

THE
HONORS
COLLEGE
at Appalachian State University



Pre-Law Handbook

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Introduction

This Handbook was prepared with the assistance of NAPLA, and with their permission to modify it for use and distribution to our students and alumni. The *NAPLA Pre-Law Guide* is based on Cornell University's *Legal Careers Guide*, which was used by permission of Cornell Career Services. NAPLA acknowledges the following schools for their contributions to the *Guide*: Binghamton University, Boston College, Boston University, Bucknell University, Columbia University, Duke University, Northeastern University, Princeton University, and Texas A & M University. The Law School Admission Council provided information on study abroad transcripts, and the Financial Aid section is based on the "Financial Aid Toolkit" developed by the Pre-Law Advisors National Council (PLANC).

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Exploring Your Interest in Law

A J.D., Juris Doctor, can lead to a wide range of law-related careers and can open doors to careers in government, business, higher education, communications, and numerous other fields. Law school graduates are administrators, teachers, librarians, and business managers, as well as advocates, judges, and politicians.

The law can be a rewarding profession. At its best, legal practice challenges the intellect, demanding the exercise of reason and judgment. The ethics of the profession require attorneys to promote justice, fairness, and morality. Thus, legal employment can bring particular satisfaction to those who want to work, within the law, to seek social justice.

Law school involves a significant emotional and financial investment. There are many differences in the career choices lawyers make, from public interest law and government law, to private practice in a firm. The need to pay back law school loans can affect the career choices of a new graduate.

Before beginning the application process, it is extremely important to carefully consider whether a law degree is right for you. It is not necessary to know what kind of law you want to practice law, or that you want to practice law at all, to make the decision to attend law school. This Handbook is designed to help you explore law school and the legal profession as you determine whether a legal education will provide you with the life and career you are seeking.

Getting Started

- Get to know yourself. Visit the **Peer Career Center** to explore your interests, abilities and values, and how these qualities align with the type of major and career that best suits you. The **Peer Career Center** is located in the Plemmons Student Union, Room 216. Call 262-2029 to schedule an appointment.
- Talk to the Honors College pre-law advisor, **Lisa Kirscht, J.D.**, about your interest in pursuing legal studies. To make an appointment with Ms. Kirscht, please email kirschtlm@appstate.edu.
- Investigate important online resources. You will find several online resources in Appendix A of this Handbook. As a starting point, you should carefully review all information for “Future JD Students” provided by the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) found at LSAC.org. LSAC is a nonprofit corporation that provides products and services to facilitate the admission process for law schools and pre-law students.

Research Your Decision

Although a career in law can be incredibly rewarding for many, an important step in making the decision is to distinguish between commonly held expectations and the reality of legal practice. Hours can be very long and often include weekends. Legal work can require spending considerable time in tedious, painstaking research. Depending on the type of law practiced and the location, entry into law firms can be difficult and salaries may not meet expectations. The market for new lawyers is competitive for those seeking positions in cities and firms that are in high demand.

Additionally, considering law school should not only be viewed as a career decision, it should also be viewed as one of the most important financial investments in your life. This is especially true in the current economic climate. It is critical that you evaluate what it will cost to complete law school, what the employment outlook is for lawyers, how much income potential may be derived from having a law degree, and whether a career in law will allow you to pay any educational debt while providing you with the lifestyle that you want.

Your first few years in college is the perfect time to research your decision, as well as exploring the field of law and legal careers that fit your interests. You should also take some additional time to learn more about other careers besides law, or non-traditional legal careers. You may discover possibilities or opportunities beyond law that are better suited for what you want out of life, and it can also confirm your decision to go to law school.

****For many reasons, legal education and the legal profession has been challenged and criticized in recent years. You are strongly encouraged to explore the resources that address these challenges, criticisms, and the changing nature of the legal profession provided in Appendix A so that you can weigh your options and make an informed decision.****

How much does law school cost?

The cost of law school will vary by institution. It will also depend on whether you attend a private or public university, whether you qualify for resident versus nonresident tuition, and whether you are able to obtain scholarship funds.

- **Tuition and Fees:** According to LSAC, the total cost of a law school education could exceed \$150,000, with tuition ranging from a few thousand to \$50,000 per year. When investigating tuition and fees, pay attention to whether you will qualify for in-state status.
- **Living Expenses:** In computing your cost of attending law school, you must also include the cost of housing, food, books, transportation, and other personal

expenses. Law schools will determine a student's estimated living expenses, which you may access at LSAC.org and each law school's website.

Note: Law schools do not include consumer debt when computing living expenses; therefore, you must also consider any credit card debt, car payments, etc., when calculating your cost of attending law school. Additionally, when considering any amounts that must be borrowed to finance law school, you should also include the cost of the debt service/interest you will have to pay on the loans.

