



PRE-LAW HANDBOOK

Liberal Arts Career Services
The University of Texas at Austin

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FRESHMAN AND SOPHOMORE YEARS

How can I decide if law school is for me?

- ❑ Read about the profession. Books (*Official Guide to Legal Specialties*, found in the Liberal Arts Career Services Resource Library, Gebauer 1.308) or Web sites (www.abanet.org/careercounsel/profile/profession.html) can detail specialty areas within the legal profession that will give you a more solid foundation on what will be possible with your law degree.
- ❑ Talk with practicing lawyers. Ask them about a “typical day” and whether they enjoy their job. This will give you insight into the profession from those who are already there. Don’t know any lawyers, then contact UT Alums. The Texas Exes organization has a Career Network (www.texasexes.org) full of alums willing to speak with you about their chosen profession.
- ❑ If you are a Liberal Arts student, make an appointment with the Pre-Law Advisor in LACS to discuss the legal profession. If you are a student outside the Liberal Arts, contact your college to determine who to speak with.
- ❑ Find an internship or part time job in a law firm, government agency, etc. This gives you an up close and personal look into what it means to be a lawyer. Determine whether your personality and skills match those of the lawyers that you observe. More information about how to obtain an internship can be found on the LACS Web site (www.utexas.edu/cola/lacs/) or with AccessUT (<http://accessut.utexas.edu/>).

Before You Start Applying, Ask Yourself...

- Do I have a compelling interest in the law? An interest strong enough to withstand an extremely rigorous curriculum? An interest strong enough to withstand a sizable financial debt?
- Would a law degree increase my social, personal, and professional satisfaction?

Reasons Not to Go

- To please someone else. A considerable number of attorneys report a high level of dissatisfaction with their career. Not so surprising since they also report that the reason they went to law school is because someone else wanted them to go.
- Don't know what you want to do. Do you really want to risk accruing a huge debt? If you do not know what you want to do, be careful of obtaining a degree that may not be applicable to the field you ultimately land in.
- To avoid the job hunt. Sooner or later you'll have to do it.
- Your favorite television shows always surround legal issues. You'd be amazed at the number of people that become interested in careers because of the glamorous representation they've viewed on television. Primetime rarely mimics life.

What is the best major for law school?

According to the American Bar Association (ABA), “students who are successful in law school, and who become accomplished lawyers or use their legal education successfully in other areas of professional life, come to their legal education from widely differing educational and experiential backgrounds ... Thus, the



ABA does not recommend any particular group of undergraduate majors, or courses, that should be taken by those wishing to prepare for legal education; developing such a list is neither possible nor desirable.”

No specific undergraduate major is recommended. Your decision regarding a major should be based on personal desires and needs. One approach is to select a major that would prepare you for an occupation other than the law. You can pursue an alternative career in this manner and simultaneously be “preparing” for law school. This will allow you the option of foregoing a legal education for whatever reason, or allow you to pursue an alternative career for a few years before entering law school, in order to gain experience and maturity. For example, it is not uncommon for students to choose a major in English, government, economics, or psychology with the intentions of working for a few years before applying to law school.

The most important aspects of choosing a major are that (a) you choose it, not someone else, and (b) you enjoy the discipline and believe that you can excel in this area academically. Why? A very important criterion for admission to law school is one’s GPA (even when taking courses at other universities or community colleges). If you select a major based on what someone else wants you to do, there is a high likelihood that you will be unhappy, and your grades will reflect that dissatisfaction. Never choose a major based on the ease of attaining high grades, but it makes sense that you will likely not excel if you have no interest in the subject area.

If you are aware of the type of law you would like to practice, these are majors you might want to consider:

- Patent Law: Computer Science or Engineering
- Tax Law: Accounting
- Corporate Law: Economics or Business
- Environmental Law: Geography or Natural Sciences
- Medical Law: Health or Natural Sciences

- Contact the Career Exploration Center (www.utexas.edu/student/cec) or speak to your Academic Advisor about how to choose your major.

What courses should I take?

There are **no** specific undergraduate courses required by law schools. Although, there are subject areas that are recommended by law schools from which students should consider taking at least one course sometime during their undergraduate education. These subject areas include literature, history, government, philosophy, language, psychology, sociology, economics, and accounting.

