

Ten Good Reasons to Delay Your Application

- 1. You need more time to study for the entrance exam (or to re-take the exam).**
For most health professions applicants, being as early as possible in the application cycle gives you a better shot at getting into schools on rolling admissions. *MD/DO applicants should be focusing on taking the MCAT no later than April if you want your scores before you submit your primary application*, or May if you are comfortable submitting before you have MCAT scores back. All UNH health professions applicants must take their entrance exams no later than June to be eligible to receive a Committee Letter of Evaluation. As April, May, and June get closer applicants often push the testing dates off. If you are not ready-do not take the exam. Delaying to the next cycle means you could spend all summer (and fall) studying for the MCAT/DAT and still have time to retake it if necessary before applying.
- 2. You have a borderline GPA.** The numbers part of your applicant profile almost always improves in your senior year if you're a junior, because you have more control over the courses you take, and you're just more acclimated to the college environment. If you are a senior you can continue to take upper level sciences to improve your GPA.
- 3. You don't think you'll have strong letters of recommendations.** Again, if you are a junior, your classes are likely to get smaller next year, and you'll have more opportunity to forge relationships with your faculty. You'll also have the summer to work on getting a letter from a supervisor or volunteer coordinator in your summer activity. If you're a senior, going on to post-back work will give you more chances to get to know faculty and supervisors.
- 4. You have limited experience** with what working in health care, and with patients, might entail. Without having participated in activities that allow you to serve the community, and build the skills you need to be a health care professional, it will be hard to convince schools that you have a realistic understanding of what you're about to undertake.
- 5. As a junior it is more difficult to compare favorably with alums and post bacs who have rich life experiences.**
Juniors may also not be as competitive as a senior who has their complete academic history...graduation honors, undergrad thesis presentations, publications, capstone coursework, etc.
- 6. You don't have time to focus on the preparations required to apply.** You have essays to write, letters of recommendations to gather, standardized tests to study for, schools to research, as well as the rest of real life and figuring out what to do this summer. If you can't spend the time you need on application prep now (and secondary essay writing this summer for MD/DO applicants), it might be better to start getting organized this year, but focus on applying next year.
- 7. "Everyone else is applying as a junior." Not true.** Approximately 60% of UNH applicants currently in the application process are taking or have already taken time off before matriculating. (For 2008 the number was 80%.) Every student whom I have talked with who has taken time has benefited from it. They have all found something productive to do in their time off, and may be more attractive to admissions committees because of this new experience as well as the maturity and insight gained from being in the 'real world' for awhile.
- 8. You just aren't sure** about medicine yet (PA, DDS, etc.) or you can't articulate your motivation well on paper and in conversation. If you need more experiences to back up your "gut feeling" that you "must" be a doctor or dentist or PA, then by all means, takes the time to find those experiences. A great thing to do in the "gap year".
- 9. There are other things that you want to experience before** taking the next step to health professions school.
Once you get to school, it becomes more difficult to take time off -- you're more likely to have financial concerns, family concerns, and a professional schedule that will keep you from, say, traveling to Africa for six months, or learning to skydive, or going to culinary school. Health professions schools (and the support UNH provides) will still be there for you if you go and do these things and return to the application process later.
- 10. Finally,** applications have been increasing in the past few years. More applicants mean that schools can be more selective in who they accept. Be the strongest applicant you can be at the time you apply.