- **Cost of Attendance (COA):** The COA is each law school's tuition and fees, plus living expenses estimated by the law school. COA becomes relevant in terms of financing your legal education. Your eligibility for federal aid is based on your need, which is calculated by subtracting the amount of your resources, as well as any scholarships or grants you receive from the total COA.
- **LSAC's Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools:** Available at LSAC.org, this is a good starting point to research the cost of different law schools, such as tuition, fees, and living expenses.
- **Individual Law School Websites:** You may also find updated information on each law school's website. Links to each law school may also be accessed on LSAC.org.

How can I pay for law school?

Financial planning in anticipation of law school is critical. It is important that you have a good credit history; therefore, check your credit before applying to make sure there are no errors on your credit report. Paying off any consumer debt and saving money to reduce the amount you will need to borrow are also important efforts to make prior to entering law school. Sources of financing law school can come from the following:

- **Personal Savings/Family Support:** If possible, set aside your own funds to help pay for law school. Talk with family members about whether they can help with law school expenses. Some students choose to live at home during law school to avoid paying rent.
- **Scholarships and Grants:** Law schools will offer scholarships and grants based upon different criteria, such as merit, diversity, or need. There are also some organizations that offer scholarships, including clubs, sororities, fraternities, or even local bar associations. Your starting point for research is to contact the admissions or financial aid offices of the law schools to which you intend to apply.

Some states provide limited grants for law school. Additionally, certain national foundations and organizations offer grants and scholarships for law school through a competitive application process.

Note: Many scholarships offered by law schools are conditional; they may require you to maintain a certain GPA in order to keep the scholarship. Before accepting any scholarship, make sure you understand any conditions that are attached to the award. For example, learn what percentage of the class maintains the GPA that is required to keep the scholarship, what percentage of students maintain the scholarship beyond the first year, and what percentage of students were offered the scholarship.

The ABA is now requiring law schools to post the retention rate of their merit scholarships on their websites by October 15, 2013. They are also required to disclose this information to students when they are offered such scholarships.

- **Federal Loans:** These are the largest student loan programs available:
 - ✓ **Direct Stafford Loan:** Unsubsidized, but has a lower interest rate and postpones repayment upon graduation.
 - ✓ **Grad PLUS Loan:** This loan is based upon credit history. Interest accrues while in school, and repayment begins upon disbursement.
 - ✓ **Perkins Loan:** May be available at some schools.
- **Private Loans:** These loans vary based on terms and conditions, and they are based upon credit history. Some are also available to finance bar-review study after graduation.
- **Federal Work-Study:** This program is offered by only some schools, and provides funding to students who work in different settings on or off-campus.
- **Repayment Assistance for Public Service Work:** The salaries of law school graduates who work in public service or public interest law are relatively low. The Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP) is available through some law schools, governments, and state bar associations, and forgives student loans upon the graduate's completion of required service obligations. The federal government also offers the Income-Based Repayment (IBR) option, which allows graduates working in public service to make lower monthly payments on their federal loans.
- **Employment During Law School:** It is not recommended that you work during your first year in law school, and many law schools place restrictions on working during the first year due to the demanding academic rigor of law school. Indeed, the American Bar Association (ABA) standards require that all law students limit paid employment to no more than 20 hours per week during the academic year, which includes hours worked under Federal Work-Study programs. Therefore, you should not rely on your ability to pay for your law school education by

working during the academic year.

- **Frugality:** It is often said, “If you live like a lawyer in law school, you will live like a law student once you graduate.” Frugality can be your best friend.

How much do lawyers make?

Lawyer salaries vary tremendously by job type, firm size, industry, geographic location, and many other factors. The Association for Legal Professionals (NALP) is one of the best resources for information about lawyer salaries and entry-level job market numbers for recent graduates. NALP’s website reveals the most recently published starting salaries for the class of 2011, as well as a wealth of information on employment statistics (see [Appendix A](#)).

Due to the poor economy in recent years, there have been significant negative changes in law-related employment, salaries, and in the legal profession in general. When researching your financial investment, you must perform a cost-benefit analysis. What will it cost you to earn a law degree and a law license versus your ability to pay for them both, based on your earning capacity upon entering the legal profession and throughout your career?

Will I get a job when I graduate?

There are many factors that influence employment opportunities for law school graduates. Exploring some of the resources provided in [Appendix A](#) will likely reveal many controversial issues that have arisen in recent years regarding law schools’ responsibility for accurately reporting the employment of their graduates. Your research will also reveal existing controversy over the increasing numbers of law school graduates for whom there are fewer jobs available. As a prospective law student and lawyer, you should carefully consider all of the information that is out there about current issues surrounding legal education and the profession.

