Checklist for Professional School

Getting on Track

_____ Research schools and make a list of 5-10 possibilities; include only those you would attend if they accepted you.

_____ Make a list of prerequisites that will cover the requirements of all the schools you are interested in attending.

_____ Make an academic plan that will cover all the prerequisites you will need. Be sure to include your core and major requirements and figure out how you will fit in professional experience. Remember to schedule in time to prepare for your standardized test.

_____ Discuss your plan with your academic advisor. Your advisor can help you integrate all the different requirements and check whether your plan is complete, efficient, and realistic.

_____ Research ways to get experience in your professional field (visit PAC for lists of experience opportunities) and include that experience in your academic plan.

_____ Calculate costs involved in applying: standardized test fees, application fees, traveling to interviews, test preparation courses, etc. The application year can be very expensive – be sure you will have enough saved up!

Staying on Track

_____ Right from the beginning, get to know your professors, employers, and supervisors. They are the people who will be writing your letters of recommendation or evaluation.

_____ Take your coursework seriously: follow your academic plan (and revise it whenever necessary); maintain as high a GPA as you can; and study for the long term instead of cramming to pass tests.

_____ Keep your textbooks and class notes organized so you can use them to help prepare for your standardized test. Between semesters and during breaks, review the material so it stays fresh.

_____ Take advantage of opportunities to gain experience in your field. Become involved in your field’s clubs and national organizations.

_____ Make a habit of staying current in your field: read newspapers and national news magazines; check through your field’s major periodicals regularly; attend professional conferences and events. PAC maintains Reading Binders with current articles about health and law related topics.
Applying – Start at the beginning of your Junior or penultimate year

_____ Make a schedule of all the deadlines you will need to meet in the coming 18 months:
  • Application deadlines for each school on your list
  • Registration dates for standardized tests
  • Test dates
  • When to request letters of recommendation/evaluation (allow 2 months)
  • When to order transcripts
  • When to have your personal essay(s) completed
  • Mailing/faxing/submission dates to be sure applications arrive before the deadlines
  • When to apply to WICHE or for financial aid.
Try to work ahead and adjust your personal deadlines to avoid conflicts. (For example, avoid trying to write your personal essay(s) in the middle of finals week, or trying to request letters in the middle of summer when many professors are out of town.)

_____ Research the schools on your list once again and become familiar with their unique features. Be sure you can articulate (in essays and in interviews) what attracted you to each particular school and why you want to attend that school.

_____ Prepare for the interview:
  • Visit Career Services QLCS 212 for practice interviews and tips
  • Be able to discuss current issues in your field
  • Be able to articulate why you chose your profession
  • Practice greeting and talking to strangers
  • Learn to dress, talk, and act in a professional manner

_____ Calculate the [hotlink to worksheet] Cost of Attendance for each the schools you are interested in and make a plan for how you will pay for it. If the WICHE program is an option, be sure you apply at least one full year before you plan to begin professional school.

Following Up – Be proactive!

_____ Buy a box of note cards (professional style, please) and send thank you notes to everyone who wrote you a letter, advised you, assisted you, or edited your essays.

_____ Call to confirm your applications have been received and are complete. *It is your responsibility to check every step!*

_____ Confirm interview dates, times, and places. If possible, know your interviewers’ names and who they are before you arrive; if that’s not possible, be sure you ask them about themselves when you meet them. Send them thank you notes afterward.

_____ Be sure your contact information is accurate (*professional email addresses only, please!*) and remains the same throughout the application process. If something changes, contact each and every office to change it.