Many courses that will be handy in law school are types that are typically required for graduation. For example, introductory courses in American history and government are essential. Writing- and research-intensive courses are also helpful. Other suggested types would include those that develop or stimulate analytical thinking. Obvious choices in this field would be accounting, economics, math or engineering courses, but don’t overlook music theory or English composition. Consider courses that focus on communications skills, such as speech or foreign language classes. Courses in introductory logic or arguments (offered in philosophy, i.e. Introduction to Logic and mathematics) are also useful, as are many sociology and psychology classes.

Just remember, you will have a number of hours open for electives after finishing requirements for your major. Aim for a broad-based education. Such an education will help you become a better-rounded student and applicant in the long run.

What do I need to do now besides take classes?

- Focus on your grades so that you’ll have a competitive GPA (always do as well as you can, even if you decide to attend a community college for summer courses or participate in a study abroad program).



- ❑ Get involved in extracurricular activities. Join a group on campus that interests you, take a part-time job, and/or volunteer. If you become involved in a group as a freshman or sophomore, the chances for you to hold a leadership position as a junior or senior will greatly improve. Information on campus organizations can be found through Campus and Community Involvement (deanofstudents.utexas.edu/cci).
- ❑ Research the legal field as much as you can. Make sure that three years of law school will be worth your time, energy, and money. Read books about the law and talk with current law students and lawyers.
- ❑ Find an internship or volunteer. The better informed you are about the legal profession the happier you will be in law school. Internships are great a way to expand your resume and learn more about career fields. As a Liberal Arts student, take advantage of LACS to access internship resources. To register with LACS, please follow the registration directions found on our Web site (www.utexas.edu/cola/lacs/students/register).
- ❑ Get to know your professors and employers. Eventually, you will need to ask those that know you well for a letter of recommendation. Ideally, your recommenders will know something about you that sets you apart from other law school applicants. This does not happen overnight, so start now.

JUNIOR YEAR

When should I take the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT)?

The LSAT is administered four times a year – early February, June, October and December. You should not take the test until you’ve finished your junior year. The ideal time to take the LSAT is in June before your senior year, simply because you typically won’t be in school and should have plenty of time to investigate law schools before the application process begins. However, if you are taking time off before law school you may wait to take the LSAT until after graduation.

Do not take the LSAT for practice! All scores will be reported to every law school to which you apply for admission and most schools average your scores. Plan to take the LSAT only once.

- ❑ Register for the LSAT. You can register online through the Law School Admission Council (www.lsac.org), or use the registration form included in the *LSAT& LSDAS Registration and Information Book* (found in the LACS Resource Library). Register early in order to increase your chances of obtaining your first choice for a testing location. Austin locations tend to fill up fast.
- ❑ Start preparing for the LSAT early. There are a number of prep course options available, and LACS does not endorse one over the other. If you are very disciplined, you may prepare by using self-study materials. Prep books can be purchased at most bookstores, and many prep materials, including copies of old LSATs with answers and explanations, can be purchased from LSAC. You will even find copies of old LSATs in the Resource Library and in the Reference Section of the Perry-Castaneda Library. Whatever method you decide on, be sure that you are prepared. Take as many mock LSAT tests under timed conditions as you can in a setting similar to your test location.

What is LSDAS and do I have to register for it when I sign up to take the LSAT?

The Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS) provides a means of centralizing and standardizing undergraduate academic records. LSDAS takes information from your transcripts and assembles your grades into a standard form called the Law School Report. Also, LSDAS compiles your letters of recommendations and sends them along with the Law School Report to each school to which you apply. You are responsible



for submitting this information to LSDAS. While you aren't required to sign up for LSDAS at the same time as the LSAT, a subscription is required by all law schools when you begin the application process. Go to the LSAC Web site (www.lsac.org) for more information and to register for this service.

You do not need to tell LSDAS where to send your report. Instead, the law schools will request your information after receiving your application. However, you must pay LSDAS for each report that will be requested. For example, if you are applying to five law schools, you need to make sure that you have paid for that many reports to be sent. These additional reports can be requested either online, by mail, or phone. Further details can be found at www.lsac.org.

What else can I do?