- **Law School Employment Summary Reports:** Learn about the employment statistics of each law school to which you intend to apply. You can access detailed employment summary reports for individual law schools through the ABA’s Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar (see [Appendix A](#)). You can also learn about employment statistics from each law school.
- **Ask Questions:** NALP has compiled a list of questions you may want to ask your potential law schools in order to get an accurate picture of the employment of their graduates (see [Appendix A](#)).

Preparing for Law School

Admissions committees look at a variety of factors and trends in your academic record in an attempt to predict how you will perform in law school. There is no “pre-law major,” and unlike medical school, there are no specific educational requirements for entrance into law school. There are, however, certain skills that you can build throughout your undergraduate education that will help prepare you to succeed in law school, on the bar exam, and in the legal profession.

Selecting a Major

Choose a major that interests you. Admissions offices are not particularly interested in your major, but they are interested in how well you did in the discipline(s) you chose to pursue. A double major or adding a minor is not necessarily a determining factor in the admissions process. However, it can be beneficial in terms of reflecting your ability to master a broad range of coursework in more than one program of study.

While specific coursework may be helpful if you choose to pursue careers in criminal, business, environmental, or intellectual property law, remember that a J.D. is a generalist’s degree, and applicants come from widely diverse academic backgrounds. Nevertheless, choosing a major that is relevant to the area of law that you ultimately want to pursue can make you a competitive candidate in your job search upon graduation from law school. This is particularly true if you are able to obtain an internship as an undergraduate in the relevant area and gain practical experience.

Remember that college is also a time for discovery. As you move through college, you may decide not to go to law school, or you may decide to pursue graduate school instead. When choosing a major, you should consider disciplines that will prepare you for a career that you want and are able to pursue even if you ultimately decide law school is not for you. Keep your options open, and choose a program of study that you enjoy and one that will keep you engaged in your education.

Skills Necessary to Succeed in Law School

Law schools are interested in your ability to do rigorous analytical thinking and research, to write well, to present, and to persuade. Take courses that will develop these skills. Law-related classes may allow you to get a feel for law as a general subject, but some might neither cover the material in the same depth nor embody the intensity and rigor of law school. Therefore, law-related courses are not necessarily accurate indicators of your ability to succeed in the study of law.

The ABA offers an overview of the skills important to preparing for a legal education and a career in law. Some of these skills are also necessary for success on the LSAT; therefore, you should strive to develop them beginning in your first year:

- **Analytic/Problem Solving Skills:** Although you will develop these skills in law school, you should begin developing your ability to think critically throughout college so that you have a solid foundation of these skills upon entering law school. Select courses and experiences that will require you to synthesize information, identify problems, objectively evaluate and formulate solutions, and create a plan for resolution. The ability to apply rules and information to different situations should also be developed in this process.
- **Critical Reading Skills:** Take the opportunity both inside and outside the classroom to develop your ability to critically read lengthy, complex text with sustained attention. Choose courses that require substantial reading assignments each week and try to form habits that allow you the time to read challenging material beyond that which is required in your courses. In law school, you will have weeks that you will be required to read hundreds of pages of complex legal opinions and you will be called upon in class and expected to know detailed information based on the readings.
- **Writing Skills:** Many students today leave college without ever having the experience of writing a twenty, or even ten-page paper. Do not let this be you, even if you dislike writing. If you avoid courses that require heavy writing, you will not be prepared for law school. Indeed, one of the most common observations and concerns among today's law school professionals is that students are entering law school with insufficient writing skills, including basic grammar skills.

Substantial writing is required in law school, as well as in the legal profession. With increasing caseloads in our judicial system, the time allowed to present your legal position orally in the courtroom has been reduced. Therefore, the best opportunity a lawyer has to present his or her case will be in written court documents. Seize as many opportunities as you can to develop your ability to write clearly, correctly, and concisely during college.

- **Communication Skills:** Oral, persuasive, and professional communication skills are also essential in law school and in the legal profession. During law school you will be expected to present oral arguments in front of an audience, which will include your colleagues and professors, and many times even lawyers and judges from the community. You will also be expected to regularly participate in classroom discussions. Therefore, take courses that require classroom presentations, engaging in debate and discussions, and seek opportunities that involve speaking in front of groups.
- **Listening Skills:** In order to help their clients, lawyers are expected to listen to their problems and understand their situations. Seek opportunities to develop your listening and communication skills by interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds. Lawyers must have the ability to listen carefully

during court proceedings so that they can timely raise objections and respond to opposing arguments. Similarly, paying attention in your law school classes is critical. Practice your ability to focus in class for long periods of time and to maintain your attention span in your college courses so that it will be second nature for you to do so once you get to law school.

