



LAW SCHOOL APPLICATION TIMETABLE

MORE THAN TWO YEARS AHEAD (FRESHMEN AND SOPHOMORES)

- Explore your career options:
 - Research legal careers utilizing resources in the Career Development Office
 - Conduct informational interviews with practicing lawyers - use personal contacts or connect with a mentor in the Xavier University Mentor Program
 - Consider working or volunteering in a law-related field
- Develop skills and abilities for law school and the legal field. Take challenging courses or jobs that enable you to develop and demonstrate the following skills:
 - Written and oral communication
 - Critical reasoning
 - Analysis and evaluation
 - Organization & management of complex information
- Focus on building a **strong** academic record.
- Participate in activities that enable you to develop and demonstrate leadership, maturity, and service. Focus on the quality of your involvement, not just the quantity of activities.
- Develop relationships with faculty

TWO YEARS AHEAD (FIRST SEMESTER JUNIORS)

- Begin investigating law schools and the application process:
 - Review law school catalogs and directories, including *The Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools*
- Continue to explore career options and to pursue law-related experiences.

1.5 YEARS AHEAD (SECOND SEMESTER JUNIORS)

- Meet with a pre-law advisor to discuss your law school plans.
- Register and prepare for the June LSAT, if appropriate.
- Begin identifying faculty to write your letters of reference.
- Continue to explore career options and to pursue law-related experiences.

Summer

- Take the June LSAT, if appropriate.
- Register and prepare for the October LSAT, if necessary.
- Register for Credential Assembly Services (CAS) - <https://www.powerscore.com/lsat/help/lstdas.cfm>
- Continue to investigate law schools through catalogs and *The Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools*.
- Request applications and financial aid information.

September

- Request letters of recommendation from faculty and employers.

- Meet with law school reps at the Graduate School & Year-of-Service Fair (October.)
- Visit law schools, if possible. Sit in on classes, talk with faculty and students, tour campuses, etc.
- Take the October LSAT, if necessary.
- Register and prepare for the December LSAT, if necessary. (**Note:** December LSAT may be too late for some schools.)

October

- Write your personal statement for the law school applications.
- Begin submitting completed applications to law schools.
- Register and prepare for the February LSAT, if necessary. (**Note:** February LSAT may be too late for most schools.)

November

- Check to see that all letters of recommendation are completed.
- Take the December LSAT, if necessary.

December

- Finish mailing completed applications.
 - (**Note:** While many deadlines may not be until February or March, schools with “rolling admissions” may begin making decisions in January.)
- Complete and submit financial aid forms. Do not wait until you are admitted to law school.

January

- Follow up to ensure that all materials have been received by schools to which you applied.
 - (**Important Note:** Most schools will not act on your application until it is complete. This includes application, personal statement, letters of recommendation and CAS report.)
- Send 7th semester grades to CAS if they are requested and/or if they are good.
- Decision process begins at some schools.

February-April

- Decision process continues... waiting lists begin.

ACADEMIC PREPARATION

There is no “best” major to prepare for law school. Emphasis is on your academic performance and the level of course difficulty rather than your field of study. Successful law school applicants can come from a variety of backgrounds - accounting, English, finance, history, nursing, philosophy, politics, psychology, etc.

Whatever your major, try to include courses that can help you develop the skills needed for law school and the legal profession: writing, analytical and logical reasoning, research, etc. The most important thing is to find a major which you enjoy and can do well in!

LSAT REGISTRATION

The [LSAT website](#) contains valuable tips and information. Carefully review it for up-to-date details on fees, policies and procedures. As you consider registering for the LSAT, keep several things in mind:

1. Allow adequate time for LSAT preparation, including one or more practice tests in a “timed” situation.
2. Try to take the LSAT in June or October. If you take the test in June, you will receive your score in mid-July and have ample time to plan application strategies (i.e., target schools based upon your LSAT & GPA; retake the LSAT; etc.) IF you take the test in October, you will receive test results in mid-November and will still have time to submit applications in a timely manner. *But most importantly...*

3. Take the LSAT during the month the “makes the most sense” for you. Consider when you will have adequate time for preparation amid classes, senior comprehensives and/or thesis, athletic schedule, part-time jobs and internships, professional job search (have a back-up!), etc.

CREDENTIALS ASSEMBLY SERVICE (CAS)

The CAS was created to organize, analyze and summarize biographic and academic information for law school applicants. Most law schools require applicants to subscribe to this service. The CAS report includes:

- Biographical information from your registration form
- A year-by-year summary of your undergraduate record
- A copy of every transcript(s) from each school you have attended
- Your LSAT score(s) and LSAT writing sample(s)

The Law School Admissions Council website (www.lsac.org) provides a registration form and procedures.

You may subscribe to CAS at the time you register for the LSAT or at a later date. Since CAS is a one-year service, remember to register for the year during which you are actually applying to law school.

WHERE SHOULD I APPLY?

Apply to a realistic range of law schools, offering varying degrees of probability for your acceptance (e.g., 1 “dream” school, 2-3 “probable acceptance” schools and 1-2 “safety” schools.) The following are factors to consider:

- Admission selection criteria
- Geographic location
- Costs and financial aid
- Curriculum and special programs
- Facilities and resources
- Students (age, diversity, etc.)
- Size; faculty/student ratio
- Placement opportunities
- Competitiveness of classes
- Student groups and journals
- Housing availability
- Personal considerations

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Letters of recommendation are not as significant as your academic record or LSAT score. However, they can play a critical role in borderline cases. Seek writers (e.g., faculty) who know you and can address your academic ability and communication skills. Law schools are not impressed by “big names” (politicians, prominent alums) who have little in-depth knowledge about you.

Provide writers with a copy of your resume, transcript and/or personal statement. This will give them a better sense of who you are and provide support for their points. Be considerate by providing a stamped, addressed envelope and plenty of time (4-6 weeks) in which to write your letter. CAS also offers a letter of recommendation service.

TIPS ON WRITING THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

Many law schools require a personal statement. This 1-2 page document is designed to assess your motivation for the study of law, your significant achievements, and your uniqueness as an individual. Maintain a positive and confident tone- do not spend an entire page explaining a weak LSAT score. Focus on accomplishments and obstacles you have overcome rather than your theories of law and society. Write clearly, creatively and concisely.

WHAT FACTORS DETERMINE ADMISSION?

- GPA: Obviously your grade point average is important, but so are your choices of courses throughout college. A 3.8 GPA earned with difficult courses has more weight with an admissions committee than a 4.0 GPA earned with easy courses.
- LSAT scores: Your scores on the Law School Admissions Test are vital, especially if your GPA is not as high as you'd like.
- Letters of recommendation: Most schools require three or more letters from professors or others in a position to know you, your abilities, and work habits well.
- Personal statement: This is the place where you can show your strengths and unique abilities. What is special about you and why should you go to law school? That's what the admissions committee wants to know.