- Continue to study and keep your grades up.
- Look for opportunities to gain leadership roles in activities, keeping in mind that you don't necessarily have to be president to be a leader.
- Attend the LACS sponsored Annual Law School Fair (held in October or November of each year). Start looking at law schools and what they require in the application process. If you are a Liberal Arts student and need additional help, make an appointment with the LACS Pre-Law Advisor (students outside of Liberal Arts should contact their college to determine who to speak with).
- Keep in touch with professors or employers who would be able to write you good letters of recommendation.
- Internships are great ways to expand your resume and learn more about career fields. Liberal Arts students can access internship information by registering with LACS. To register, please go to our homepage (www.utexas.edu/cola/lacs) and review the registration procedures.

SENIOR YEAR

Where can I get in?

Pre-law students are invariably faced with the task of selecting which law schools to apply to. The question "What is the best law school?" is not always the most pertinent. The question "What is the best law school for me?" however, takes into account the needs and desires of each student and allows for a better selection.

Some things that a student might consider in selecting a law school are:

- Location** Is the law school located in the geographical area you prefer? How important is the geographical location to you, and why? Is the location on a campus? In a city? In a college town? What geographic area do you want to work in after graduating law school?
- Size** Do you prefer a large (1,000 or greater), an intermediate (500-1,000), or a small (500 or less) sized student body? The advantages of a larger law school are a greater number of courses offered and diversified interests within the faculty. In a smaller law school there is usually closer contact with the faculty and a more relaxed ambiance within the student body.
- Character** Is the institution characterized as a national, state, or regional law school? Where are the alumni employed? Pay particular attention to the job placement patterns of law schools if geographic location is important to you.



Student Body Any professional program is competitive. Some law schools are very competitive and have student bodies that are vocationally oriented and grade conscious. Others are less competitive and possess student bodies which might be classified as "more supportive". The best way to find out about the student body of a law school is to visit the school and talk to the faculty and students. If possible, sit in on a few classes and talk with the students after class.

Faculty What is the strength of the faculty at a particular law school? The law school's Web site will list the faculty along with their professional activities, publications, etc.

Library Is the size of the law library adequate both in terms of holdings and space? Can students be accommodated during examination time? Does the library have computer facilities, wireless capabilities, etc.?

Strengths Some applicants have an area of the law in which they are particularly interested - international law, environmental law, tax law, patent law, etc. If so, you should examine law school catalogs closely to find those that have faculty and curricular expertise in the areas of your particular interest.

Cost Somewhere along the line, money will become an issue. Unless you have access to a large nest egg, look at the total cost for three years of study. This estimate should include tuition, room and board, fees and expenses, insurance, and travel.

Assessing your chances of gaining admission to any particular law school requires a review of the most current admission's data available. There are several resources to help you:

ABA/LSAC Official Guide To ABA-Approved Law Schools This book is available for purchase from LSAC, free on the LSAC Web site (www.lsac.org), or available for review in the LACS Resource Library (Gebauer 1.308). This handbook includes facts and information on all ABA-approved law schools in the country. Data such as admission results for prior applicants are helpful to see how others with your GPA and LSAT scores fared last year.

Law school catalogs Some law schools don't print all of their admission results in the *ABA/LSAC Official Guide*; therefore, you can obtain an application booklet and/or catalog by contacting the law schools that you are interested in and requesting information. Many schools do have this available online.

Midwest Association of Pre-Law Advisors (MAPLA) Profiles This reference guide is full of useful information such as tuition costs, joint degree options, specialties, demographics of students, and median entering statistics. It is available for use in the LACS Resource Library.

What are "REACH", "TARGET", and "SAFETY" schools?

It is rare that an applicant will gain admission to all of the laws schools they apply to. Therefore, it is helpful to make educated guesses based on three categories of prospects.

1. **REACH** This is a law school where about 20% or less of the applicants with your GPA and LSAT scores were recently admitted.
2. **TARGET** This is a law school where your GPA and LSAT scores are approximately the same as the medians for last year's entering class. "Target" schools present at least a 50/50 chance of acceptance.



3. **SAFETY** This is a law school where at least 80% of the applicants with your GPA and LSAT scores were admitted last year. Include several "Safety" schools on your list due to the accelerating applicant pools in terms of quality. What may have been a "Safety" school last year may have suddenly become a "Target" school instead.

It is important to apply in each range of schools to ensure you are accepted somewhere.

