

A Guide to Pre-Professional Studies for Parents

Congratulations on helping your student gain acceptance to one of the country's finest universities—Purdue! Your student's success was in no small part due to your support, persistence, and caring. Your student is now in charge of making decisions which affect their education and future. This guide will help you understand what it takes to be admitted to a professional program so you can support them throughout their journey.

Academic Expectations

- A major should be chosen based on the student's interests. Pre-med, pre-vet, pre-law, etc. are vocational interests, not majors. Professional schools have no preference for major but do generally identify key classes and/or competencies students must have. Visit [the Purdue Pre-Professional Advising website](https://www.purdue.edu/preprofessional/careers/Index.php) to view coursework required for a particular field <https://www.purdue.edu/preprofessional/careers/Index.php>.
- Good grades are required. For most professional programs a 3.0 is the minimum. Realistically though, a 3.6 GPA or higher is needed to be competitive in many programs. Keep in mind it may be better to withdraw from a class than earn a failing grade. Students should consider the implications for financial aid, NCAA eligibility, coverage on parents' insurance, visa status, etc. before withdrawing. As long as your student does not have a pattern of withdrawing from classes, this will be fine.
- Your student has both an Academic Advisor in their major to help with choosing classes and navigating Purdue and access to a Pre-Professional Advisor. Encourage your student to make use of other campus resources as well such as the Center for Career Opportunities and the Writing Lab.
- Depending on the professional field your student wishes to pursue, they may need to take a standardized entrance exam. Students are often under a lot of pressure before taking these intense exams and will appreciate your support.
- Professional programs require several letters of recommendation/evaluation from faculty who know the applicant well.
 - Encourage your student to get to know their professors by attending all classes, asking questions, attending study sessions, going to office hours, and actively participating in class discussion.
 - For medical (both MD and DO) and dental applicants, we have a letter service for electronically sending out recommendation letters through Pre-Professional Advising. For other programs, letters are submitted directly online by the letter writers. Even if you or another family member are in a professional field, most schools will not use a letter written by family members.

Extra-Curricular Expectations

- Students need to shadow/observe someone in their chosen profession. You may be able to assist by helping your student contact people you know in those fields.
- Students need to participate in campus activities and volunteer in the community to gain leadership experience and to show they are service oriented.
- Summer research and study abroad are great opportunities, but they may also have timing and financial aspects for which you will need to plan ahead.
- Service trips to volunteer clinically in other countries sound exciting, but should be approached cautiously. They are expensive and students need to ensure that they are not practicing medicine without a license—something that professional programs discourage.
- The student grapevine and various websites often lead students to think they must do particular activities to gain admissions to programs. No absolute checklist exists. Students should do the things they feel passionate about.

Personal Expectations

- Encourage your student to take care of themselves by getting adequate sleep, proper nutrition, and taking steps to prevent the colds and flus that often hit during midterms, final exams, and before entrance exams.
- Professional schools appreciate students taking charge of all correspondence with their programs. They typically do not want parents directly involved by contacting them on behalf of their students or during interview days.
- The process of preparing for and applying to professional schools can be difficult. Your student will appreciate your support as they learn to take responsibility for this process and their future.