



# Parallel Planning

Setting your sights on a career in a professional field such as law, medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or other health career is a challenging, but attainable, goal. Pre-Professional Advisors are here to help you reach your goals. The stark reality, however, is not all applicants to these highly competitive programs are accepted. In addition, students often change their career goals as they learn more about the professional field or as they gain experiences that expose them to other career options. For these reasons, we strongly advise students to have a parallel plan. Even if you feel you are building a competitive application, preparing other viable career paths is a must.

## Developing Your Parallel Plan

- Consider whether you might find related careers just as fulfilling? For example, if you want to be an MD, you should also consider Osteopathic Medical (DO) programs and Podiatry (DPM). Physician Assistant and Nurse Practitioner programs might also be areas to explore. Anesthesiologist Assistant could be a fulfilling career as well.
- Many professional fields are available. A master's degree in public health might fit your interests. Medical informatics is a hot field if you like computers. You could always apply to the professional program you want after your master's is complete.
- Many pre-law students are hoping to help make people's lives better. They can often do that through graduate study in social work, public health, philanthropy, or public policy programs. Some of the new Master of Science in Law (MSL) programs at law schools allow students to gain a background in law while not investing the years and dollars in becoming a lawyer. A paralegal program could also be a great fit as they are moving into a number of new areas of practice.
- One of the most significant things to remember if you are applying at the end of your junior year is that your senior year is still important! If you don't get in by the end of your senior year, what has changed in your application? Many students end up re-submitting what was essentially a failed application. Keep your grades up during your senior year, gain more professional experience, and keep up the volunteer work. No senioritis for you!
- Ask yourself: what can I do to improve my credentials and experience if I take a year off and apply (or apply again)?
- Many people are accepted when they apply again. So keep trying and continue to build your credentials. Be smart about your applications and critical about your qualifications so that you can realistically plan for re-application.
- Discuss your parallel plan with your academic advisor and a pre-professional advisor.
- Meet with a CCO Career Consultant to develop a career plan, learn internship and job search strategies, review a résumé or cover letter, or explore graduate school.

## Resources

- Center for Career Opportunities: <https://www.cco.purdue.edu/>
- CCO Career Planning Handbook: <https://indd.adobe.com/view/6a0e91af-17ef-4a3f-95fc-a351b9d03651>
- Pre-Professional Advising: <https://www.purdue.edu/preprofessional/>
- Explore Health Careers: <http://explorehealthcareers.org/en/home>
- Law School Admissions Council: <http://www.lsac.org/id/thinking-about-law-school/getting-started>
- US Bureau of Labor Statistics: <http://www.bls.gov/home.htm>