- **Research Skills:** Legal research is a specific skill you will begin to develop during your first year in law school, and it is not necessary that you learn how to perform legal research prior to law school. However, you should develop basic computer skills, as well as the ability to efficiently locate information, resources, and answers to specific questions in a library and online.
- **Organizational and Synthesis Skills:** Law school (and lawyering) requires the ability to process voluminous amounts of material, identify relevant information, and organize it into logical analytical patterns. During your first year in law school, you will create a “course outline,” for each class, the content of which will be key to your success on exams. Outlines are created by undertaking the process of reducing the massive amount of material you learn into a coherent document from which you can efficiently study for exams. Careful and consistent note-taking in class are important to this process. The process of creating an outline is more important than the final document itself because you are studying and learning as you create it. When you have college courses that are conducive to outlining the material, you should undertake the effort in creating an outline.
- ***IMPORTANT*:** **The most common mistake made by pre-law students is to select “easy” courses that will guarantee good grades in an effort to achieve a high GPA.**

There is no doubt that your GPA, particularly within your major, is one of the most important considerations for admissions committees. However, taking courses that will not challenge you or help you develop the foregoing skills will not prepare you for the rigors of law school.

Even more importantly, admissions committees will look beyond your GPA on your transcript and consider the variety and depth of your coursework, which demonstrates your interests, intellectual curiosity, and motivation. Lecture courses provide a good foundation for further instruction, while seminars allow you to present, discuss, critique, and defend more specific ideas. Students who take challenging (i.e., honors and upper-level) courses (as well as challenging professors) in the social sciences, humanities, and sciences, and who have a broad liberal arts education, are strong candidates for law school.

- See [Appendix B](#) for a list of courses offered at ASU that can build some of the foregoing skills.

Get to Know Your Professors

Letters of recommendation are very important elements of your application package; therefore, it is important that you begin to make efforts to establish relationships with your professors in your first year. Let them get to know you and what your strengths are, make yourself stand out as an individual by attending office hours, ask questions in class, and take any opportunity to conduct research with them. For Honors students, the access to smaller classes gives you an even greater opportunity to interact with faculty, one of the many benefits of being in the Honors College. Take advantage of this benefit by getting to know your professors.

Pursue Activities

Law schools will be interested in your extracurricular activities, leadership experience, summer jobs, internships, and public service because they seek well-rounded candidates for admission. Select activities that interest you; they do not have to be directly related to law, and they can be community as well as university activities. Over time, get involved in more depth in fewer activities. Take initiative and show leadership.

Discover or Reaffirm Your Passion for the Law

Law schools will want to know what your motivation is to study and pursue the law. As you prepare academically, you should take a step back and think about the reasons you want to pursue a career in law. For some students this will be an easy task; for others, it may be a challenge. A personal statement is a required component of your law school applications, and it should reveal your story of who you are and why they should admit you. As part of your preparation for law school, you should think about and prepare to articulate your motivation or inspiration for choosing this path.

Stay Out of Trouble

Law school applications will ask you questions relating to your criminal record and your undergraduate disciplinary record. It is critical that you answer these questions truthfully. Although a record of poor conduct certainly does not help your application, having minor arrests or convictions, a university conduct code violation, or being academically disciplined, will not necessarily preclude a student from being accepted into law school. What can preclude acceptance is failing to disclose it or misrepresenting it on your applications.

Even more critical, nondisclosures or inconsistencies on your law school and state bar applications can also trigger an investigation by the state bar association when you apply for admission, which can lead to a costly hearing. In many cases, law school graduates

who have not passed the “character and fitness” investigation by state bar associations have been denied admission, thus preventing them from practicing law. Thus, remember to disclose and behave yourself!

Learn What Lawyers Do

Try to take any opportunity that becomes available to talk to lawyers who are working in the legal profession and learn about what they do. Go to your local courthouse and observe the lawyers at work, ask to join the local bar association as a student member, or take advantage of family or friends who can connect you with lawyers who are willing to talk to you, or even show you what a typical day is like. There are countless students who go to law school without ever learning what lawyers actually do, other than what they see on television. Not only can this help prepare you for law school, it can also confirm or negate your decision to attend.

Postponing Law School

Delaying law school will not compromise your chances to be admitted later. Indeed, law schools look at applicants’ work experience or other post-undergraduate experiences in making their admissions decisions. A mature applicant who has had work and life experiences can have a lot to offer and contribute to a new law school class, something that admissions committees will favorably consider. There could be a number of different reasons for postponing law school. Whatever they are, be sure to carefully think through your priorities.

