Let's Talk About Glide Years

Pre-Health Advising
Spring 2015
What is a Glide Year (or more!)?

A Glide Year is time after your undergraduate education that can be used to provide you with the opportunity to strengthen areas of weakness, to mature and grow, to explore new areas of interest, to take a break from school, to earn money and/or pay down student loans from undergrad.

A Glide Year or Glide Years are normal.

Why do we call it a Glide Year? There is no great term for “taking a year off to focus on life” so we call it a Glide Year. You may refer to it as a “gap year” or simply “life”.
Who takes a Glide Year?

• Students with strong GPA’s

• Students who wish to gain further experience in a related field or who wish to gain new skills

• Students who want or need to improve on various aspects of their application

• A large portion of the applicant pool (The average age of matriculation to MD programs is 24; in 2014, 36% of entering MD students were 22 or younger).

• Approximately 25-33% of Brandeis students apply to medical school as juniors. This means that 66-75% of Brandeis applicants take at least one glide year.
What is to gain from a Glide Year?

- Maturity
- The ability to live on your own, be responsible for your own bills, etc.
- Work experience, either in a related field or gaining transferrable skills
- Strengthen areas of weakness (academic or in other areas)
- Study for the MCAT without having to worry about other coursework
- Show schools 4 years of academic work
- Time to explore while you are in college (study abroad, major in a non-science)
- Refresh yourself mentally, be ready to start school again
- Medical school is grueling and long. Make sure that you are motivated to follow this career path.
What to do if you take time off?
Post-Bac Program or Educational Experience

- Did you have a rough start academically at Brandeis? Do you need to show improvement in your GPA?

  - A Post-Baccalaureate program may be a good glide year option for students who determine their main weakness is academic.
    - There are formal Post-Bac programs that award master’s degrees or market themselves as “record-enhancer” programs.
      - The AAMC has a good list of Post-Bac programs across the country.
    - If cost is important and you are also thinking about working, you could do an informal post-bac on your own by taking upper-level science course work as a non-matriculating student at a 4-year college or university. The Harvard Extension school is a good example of this.
You could get a… J-O-B.

- Is your area of weakness that you don’t have much experience in the health care field or have difficulty articulating why you want to go into medicine? This might be the right path for you. You could think about:
  - Research Field
  - Patient Care focused positions
  - Other positions with transferrable skills
Research Positions – some examples

- Research Technician
- Research Assistant
- Clinical Research Assistant
- Clinical Research Technician
- Research Study Coordinator
- Research Study Assistant
- Clinical Research Intern
Get Certified

- We encourage students thinking about taking a glide year or more to consider getting a certification. This can open up a number of positions for you and can be valuable training/experience.
  - [Certified Nursing Assistant](#) – available from the Red Cross in MA.
  - EMT Certification – [BEMCo](#) course or other options.
  - [Phlebotomy](#) – available from the Red Cross in MA.
  - Certified Medical Interpreter – get one of two national certifications; ways to do this vary, fluency in two languages is key. 40+ hours of training generally required, can be through courses or continuing ed.

- Each state has different licensure requirements. It may be challenging and/or time consuming to transfer certifications and/or licensure across state lines, so be thoughtful about where you think you want to be for the year or two after graduation and consider getting certification in that state. Do your research and be prepared.
Job Titles with a focus on Patient Care

With Additional Certification

- Certified Nursing Assistant (hospital or nursing home)
- EMT
- Phlebotomist (lab, hospital, clinic, blood center, plasma center, etc)
- Emergency Department Technician
- Medical Technician
- Medical Assistant (hospital or clinic)
- Dental Assistant (on the job training or certification program)
- Nurse’s Aide
- Health Care Interpreter/Certified Medical Interpreter

Without Additional Certification

- ER/ED Scribe; Scribe in a clinic or Doctor’s office
- Medical Assistant (doctor’s office or clinic)
- Dental Assistant (up to 6 months prior to needing certification)
- Patient Care Advocate
- Community Health Worker
- Occupational Therapy Aide
- Pharmacy Technician
- Health Care Administration positions (such as patient registration coordinator)
- Continue a HSSP internship into a year long position.
Other Options: Social Justice Focus

Social Justice – Health Related
• **AmeriCorps**
  • In Boston, Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program
  • In California, maternal medicine clinic and outreach
• **HealthCorps**
  • Focusing on kids in school-based programs in NY and CA; nutrition, movement, etc.

Social Justice – Not Health Specific
• **Teach For America**
• **Peace Corps**
• **Teach for China**
• **Global Brigades**
• Find more at [Idealist.org](http://Idealist.org)
Other Options: Transferrable Skills

• You do not have to work in health care. However, you should be able to talk about how the skills you have used/learned will transfer to medical school. Some examples:

  • **SAT Tutor/Teacher for Kaplan**: communication skills, ability to explain complex information to youngsters in a way that they understand, time management, lesson planning.

  • **Manager at local store**: communication skills, ability to motivate and manage others, teamwork, leadership.

  • **Retail sales associate at popular store**: ability to trouble shoot problems, comfort in conversing with new people, ability to maintain high energy over the course of the work period, ability to work with a range of people/individuals.
How to Start?
Hiatt for one.

• Get a resume approved through Hiatt and get on their email list.

• Attend Hiatt employment nights and search the job/internship databases.

• When working with Hiatt, DON’T go in and tell them you want to find a “Glide Year Job”. They have no idea what that is or why someone should hire you for 8 to 10 to 12 months.

• DO ask for help finding an entry level position in a field you are interested in.
Other Resources

- The Pre-Health listserv will send out any glide year opportunities that are sent to us, but this is not comprehensive.

- Get familiar with Indeed.com (a job aggregator site; like Google for the job search)
  - This is a great place to type in those key words/job titles that interest you to see what types of listings come up and what the required skills are for those jobs.
  - Do you see specific certifications required? What is the pay range for the job that you are looking at?

- Check Hospital/Clinic/Organization websites weekly/monthly to see what positions are posted. You may also want to look for Community Health Clinics to see what positions are available.

- Network
  - Check out the [Networking 101 for the Pre-Health Student slides](#) for more on how to begin networking.
Questions?

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Contact Us at PHA@brandeis.edu
For Appointments, you may book online
or call Academic Services at 781-736-3470.

Quick Questions Drop-In Appointments are offered Monday – Friday, 1:30-2:30pm.
Sign up daily in Usdan 127.