



LEVERAGING YOUR GAP YEAR

How gap years can strengthen your
health graduate application

Agenda

- What is a gap year?
- What can I do in a gap year?
- How to include your gap year on your application.

What is a gap year?

- A large majority of applicants are electing to take time between completion of their undergraduate degree and matriculation to health professional programs to prepare for their programs and strengthen their applications.
 - At NU, about 84% of accepted candidates to a health graduate program have taken at least one gap year!
- Taking additional time can enhance your application through academic and experiential opportunities, give you the chance to recharge before entering a demanding program, allow you to save money, and enable you to get more from your professional program.

Gap Year Myth vs. Fact

MYTH: MOST STUDENTS GO STRAIGHT FROM COLLEGE TO MEDICAL SCHOOL.

- Fact: **Taking at least one gap year is the norm.** More than half (59.9 percent) of 2015 matriculating medical students indicated in the AAMC's "Matriculating Student Questionnaire" that there was a gap of at least one year between their college graduation and matriculation to medical school...

MYTH: MOST MEDICAL STUDENTS ARE IN THEIR EARLY 20S.

- Fact: There is a wide variation of the ages of entering medical students. For the 2015 entering class, individuals were between 18 and 54 years of age at the time of expected matriculation, with the **average age at matriculation being 24.**

Sources:

- <https://students-residents.aamc.org/medical-school-admission-requirements/fact-or-fiction-reviewing-data-official-guide-medical-school-admissions>
- [321468-factstablea6.pdf \(aamc.org\)](#)

What can you do during a gap year?

Additional Experiential Preparation: Having robust experiences in clinical, research, and community engagement settings demonstrates your readiness for a rigorous health professional program and confirms your desire to pursue a healthcare career. Areas for additional experiential preparation and opportunities include:

- Clinical Employment
- Research
- Community Service and/or Civic Engagement
- Other Professional Experience

Learn more:

- [Gap Year | PreMed and PreHealth Advising Program \(northeastern.edu\)](https://northeastern.edu/gap-year/premed-prehealth-advising-program)
- [Making the Most of Your Gap Year | Students & Residents \(aamc.org\)](https://aamc.org/making-the-most-of-your-gap-year)

What can you do during a gap year?

Additional Academic Preparation: Being admitted to a professional healthcare program takes years of preparation and mastery of difficult science coursework. Additionally, some individuals wish to gain additional expertise in a field that is distinct from health and medicine, but that can benefit their careers as clinicians. Types of academic programs to consider in a gap year are:

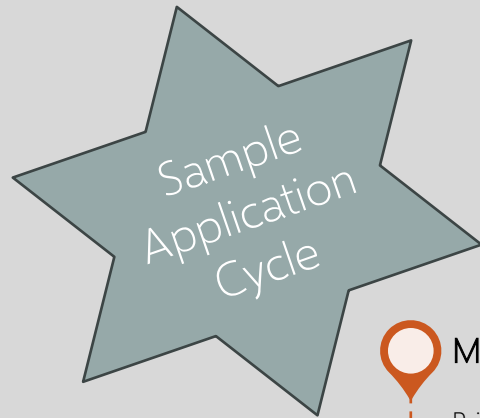
- Medical Master's Programs
- Other Master's Programs
- Post-Baccalaureate Programs

Learn more:

- [Gap Year | PreMed and PreHealth Advising Program \(northeastern.edu\)](https://northeastern.edu/gap-year-premed-prehealth-advising-program)
- [Postbaccalaureate Programs | Students & Residents \(aamc.org\)](https://aamc.org/postbaccalaureate-programs-students-residents)

How do I include my gap year on my application?

That depends on whether you are taking one gap year or multiple!



How do I include my gap year on my application?

- All health graduate program applications have a section where you can add your experiences. This is the part of the application where you'll define the activities you've participated in outside of your coursework to prepare for your future health career. **If you are only taking ONE gap year and applying before engaging in most of your gap year activities, you can also talk about your gap year in your health graduate program interviews!**
- When speaking about this period in your application, **avoid phrases like "time off."** Talk about how you used this opportunity to strengthen your knowledge and improve the skills that will make you a better clinician. Be honest; share what you've learned and how you've grown.
- When writing your experience descriptions (this should be **narrative text**, NOT bulleted like a resume) consider what you learned, how you contributed, and why it was impactful. Avoid listing your job responsibilities. Instead, keep in mind the [AAMC Core Competencies](#), and how one or more of these may be reflected in the experience.
- Don't forget, Admissions Committees are looking for a candidate who has demonstrated that they are trying to better themselves as a person and future health provider, not just trying to make themselves look good to get into a graduate program.

Source: [Making the Most of Your Gap Year | Students & Residents \(aamc.org\)](#)

QUESTIONS

- PreHealth advisees are encouraged to meet with their individual PreHealth advisor at least once per academic year.
- To find your advisor and book an appointment, please visit our staff page: [Meet The Staff | PreMed and PreHealth Advising Program \(northeastern.edu\)](#)