Pre-Law FAQs for Juniors and Seniors

What is the LSAT?

The Law School Admission Test (LSAT) is a half-day standardized test required for admission to ABA-approved law schools.* It provides a standard measure of acquired reading and verbal reasoning skills that law schools can use as one of several factors in assessing applicants. The LSAT is designed to measure skills that are considered essential for success in law school: the reading and comprehension of complex texts with accuracy and insight; the organization and management of information and the ability to draw reasonable inferences from it; the ability to reason critically; and the analysis and evaluation of the reasoning and argument of others.

Should I enroll in a commercial LSAT test prep course?

While prep courses can be very helpful, they are also quite expensive. Whether or not you choose to enroll in a commercial course depends a lot on your individual circumstances. The length of the course, the material provided and the size of the class vary greatly from company to company, so the Office of Pre-Law Advising strongly recommends that you do some research before you sign up. You can start by researching the links provided on http://cbss.georgiasouthern.edu/prelaw/links/

If the expense of a prep course is too onerous and you are self-disciplined, you should purchase an LSAT prep book and begin taking full, timed practice tests on a regular basis. Plan at least a year ahead and create a study schedule for yourself, using the LSAT prep book and other materials from the LSAC as your guide. There are a number of practice test books in the OPLA library, and OPLA sponsors two free practice LSATs each semester (see http://cbss.georgiasouthern.edu/prelaw/practice-lsats/). Be sure you have signed up for the pre-law listserv so you will get advance notice of the practice LSAT sessions. See http://cbss.georgiasouthern.edu/prelaw/social/

How many times should I take the LSAT?

Plan to take the LSAT just once, and do your best on it. However, retake the test if you have any reason to think your LSAT score is unrepresentative. Most law schools emphasize the higher LSAT score (although all LSAT scores will be considered).

When should I apply to law school?

Applying to law school is a very time-consuming process, and law schools set different deadlines. Research the law schools that interest you and begin filling out application materials as early as possible (i.e. in fall of the year before you plan to attend law school). Submitting your applications (including your LSAT score) at the beginning of the admission period may increase your chances of admission and scholarship offers. Read the materials the law schools publish very carefully, and follow the directions.

* A few law schools now accept the GRE in lieu of the LSAT; however, the American Bar Association hasn’t decided whether the GRE as a law school admissions exam meets accreditation standards.
Where should I go to law school?

You should apply to law schools that have been accredited by the American Bar Association. You will want to concentrate on applying to law schools where you are likely to be admitted. Comparing your GPA and LSAT scores to the median (middle) scores of recent admittees to specific law schools will give you a rough sense of your chances for admission.

It is sometimes advisable to go to law school in the geographic area where you plan to practice, as contacts made during law school are invaluable later, and many law schools are more adept at placing their graduates in the city/state/region in which the law school is located.

Do your research! Contact the various law schools that interest you to obtain their standard information and application materials. Read the materials the law school publishes very carefully, and, if you are able, visit the law schools you are considering.

You can also research law schools by going to the searchable edition of the ABA-LSAC Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools maintained by the Law School Admission Council at https://officialguide.lsac.org/release/OfficialGuide_Default.aspx

I made terrible grades during my freshman year, but I learned from my mistakes. Will the fact that my grades have improved help me?

Yes. Admissions committees look for the "upward trend." Many students get off to a bad start and show improvement later. It’s best to get good grades right from the beginning, but the next best scenario is to get better and better grades each semester.

What are the main factors law schools consider in an application?

The primary factors are the applicant's score on the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) and Grade Point Average (GPA). Law schools vary in the relative level of importance they place on these two criteria, though most weight the LSAT score more heavily. Law schools will also consider to a lesser extent: the personal statement, letters of recommendation, undergraduate institution, grade trends, major and difficulty of courses, work experience, graduate degrees, extracurricular activities, and writing skill (as exhibited by the personal statement and LSAT writing sample). Additionally, most publicly funded law schools bias their admissions decisions in favor of residents of the state in which the school is located.

More questions?

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