Demystifying the “Gap” or “Glide” Year

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What is it?

Time spent between graduation from Princeton and matriculation into your health professions school
Who does it?

All 2018 Princeton Med Applicants (n=146)
Why do it?

- To be more ready
- To be more mature
- To fight burnout
- To align your preparation with your goals
Physician Job Satisfaction Declining, New Survey Reveals

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A wide-ranging physician survey conducted by Merritt Hawkins on behalf of The Physicians Foundation has made waves throughout the healthcare industry for a number of reasons. Indeed, with its revelation that about half of all doctors are feeling burned out and fed up with the healthcare industry, the survey of more than 17,000 doctors indicates that physician job satisfaction is on the decline, implying that the nation’s ongoing physician shortage may get worse before it gets better.
To be more mature
To fight burnout
To align your preparation with your goals
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https://apps.aamc.org/msar-ui/#/medSchoolDetails/25/126
To align your preparation with your goals

https://apps.aamc.org/msar-ui/#/medSchoolDetails/14/114
To align your preparation with your goals

https://apps.aamc.org/msar-ui/#/medSchoolDetails/153/848
To align your preparation with your goals

- MCAT study time
- Senior year class experience, grades, letters of rec
- Thesis experience, grade, letter of rec
- Expanded application prep time
- Glide year experience to discuss in interviews, update letters
How does it work?

By the time of application, regardless of year:

- At least 11-12 biology, chemistry, physics, math classes.
- MCAT, BCPM & overall GPA aligned with schools of interest
- Activities that prepare you for medicine (understanding of profession, direct interaction with patients, service, leadership, research—whatever makes sense for your narrative and interests).
- 4-6 strong letters of recommendation
- Personalized, evidence-based “why medicine” answer

Direct Entry:

- Junior year = Year prior to applying
  - Fall: Continue to gain experience, consider letters of recommendation
  - Spring: Application prep, gather letters, HPA Pre-Application Interview
- June: Submit primary application
- July / August: Secondary applications
- Senior Year = Interview Year
- Fall: Medical School
How does it work?

**One glide year:**
- **Junior summer**: Thesis, MCAT
- **Senior year** = Year prior to applying
  - Fall: MCAT (if not yet done); begin job/school search
  - Spring: Application prep, gather letters, HPA Pre-Application Interview
- **June**: Submit primary application
- **July / August**: Secondary applications
- **Interview Year**
- **Fall**: Medical School

**Two (or more) glide years:**
- **Junior summer**: Thesis, other activities, MCAT (?)
- **Senior year**: Ask for Princeton letters of rec, job/school search
- **Senior summer**: MCAT (?)
- **Year prior to applying**
  - Fall: Work (fellowship, school), contact HPA.
  - Spring: Application prep, HPA Pre-App Interview (?) (skype/phone is fine)
  - **June**: Submit primary application
  - **July/August**: Secondary applications
- **Interview Year**
- **Fall**: Medical School
Interview Year Activities

- Continue to develop your candidacy! Activities during glide year can lead to an interview (August through March)
- Current activities are often a main focus during interviews
- Share information on glide year activities in update letters to schools you haven’t heard from
- Solicit one additional letter of recommendation over the course of the year
What to do?

- Augment preparation
- Reinforce a strength
- Build a complementary skill set
- Earn money
Augment Preparation: Clinical

- ER Scribe, Patient Advocate, Certified Nursing Assistant, Phlebotomist

- Clinical research complemented with hospital volunteering 4-8 hours per week

- Hospice, elder care, or other shorter duration volunteer opportunities alongside job; short-term shadowing
Augment Preparation: Grades

- Special Master’s program + hospital volunteering
  - BU MS in Medical Sciences

- Work in a clinical research position with heavy patient contact that’s affiliated with a university that provides tuition benefits, take classes part-time
  - www.hr.upenn.edu/PennHR/benefits-pay/tuition

- Move home, work as an ER Scribe or other patient-facing job, take classes at a local college/university as a non-degree seeking student
Augment Preparation: Research

- Research assistant in an academic medical center, shadow PI and/or affiliated physicians
  - Consider location (and state residency) strategically
  - Volunteer a shift or two per week if research is not patient-facing

- NIH Post-Bac Intramural Research Training Award or Rockefeller University or similar research-based opportunity plus hospital volunteering / other patient care work

- Longer-term research position with concurrent hospital / patient care exposure
Reinforce a Strength: Service

- Princeton in Africa
- Princeton in Asia
- Princeton in Latin America
- Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Award

Tips for Applying from Abroad
Reinforce a Strength: Service

- AlumniCorps Project 55 Fellowship Program
- AmeriCorps
- National Health Corps

Helping Patients Make Sense of Cancer Care at UCSF
Patient Advocacy in the MGH EM Net WIND Study
The Social Determinants of Health at the NY Academy of Medicine
Reinforce a Strength: Independence, Vision

- Fulbright research award; LaBouisse, Reach Out, Dale Fellowships
  - Dan Stover ‘03 – via ReachOut, work with non-profit community development organization: [https://www.princetonreachout.org/stover](https://www.princetonreachout.org/stover)
  - Raphael Frankfurter ‘13 – via LaBouisse, worked with Wellbody Alliance, then became Executive Director prior to pursuing MD/PhD: [paw.princeton.edu/article/qa-raphael-frankfurter-%E2%80%9913](paw.princeton.edu/article/qa-raphael-frankfurter-%E2%80%9913)
Reinforce a Strength: Other Passions

- Writing → grant writer with non-profit; health education work; clinical research (depending on the projects); crafting thesis into publications
- Work with underserved / specific groups → see service; look for volunteer opportunities that put you in contact with populations of interest
- Faith → working with youth ministries, assisting on missions abroad, hospice volunteering
- Sports → playing professionally, coaching
- Maintaining hobbies, continuing to learn, taking on leadership roles
  - Book groups, dialogue groups
  - Attending cultural events, speakers
  - Keeping up to date with current events (including in health care)
  - Joining boards, advisory groups for organizations
Build a skill set

- Research
- Teaching
- Management
- Leadership
- Communication skills
- Tech skills

[External Link](students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/preparing-med-school/anatomy-applicant/)
Earn / Save Money

- Almost everything in STEM
- Consulting
- Choose location strategically
Keep in Mind
More examples

- AAMC “Anatomy of an Applicant”
- Bryn Mawr video
- Atlantic article
- Johns Hopkins student newspaper

- Past Princeton student experiences: [hpa.princeton.edu/pre-health-after-princeton/glide-year](hpa.princeton.edu/pre-health-after-princeton/glide-year)
- Current job postings: [hpa.princeton.edu/post-grad-job-board](hpa.princeton.edu/post-grad-job-board)
Next Steps

- Meet with Kate or Jessica to discuss further
- Meet with a Fellowships adviser
- Talk with students who are taking glide year(s)
- Broach the subject with family to gauge response
- Browse through opportunities in Vitals