The best way to figure out if a particular law school is right for you would be to visit. Below you will find a list of potential questions that you could ask during your visit. Remember, this list is not exhaustive.

Questions concerning a law school's admissions process:

1. Describe your review process for applicants' folders.
2. How did your applicant pool change last year and what projections are you making for this year?
3. With my grades and LSAT what would be my chances of gaining admissions to your law school?
4. How do you evaluate the more subjective factors of an application and how important are they?
5. What advantages exist for applicants who apply early? What do you consider "early"?
6. When do you typically let applicants know your admission decisions?
7. (If state-supported school) How do you treat residency status in the admissions process?
8. Do applicants with post-college work experience have an advantage over new college graduates?
9. What do you look for in the personal statement?
10. Can you give me examples of the kinds of recommendations that can make a difference?
11. What should I anticipate the cost to be in attending three years of your law school?
12. How do most of your students pay for law school?
13. How does your office handle financial aid awards? Can I expect to know my aid award before I'm required to pay a deposit?
14. What merit scholarships do you offer to incoming students?

Questions about the character/ambiance of the law school:

1. What are the curricular strengths of your faculty?
2. How are first-year classes organized and taught?
3. How many students are typically enrolled in each entering class?
4. How much (or what kinds) of contact with faculty would the typical law student have outside of class?
5. How many graduates practice law in your state (or region) after graduation?
6. What factors shape the career interests and options available to your graduates?
7. What complaints do your students have about your law school?
8. What is the atmosphere within your student body concerning competition?
9. How are students selected for your law school journals/reviews?
10. Can students leave their class books and notes in a study carrel without fear of theft?
11. When your students say what they like about your law school, what things are frequently mentioned?
12. When students turn down your school in favor of another, what reasons do they cite for doing so?
13. What features do you believe set your school apart from "comparable" schools?

Questions concerning career outcomes:

1. What is the job search experience like for your law school's graduates who want to work here in Texas?
2. How many (what percentage) of your graduates have their jobs lined up before Christmas of their final year?
3. To what extent do your students get their summer jobs through your on-campus recruiting program?
4. What kinds of jobs do your first year students line up for their first summer job?
5. To what extent does class rank affect your students' job search success?

Who do I ask for a Letter of Recommendation?



Letters of recommendation are an extremely important piece of your law school application. Professors and other recommenders have the ability to support what you have already stated in other parts of your application and add more information about you as an applicant. Do not wait until the last minute to determine who to ask, it is always best to be the first person to ask a favorite professor rather than the last.

Q. Whom should I ask for my letters of recommendation?

A. Always refer to the application for specific directions. Generally professors, supervisors, faculty advisors, teaching assistants and/or anyone else who is a non-relative are acceptable recommenders.

Q. What do I ask my recommenders to write?

A. The following are acceptable topic areas:

- Length of time and in what capacity the recommender has known you.
- Writing ability, speaking ability, and other academic strengths you possess.
- Advantages you may bring to law school.
- Capacity for original thought, growth potential, and the ability to analyze and critically assess information.
- Special characteristics you may possess such as motivation, judgment, maturity, and creativity.

This information should be in the form of a letter, on letterhead, and with an original signature, unless otherwise specified in the application packet. Most law schools use the Letter of Recommendation service provided by LSDAS. LSDAS will add your letters of recommendation to your Law Report. For more information, visit the LSAC Web site (www.lsac.org) or refer to the *LSAT & LSDAS Registration and Information Book* (available in Gebauer 1.308). If the law school does not use the Letter of Recommendation service by LSDAS, save your recommender time by suggesting that he/she write one letter, make copies, and sign each copy.

Q. When should I ask my recommenders for their letters?

A. Your first contact should be early. It is not out of the question to give your recommender one to three months notice. Once you have signed up for LSDAS and found out what each law school expects, you will need to provide your recommenders with the necessary paperwork. Letter of Recommendation forms can be downloaded from the LSAC Web site. Allow at least one month for your recommenders to write a letter; check in with them (occasionally) to gently remind them of your deadlines and to provide additional information, if needed. Keep in mind that LSDAS may take up to two weeks to process your letters of recommendation. You want to have your letters of recommendation available to be sent with the rest of the information within your Law Report (LSAT score and transcripts).