Determining Where to Apply

With approximately 200 ABA-accredited law schools in the United States, how do you decide where to apply and ultimately where to attend? Begin by assembling a list of law schools based on the criteria that are important to you, and then revise your choices according to your chances of admission.

Do not let the search for "long shots, good chances, and sure things" govern your selection process. Selecting schools carefully will help reduce the time and expense of applying to an excessive number of schools. Moreover, you should limit your search to only schools that have been accredited by the ABA. Your starting point for information about law schools should be the LSAC's Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools (see [Appendix A](#)).

Criteria for Selection

Consider the following factors and determine which are important to you:

- **Cost:** What are tuition, housing, and transportation costs? Is financial aid exclusively need-based, or are merit scholarships available? Does the school offer a loan forgiveness program for public interest lawyers? What is the average debt burden for graduates from this school?

There are ways to minimize your cost of attending law school and to keep down the debt you incur. Apply to schools where you will be in the top part of the applicant pool; schools may give you a merit scholarship to attract you. Also, public schools are usually less expensive, and even if you are not a resident of a state in which a school is located, you can sometimes pay in-state tuition after your first year.

- **Bar Passage:** What is the school's bar passage rate? Is it above or below the state average? How consistent is the school's bar passage rate from year-to-year? What bar preparation resources or courses does the school offer?
- **Career Services:** What advising and resources are available to help you find a job? Is career counseling available? How many employers recruit at the law school and who are they? What percentage of the class has positions upon graduation? In what types of positions and geographic areas are they employed? What is the percentage of graduates holding judicial clerkships, private practice, public service, etc.? What assistance is given to students not interested in working in law firms? How involved are alumni in career activities?

- **National/Regional Schools:** Does the school attract applicants from across the country and abroad, or are most students from the region in which the school is located? Do most students want to work throughout the country or in the school's region following graduation?
- **Location:** Is the school in an urban area or in a suburban/rural setting? Is it part of a university or is it independent? Are there other graduate schools nearby? Is the school in a place you would want to be for three years and where you would be willing to work following graduation, depending on employment opportunities?
- **Faculty/Classes:** What are the academic and experiential backgrounds of faculty? How accessible are they? What is the faculty-student ratio, the number of full-time versus adjunct faculty, and the number of female and minority faculty? How many students are in each course? Are classes taught in the Socratic method or lecture?
- **Facilities and Resources:** Is the school affiliated with a university? Do students have access to courses from a range of academic disciplines to supplement their legal curriculum? Is the library large enough to accommodate holdings and permit students to conduct research and study? How helpful is the library staff? How accessible are electronic databases such as Lexis and Westlaw? In general, do the facilities provide a comfortable learning environment?
- **Student Body:** What is the size of the entering class? What does the admissions profile tell you about the quality and diversity of the student body? Where did students study as undergraduates and what are their geographic backgrounds? Is there diversity in interests and personal/cultural backgrounds? What is the overall atmosphere—are students friendly or overly competitive? Is there much interaction with fellow students outside the classroom?
- **Special Programs:** What courses are available in specialized areas? What joint degree programs of interest to you are available? What are the opportunities for practical experience, including clinics, internships, externships, etc.? Can you “write” on to law reviews in addition to be selected based on class rank? What specialized institutes, journals, or organizations exist in your areas of interest? Does the school demonstrate a commitment to women and minorities through special programs? Does the school have a moot court program or trial team - how successful have the teams been in competition on the state or national level?

See the NAPLA/SAPLA Book of Law School Lists for information about different programs offered by law schools. You can also search for schools that offer concentrations and programs in certain specialties on the National Jurist’s website ([Appendix A](#)).

- **Student Life:** Is housing provided for first-year students? If not, does the school offer assistance in locating off-campus housing? Is the school located in a safe area? What is the cost of living? What types of cultural opportunities are there? Does the school provide recreational facilities? What is the general ambiance?

Non-Traditional Alternatives

Evening divisions and part-time programs make it possible for students to work and study law simultaneously, earning a J.D. in four years. A few schools on the quarter system allow students to enter mid-year. Summer entry and/or summer courses can accelerate the degree program from three to two-and-a-half calendar years. And finally, some law schools have created summer trial programs, which allow borderline applicants to prove themselves capable of legal study in time for fall entrance. See the NAPLA/SAPLA Book of Law School Lists ([Appendix A](#)).

Reputation

A number of factors contribute to a school's reputation, including faculty, facilities, career services, and the reputation of the parent university. Though a number of law-school rankings are available, most factors evaluated are not quantifiable, and therefore you should not perceive the rankings as accurate or definitive.

