Congratulations on helping your son or daughter 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. As a student, your child is now in charge of making decisions which affect his or her education and future. This guide will help you understand what it takes to be admitted in a professional program so you can support your student in his or her efforts.

Academic Expectations

- A major should be chosen based on the student’s interests. **Pre-med, 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 (see our website for the coursework required for a particular field).
- Good grades are required. For most professional programs a 3.0 is the minimum. Realistically though, a 3.6 to a 3.8 GPA or higher is needed to be competitive in some 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.
- Your student has both a Pre-Professional Advisor and an Academic Advisor in his or her major to help with choosing classes and navigating Purdue. 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 field your son or daughter wishes to pursue, he or she may need to take a standardized aptitude test. Students are often under a lot of pressure before taking these intense exams.
- Professional programs require several letters of evaluation/recommendation from faculty who know the applicant well. Encourage your student to get to know his/her 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), dental, and podiatry applicants, we have a 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 with this 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.

Personal Expectations

- Encourage your student to take care of him or herself by getting adequate sleep, proper nutrition, and taking steps to prevent the colds and flus that often hit during midterms, final exams, and before aptitude tests.
- Professional schools appreciate students taking charge of all correspondence with their programs. They typically do not want parents involved 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.