Q. What do I need to provide my recommenders?

A. Provide each recommender with a folder including your:

- Instruction sheet (self-written) with information on how to get in touch with you.
- Letter of Recommendation form (provided by law school and/or LSDAS).
- Transcripts.
- Resume.
- Personal statement (if written).
- Return envelopes.

What is a Personal Statement?

Your personal statement has several functions in the law school application process. First, it serves as a writing sample. Secondly, most law schools do not have the ability to interview all their applicants, so the



personal statement tends to replace the information usually learned during an interview. Lastly, the information can make your application seem less sterile and give it a more realistic edge.

Make sure to consider your audience when constructing your personal statement. With possibly thousands of statements to read, law school admissions committee members may initially only give your personal statement a few minutes of attention. Consider carefully what the admissions committee needs to know about you in 500 words or less. In addition, consult each application carefully to determine what the law school wants. This could necessitate that you write several personal statements.

How do I come up with a topic for my personal statement?

- Free writing- pick out a personal characteristic and take 20 minutes to write about it.
- Journaling- keep a daily journal. It not only helps to determine a topic, but it also aids in forcing you to practice your writing.
- Chronological Method- what is your earliest memory? Now, write down every significant memory since then.
- Accomplishments- make a list of accomplishments, big or small.
- Personal characteristics- make a list of your personal characteristics or skills.
- Ask family and friends- part of the difficulty in coming up with a topic is that you are probably uncomfortable with writing about yourself. Family and friends usually have no problems spouting off your accomplishments.
- Read the law school application- some law schools are explicit on what they prefer you write about. Always follow the directions on each application carefully.

For the most part, your personal statement can be on a topic of your choosing. Consider what the law schools already know about you from the rest of your application (transcripts, LSAT score, letters of recommendation, and resume) and tell them something more.

Making your personal statement stand out.

- Create an interesting first paragraph and/or summarize well.
- Choose a theme.
- Avoid gimmicks such as poetry, recipes, etc.
- Personalize your essay by not just relating what you did but why you did it and what impact the experience had on you.
- Explain how you broadened your horizons.
- Discuss your accomplishments in terms of the obstacles you overcame.
- Tell the admissions committee what you want them to know about you. Your essay may be creative and unique and should reflect your values and priorities.
- Individualize your personal statement by giving specific reasons for applying to that school, but do not just use the information found in their catalog.
- You want to always explain, not make excuses for, discrepancies or problems in your academic or personal record, but reserve this for an optional statement. Keep your personal statement positive.
- Follow the application directions precisely.
- Do not wait until the last minute to write your personal statement.
- Proofread again and again and again.

The LACS Resource Library (Gebauer 1.308) has books dedicated to helping you figure out an appropriate personal statement topic and examples of personal statements that have worked. Or, you might want to contact the law schools you are interested in applying to and inquire if they have personal statements on file.



Other resources include the Undergraduate Writing Center located in the Undergraduate Library. In addition, you may want to ask a professor to critique your personal statement.

Do law schools require a Resume?

Many law school applications require a resume. The formatting and techniques that you use for your professional resume are also used for the resume submitted with your law school application. You will want to read your applications carefully to determine the appropriate information to include and the length of the resume that you submit (some law schools will accept up to 3 pages). Remember, many law schools do not grant interviews for applicants. You will want to give them as much information as possible on your resume. That means detailing your honors and awards, academic record, work and volunteer experiences, foreign language competencies, and study abroad/research opportunities that you have undertaken. More information on how to construct a resume can be found on the LACS Web site, www.utexas.edu/cola/lacs.

When do I apply for Financial Aid?

When you are up to your ears in applications, you tend to forget how you are going to pay for your law school education. Remember to be diligent in seeking out information about financial aid when you are requesting applications. Some deadlines for scholarships come up rather quickly (sometime as early as November), and it is always a good idea to fill out the forms needed for loans as soon as they become available. **Do not wait to be notified of your acceptance before filing out financial aid forms.**

What is financial aid?

The term “financial aid” encompasses any form of monetary aid that helps to pay for your law school education. The following forms of aid may or may not have to be re-paid:

- Scholarships and Grants
- Federal Work-Study
- Federal loans
- Private loans

Scholarships and Grants.