Selectivity at law schools, however, is one factor that can be quantified; you can gauge a school's relative selectivity by comparing the number of applicants accepted to the overall number of applications. In [Appendix A](#), you will find links to the following resources that will help you determine your competitiveness for schools include:

- LSAC's Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools (includes GPA/LSAT search tool that generates your chance of admission to different law schools)
- The Boston College Online Law School Locator
- The NAPLA/SAPLA Book of Law School Lists

Law School Forums

Law School Forums provide students with an opportunity to meet personally with law school representatives to gain information and insight into their admissions process and to learn what each school has to offer. These are held in different cities and different times throughout the year. Some schools will also host Law School Fairs at their individual schools. These are great events that provide resources to help you decide where to apply. For schedules and information, visit LSAC.org.

Understanding Admissions Criteria

Objective Criteria

Law schools consider the objective criteria (GPA and LSAT score), which are the factors that most accurately predict how applicants will perform in their first year. Some may also consider a formulated index number:

- **Law School Admission Test (LSAT):** Applicants take the LSAT, a half-day standardized test, during one of four test administrations offered annually by LSAC. Scores, which range from 120 to 180, are used by most law schools as a common measurement of potential for success in law school.
- **Undergraduate Grade Point Average (GPA):** Applicants submit undergraduate transcripts to LSAC's Credential Assembly Service (CAS) (see following section), which converts grades to a cumulative grade point average using a set of consistent values. The GPA offers admissions committees another numerical basis for comparing applicants.
- **Applicant Index:** Some law schools ask the CAS to combine applicants' LSAT scores and GPAs with weighted constants to produce a single index number, which they use to assess and compare applicants' potential for success in law school. You can calculate your index through your LSAC account.

Subjective Criteria

Subjective criteria are the factors law schools consider in addition to the objective criteria:

- **Personal Statement:** Applicants submit a personal statement as part of the application process for almost all law schools. Admissions committees look for a concise, detailed, well-written statement revealing the applicant's individuality. They want to learn from the statement who the applicant is and what makes him/her qualified to study at their law schools.
- **Letters of Recommendation:** Most law schools require applicants to submit letters of recommendation from professors or employers to gain a different perspective on the applicant's academic strength and personal qualities. Admissions officers find most helpful specific examples of applicants' motivation and intellectual curiosity, an assessment of communication skills, and a comparison with peers.

- **Experience:** This factor includes undergraduate curricular and extracurricular activities, leadership roles, internships, work experience, and study abroad experiences. Include a resume in your application materials that demonstrates your skills and abilities relevant to the study of law, and how you will contribute to the diversity and strength of the class.

Applying to Law School

After reaching the decision to pursue a law degree, you will want to file a strong and complete application to increase your chances for admission. The first step in the application process will be to meet with your pre-law advisor, who can help you create a strategy for maximizing your chances for success. A Pre-Law Timeline can be found in [Appendix C](#), which provides the steps you should take in your journey to law school.

Law School Admissions Council (LSAC)

LSAC is comprised of all ABA-approved law schools in the U.S. and Canada. It was founded to coordinate and facilitate the process of applying to law school. One important step you must take is to set up an LSAC law student account on their website. You will need this account number to utilize all LSAC services, and to register for the LSAT and CAS.

- **Release of Information:** When you register, you will be asked to authorize LSAC to release your LSAT, biographical, academic, and application information to your “home institution,” which would be Appalachian State University. You are encouraged to grant this authorization because this numerical data is extremely helpful to ASU; LSAC uses it to produce reports that help us advise other ASU students and alumni regarding trends of our students who pursue law school. Your name and any other personal information will never be released or disclosed by ASU.
- **Fees:** Be aware that applying to law school is not inexpensive. Basic costs include:
 - ✓ CAS registration fee (currently \$155)
 - ✓ LSAT registration fee (currently \$160)
 - ✓ Law School Report (per school – currently \$21)
 - ✓ Application fees (per school – ranging between \$50 and \$75)

You might need to add other costs such as LSAT preparation, travel to visit law schools, etc.

Note: LSAC offers fee waivers for those with a demonstrated inability to pay for essential parts of the application process.

- **Candidate Referral Service (CRS):** LSAC provides you with the option of registering for the CRS, a free service that allows law schools to search and recruit you based upon certain characteristics. They may provide you with information about potential scholarships, their programs of study, or application fee waivers. It allows you to be contacted by law schools you may not have otherwise considered.

Law School Admission Test (LSAT)

The LSAT is required for admission to all ABA-approved law schools. The test is administered four times per year (February, June, October, and December) by LSAC at testing centers around the world. Detailed test information, dates, sites, registration forms, fees, deadlines, and free sample tests are online at LSAC.org.

