

# Professional School Preparation

Programs will look for students who are committed to the profession and have taken the time to be certain their chosen field is the right fit for them. They are also looking for future professionals who can communicate well, work as part of a team, and become leaders of their profession in the future. While schools will look at categories of activities, **no checklist for success exists**. No best activity is a “must do” to get you in to professional school. What will matter is how you reflect on your activities and what you are able to tell admissions committees about what you have learned along the way. The key to success when you apply will be to focus on the skills and competencies you have developed and those can come from a myriad of different experiences depending on your path through college and life.

## Demonstrate Academic Credentials

- Pursue your bachelor’s degree in a major that fulfills your curiosity while taking professional program requirements
- Have a solid GPA—3.6 or higher will give you the best chance of admission
- Take the required aptitude test (the end of your junior year is often the typical time for this)
- You do not necessarily need to repeat your AP/IB courses—this is a good thing to contact some schools about and we can guide you through this

## Develop a Record of Interest & Knowledge of the Field

- Gain practical experience—volunteer in a setting where your profession of interest is practiced
- Shadow/observe professionals in your field
- Join a professional organization in your field (most offer student memberships)
- Follow news and research in your field

## Establish Interpersonal Skills & Commitment to Service

- Community service—volunteer with any organization of interest to you (preferably serve regularly over a long period of time)
- Actively participate in campus clubs/student organizations and activities
- Work on communication skills—verbal, written, and listening skills are key
- Develop your leadership and teamwork skills

## Conduct Yourself as a Professional

- Ensure all your communications with others including faculty, staff, and social media are respectful to everyone and reflective of the position you hope to be in one day.
- When contacting professional schools, remember that they typically track all contact with students and that information becomes part of your application file. Think ahead about your reasons for contacting them and always be especially polite to everyone you speak to. Be sure they can return a phone call by ensuring you have an appropriate phone message and room for them to leave a message.

## Faculty Relationships & Undergraduate Research

- Get to know faculty! You will need their recommendation letters during the application process.
- Pre-Health letter requirements often include
  - Science faculty letters for health care fields (1 or more)
  - Non-science faculty letters (social science or humanities—usually only 1)
  - Professional in the field (often someone you worked with or shadowed)
  - Personal letter from someone who has seen you in action outside of the classroom (research, work, volunteer work, shadowing, etc.)
- Law schools typically require 2-3 letters. Secure at least 1 from a professor, preferably in your major. Professional contacts through employment, research, volunteer work, shadowing, etc. could fulfil the remaining letters.
- Participate in undergraduate research (in any field of interest to you)

## Pre-Professional Advisors in the Center for Career Opportunities want to help!

Make an appointment or email us to learn more about pre-professional opportunities and information on these topics:

- Career Options & Parallel Planning
- Shadowing/Observing Strategies
- Aptitude Tests & Professional School Applications
- Interview Preparation Tips
- Core Competencies
- Writing a Personal Statement
- Letter Service for Medical & Dental School Applicants
- Join our monthly e-newsletter at our website
- Take our classes:
  - BIOL 39600-Pre-Med/Health Application Seminar
  - GS 49000-Law School Exploration
- Attend the Health Programs Expo or Law School Forum
- Make use of our Learning Center on our website
- Become a Pre-Professional Advising Ambassador

## Preparing for your Giant Leap

[purdue.edu/preprofessional](http://purdue.edu/preprofessional)