There are two types: need and merit-based. Individual law schools determine eligibility. There are organizations that provide additional funding by way of scholarships, e.g. bar associations, fraternities, sororities, but you need to actively search for these options. These types of aid do not have to be re-paid.

Federal Work-Study.

Federal Work-Study is determined by individual law schools. This program provides for a paid, part-time, position within the law school. Usually, first year students are unable to participate in the Federal Work-Study program because of the rigors of coursework.

Federal loans.

Federal Subsidized Stafford Loan- interest is paid by the federal government, as long as you are enrolled in school at least part-time. The maximum a student may borrow annually is \$8,500*.

Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loan- interest accrues while you are in school and can be paid monthly or deferred until repayment of the loan. The maximum a student may borrow with a combination of subsidized and unsubsidized loans is a total of \$18,500* annually.

Federal Perkins Loan- this loan may be available at some schools and the amount is determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The maximum that a student can borrow is \$5,000* annually.



You must fill out the Free Application For Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be considered for these types of loans.

*Terms and conditions of the loan are subject to change. Please check with the law school's financial aid office for the most current loan information.

Private loans.

Eligibility for private loans is determined by the student's credit rating. Terms and conditions of the loans vary with lenders. Law school financial aid offices will have information on lenders that are willing to supply private loans to law school students. You will undergo a credit check for these types of loans, so make sure your credit history is in order in advance. Companies like Equifax, Transperian, and TransUnion will give you information on your credit background.

The FAFSA is required by all law schools to determine your financial contribution to your legal education and appropriate financial aid. This form can be obtained from UT's Student Financial Services office, a law school's financial aid office, or online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. You can submit your paperwork as early as January 1st the year you plan to attend law school, and it is always best to fill out the FAFSA as soon as possible. Because you are seeking graduate/professional education, your parental information will not be necessary. However, some law schools will want you to fill out an institutional financial aid form that may require this type of information. Always contact the law school's financial aid office to determine if there is an institutional financial aid form that is required in addition to the FAFSA.



APPLICATION TIMELINE

This timeline is just a suggestion. Please adapt it to better fit your own personal schedule and needs.

Summer/Fall of Senior Year

- Start to prepare a generic application for law schools. Write a list of all the schools you've attended, dates, addresses, zip codes, and your employment history. Each law school application will be slightly different but each will ask for the same core group of facts.
- Construct your own timeline of what steps are needed to submit your application on time. Bear in mind that your chances for acceptance and financial aid are better with early applications. Do anything you can to avoid applying the last month. 50% of graduate school applications are received in the last month.
- Research law schools. You may have more time to devote to this research if you begin in the summer.
- Register for LSDAS and begin sending them information (transcripts and letters of recommendation).
- Request law school applications from the schools that interest you. Some applications may now be available through the law school's Web site. Always read your applications carefully.
- Contact your Pre-Law Advisor (Liberal Arts students can contact the Pre-Law Advisor in LACS) to have any questions answered about your law school application.
- Work on getting your letters of recommendation.
- Start drafting your personal statements.
- Have your personal statement critiqued by your Pre-Law Advisor (if you are a Liberal Arts student contact LACS for an appointment), favorite professor, and/or the Undergraduate Writing Center (located in the Undergraduate Library)
- Construct your law school resume and have it critiqued by your Pre-Law or Career Advisor (if you are a Liberal Arts student contact LACS for an appointment).

October

- Prepare your final draft of law school applications and your final draft of essays. Although regular deadlines generally aren't until February, many law schools have early deadlines and rolling admissions (review applications as they come in). ***The sooner you apply, the better your chances of being admitted.*** Keep copies of all information submitted and have a file for any correspondence that you may receive.
- Make sure your transcripts and letters of recommendation have been sent to LSDAS.
- Attend the LACS sponsored Annual Law School Fair which occurs annually during the fall semester (October or November). Our Law Fair is consistently one of the largest in the country. Over 100 law schools are usually represented. Texas does everything big.

November

- If you submitted applications in October, call law schools that did not acknowledge receipt of your application.



- ❑ Secure financial aid forms. Note the financial aid deadlines for your selected law schools in your timeline. Law school is extremely expensive. According to LSAC, about 75% of law school students receive financial aid for 75% of their law school costs. It's fairly easy to receive financial aid if you apply early and submit the financial paperwork asked by each school.