- **When to Register:** Be aware that test sites can fill quickly, especially in or around major cities. Therefore, it is advisable to register several months in advance of a test date so that you can take the test in a convenient location.
- **Timing:** The optimal time to take the exam is June of the year you apply (i.e., spring semester of junior year if you are applying in the fall semester of your senior year). Taking (or retaking) the test in October will still allow you to see your LSAT score if you apply in November, as scores are generally reported approximately three weeks after the administration of the test. Scores from the December administration will reach law schools in time to complete application deadlines at all schools. If you take the December test, plan to submit your applications around the time of the test. You may, however, decide to wait to see your score before submitting your applications. Keep in mind, however, there may be financial aid benefits associated with early applications.
- **What it Tests:** The LSAT is designed to provide law school admissions committees with a common measure of your aptitude for legal study. The test consists of five multiple choice sections, each thirty-five minutes in length:
 - 1) one reading comprehension section
 - 2) one analytical reasoning section
 - 3) two logical reasoning sections
 - 4) one experimental test question section (not scored)

A 35-minute writing sample at the end of the test is also given but it is not scored; however, copies of the writing sample are sent to schools to which you apply.

- **Scoring:** Your score is computed on a scale of 120 to 180, based on the number of questions you answer correctly. There is no deduction or penalty for incorrect answers, so it is advantageous to guess if you do not have time to answer a question.
- **Preparation:** You cannot cram for the LSAT. You should begin preparing for the LSAT at least three months or more prior to the testing date. If you plan to take the LSAT in June, for example, then you must remember to plan your spring semester wisely so that it is manageable for you to focus on your preparation. Even before this time, however, you should acquaint yourself with the exam itself, such as its format and the types of questions that are asked.

Taking practice LSATs under timed conditions is critical to your success. Untimed practice does not simulate actual test conditions and therefore is unproductive to your preparation. Taking at least 13 to 16 timed LSATs during the course of your preparation would be highly beneficial. Just as you want to prepare during college to succeed in law school; likewise, you should develop your reading comprehension and analytical/critical thinking skills during your first years in college to help ensure success on the LSAT.

- **Use of Commercial Prep Courses:** One of the most common questions students ask is whether it is necessary to use a commercial course to prepare for the LSAT. The best answer is, “it depends.” Students who are disciplined and maintain a structured schedule for themselves, which includes both study and practice, and who practice under timed, exam-simulated conditions can perform well.

Most students find that the insight and structure provided by a course offered through a commercial provider prepares them best. Commercial courses can be very costly, however, and some are better than others. Do your research and talk with others who have taken the LSAT to learn from their experience, especially concerning the cost and effectiveness of courses you may be considering. Some may offer special discounts for early subscribers. See [Appendix A](#) for links to some LSAT preparation courses that are available.

- **Practice Materials:** You should try to use actual prior LSAT tests when practicing. Try to avoid using “model LSAT questions” as much as possible. Free practice materials may be obtained from LSAC.org.
- **Second Thoughts:** If you are registered for a test but feel you are not fully prepared or in a frame of mind to perform well, it may be better not to take the test; law schools will not view your absence on the test date negatively. Plan to be well-prepared and to take the test only once, but if you do not believe your score is representative of your abilities, for example, you were scoring considerably higher on practice tests, you may want to consider retaking the test.
- **Multiple LSAT Scores:** Law schools vary in how they consider multiple LSAT scores in making admissions decisions. Though many schools use the higher score in reaching decisions, some use the average of multiple scores unless there is a compelling reason to use the higher score. Find out directly from the law schools how they consider the scores, or you may learn what specific schools consider in the NAPLA/SAPLA Book of Law School Lists (see Appendix A). Note that you may not take the LSAT more than three times in any two-year period. Visit LSAC.org for any exceptions to this rule.

Most schools welcome an addendum explaining the point difference in scores, including any extenuating circumstances and a history of performance on standardized tests. LSAC will report the results of all LSATs you have taken within five years; however, you may find some schools willing to consider only

scores received within a three or four-year period.

Credential Assembly Service (CAS)

LSAC provides this service to centralize and standardize objective application information (GPA and LSAT scores), and ABA-approved law schools require applicants to subscribe to the CAS. The service organizes and analyzes applicant information in a way that allows law schools to compare academic records from undergraduate schools that use different grading systems. Once you register, your CAS will remain active for five years.

CAS will collect your transcripts, LSAT score, letters of recommendation, and other information and it will summarize your work to create a “Law School Report” that will be sent to each law school to which you apply. When law schools receive your completed applications, they will request your law school report from LSAC.

