Preparing for Professional School

Application to professional school is competitive. 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 team, and become the 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.

Demonstrate Academic Credentials

• Pursue and complete a bachelor’s degree in a major you enjoy while taking courses professional programs require
• Have a solid GPA—3.6 or better will give you the best chance of admission
• Take the required aptitude test (the end of your junior year is often the best time for this)

Develop a Record of Interest & Knowledge of the Field

• Gain practical experience—volunteer in a professional setting
• 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 in any organization you choose (preferably serve on a regular basis 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 professional
• 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.

Faculty Relationships & Undergraduate Research

• Get to know faculty! You will need their recommendation letters during the application process
• Letters requirements often include
  o Science faculty letters (1 or more)
  o Non-science faculty letters (social science or humanities—usually only 1)
  o Professional in the field (often someone you worked with or shadowed)
  o Personal letter from someone who has seen you in action outside of the classroom (research, work, volunteer work, shadowing, etc)
• Participate in undergraduate research (in any field of interest to you)

Pre-Professional Advisors in the Center for Career Opportunities can 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

• Join us on social media
• Take our classes:
  o BIOL 39600-Pre-Med/Health Application Seminar
  o GS 49000-Law School Exploration
• Come to the Health Programs Expo March 2nd, 2020
• Make use of our Learning Center on our website
• Become a Pre-Professional Advising Ambassador