December

- ❑ If you submitted applications in November, call law schools that did not acknowledge receipt of your application.

January

- ❑ Complete and mail financial aid request forms. Don't delay applying to law school because you want to wait until your financial aid is worked out. Apply now. Worry about money later. Many universities won't make their financial aid packages available until you apply.
- ❑ Update LSDAS with your seventh semester transcript.
- ❑ If you submitted applications in December, call law schools that did not acknowledge receipt of your application.

Spring

- ❑ If you find out that you are on a waiting list, give the law school new information such as your improved GPA, a new letter of recommendation from an impressive faculty member, or an updated resume.
- ❑ Make an appointment with your Pre-Law Advisor (Liberal Arts students can contact the Pre-Law Advisor in LACS) if you are having difficulty deciding between schools or for other application questions.
- ❑ The first thing you should do when you are accepted is to contact Liberal Arts Career Services. We want to know about your success! Your advice about what to do (and what not to do) can be shared with other students. Fill out the Law School Success Form at www.utexas.edu/cola/lacs/pre-law_services.



What To Do If You Don't Get In

- Apply to more schools and apply early.
- Apply to more safe schools.
- Visit with their Admissions Representative. Make your case and ask them for guidance on what to do next. They are the "experts". Heed their advice.
- Take additional classes. If you have a low cumulative GPA as an undergraduate you may want to take post-baccalaureate courses and get a 4.0! You could then write on your resume that you have a Post-Graduate GPA of 4.0. However, any classes taken after graduation will not be included in your overall GPA as report by LSAC.
- Gain related experience. Volunteer in the Attorney General's Office or work in a law firm. As little as two hours a week could work in your favor as far as showing a sincere interest. Or consider other unique opportunities (AmeriCorps, Teach for America, or Peace Corps).
- Look into schools that offer provisional or summer admission.
- Wait until you're older.

Sources

Lermack, Paul. *How To Get Into the Right Law School*. 2nd edition, 1994. VGM Career Horizons, Lincolnwood, Illinois 60646.

Baker, Margot. *Southern Methodist University Pre-Law Guide*. 1994. SMU, Dedman College, The Advising Center, Dallas, TX.

Law School Admissions Services (Law Services). They administer the LSAT and the LSDAS. Law Services, Box 2000, 661 Penn St., Newtown, PA 18940-0998.

Asher, Donald. *Getting into Graduate School*, October 6, 1994 video conference. Sponsored by the College Placement Council and presented by the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Video conference was made available at UT through the Liberal Arts Council - Chairs Committee.

Helpful Web sites

Liberal Arts Career Services- Pre-Law Services	www.utexas.edu/cola/lacs/pre-law_services
Law School Admission Council	www.lsac.org
American Bar Association- Career Counsel	www.abanet.org/careercounsel/students.html
National Association for Law Placement	www.nalp.org/prelaw/index.htm
Internet Legal Resource Guide	www.ilrg.com/
US Department of Education	www.ed.gov
Free Application for Federal Student Aid	www.fafsa.ed.gov
Access Group	www.accessgroup.org



Helpful Library Resources

(These resources can be read in the LACS Resource Library located in Gebauer 1.308.)

ABA/LSAC Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools, Produced by the Law School Admission Council and the American Bar Association-Contains general information on all ABA-approved law schools.

Graduate Admissions Essays, by Donald Asher- Pay attention to the introductory chapters where exercises are presented to help you come up with a topic. Also contains example personal statements.

NAPLA/SAPLA Book of Law School List; by Gerald L. Wilson, Senior Associate Dean at Duke University and Edward M. Stern, Assistant Dean for Pre-Law Advising at Boston University- Listings of joint degree, academic/clinical programs, scholarships, law school organizations, and what a law school does with multiple LSAT scores.

Official Guide to Legal Specialties: An Insider's Guide to Every Major Practice Area, by Lisa L. Abrams, J.D.- Details 30 different legal specialization areas.

So You Want to Be a Lawyer: A Practical Guide to Law as a Career, a publication of the Law School Admission Council- Learn more about law as a career, application to law school, and finding a job after you obtain your J.D.

29 Reasons Not to Go to Law School, by Ralph Warner, Toni Ihara, and Barbara Kate Repa- Contains reasons not to go to law school.

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