Items Included in the CAS Report:

- Biographical information
- Summary of undergraduate grades and credit for each year and each institution
- Copies of transcripts sent to LSAC
- LSAT results, including cancellations and absences
- Average LSAT score when more than one reportable score is on file
- Photocopies of LSAT writing samples
- Admission index, if requested by the law school
- Name of all law schools reported your prior matriculation or intent to matriculate
- Notation of whether you were ever the subject of misconduct or irregularity in the admissions process
- Special documents, such as those concerning disabilities (if authorized) or LSAC letter concerning conditions during LSAT administration
- Up to four evaluations
- Application, if required by law school

Note: CAS will not calculate or include the GPA you received in your major in your Law School Report. If you want to highlight this, you should include it on any resume you submit along with the rest of your application materials.

Transcripts

You must submit transcripts from all higher educational institutions you attended. See LSAC.org for complete instructions. As part of your request, you should provide a completed LSAC Transcript Request Form.

- **Study Abroad Sponsored by ASU:** If you enrolled in a study abroad program

sponsored by your home institution (ASU), and the courses along with grades and credits using your home institution's grading system are recorded on your official transcript, you do not need to send an additional transcript to CAS.

- **Study Abroad NOT Sponsored by ASU:** If you enrolled in a study abroad program sponsored by another U.S. or Canadian college or university, in addition to your home institution's transcript, you must have the college or university sponsoring the study abroad program send a transcript directly to CAS. List the U.S. or Canadian institution on your CAS registration under "other institutions attended." Questions regarding this should be directed to LSAC.
- **Direct Enrollment in Foreign Institution:** If you directly enrolled in one or more foreign institutions, and the total amount of work is the equivalent of one year or less, do not list the foreign institution when you register for the CAS, and do not have a transcript forwarded to LSAC. You may, however, be required to list your attendance at such institutions on your applications to law schools.
- **Grade Conversion:** In order to provide law schools with a uniform basis to compare applications, CAS converts all grades awarded (after you receive your first undergraduate degree) on a 4.0 scale. Thus, it is possible that the GPA reflected on your transcript may not correspond to the GPA that is calculated by CAS and submitted in the reports to law schools. You should refer to LSAC.org for detailed information about how all your grades will be converted by CAS.
- **Repeated Courses:** If you received a low grade in a course and later repeated it, CAS will use the grades you received in both courses to calculate your GPA if both are showing on your transcript. This is true even if the university replaces lower grade with a higher grade received in the repeated course, and only the higher grade is calculated into your GPA on your transcript. In such a case, the GPA calculated by CAS on your Law School Reports would be lower than that reflected on your transcript.

The Application

There are a few options for submitting applications to law schools. You can apply to any ABA-approved law school through the CAS electronic application, which streamlines the process by allowing you to enter common information only once; you then complete each school's individual application and submit your applications electronically. You can also electronically attach other documents to the application, such as your personal statement and resume.

You may also complete applications located on schools' websites, or call the schools to request hard-copy applications. Addresses and phone numbers of admissions offices are provided on schools' websites.

Completing application forms is a fairly straightforward process. Schools will be seeking basic information about you, including your academic background, extracurricular activities, and employment history. You may be asked to list other schools to which you are applying; responding to this question and/or indicating an interest in financial aid will not affect your chances for admission.

Be accurate, truthful, and forthright when you complete your applications! Remember, any inconsistencies or inaccuracies can later cause problems with the state bar association; therefore, disclosure is key. Also, enclose a resume with your application, but be sure to respond to all of the questions on the applications and answer the questions that are asked.

Personal Statements

Besides your GPA and LSAT score, the personal statement is probably one of the most important components of your application. This is your opportunity to go beyond the objective aspects of your application to show the law schools who you are and what is important to you.

- **Content:** Schools often require you to respond to one or more prompt questions asked in the applications – make sure you respond to these questions. Responding to unique question(s) from different law schools will require you to tailor your personal statement for each school to which you apply.

In responding to the question(s), however, remember that schools will be seeking information about your background, personal qualities, leadership skills, motivation to learn, as well as what is unique about you and what distinguishes you from other candidates with similar GPAs and LSAT scores. Your goal is to write a concise, detailed statement establishing yourself as an individual. An interesting and personal discussion about yourself, one that reveals your personality and character, will help you come alive to the admissions. The personal statement should tell admissions committees who you are and why you are pursuing law school. Do not spend too much time on how much you desire to attend law school; however, do make some connection to your reasons for pursuing a career in law.

- **Preparation and Forethought:** Because the personal statement is so important, you should begin thinking very early about how you want to present yourself. You may want to begin exploring early what types of questions law schools want you to respond to in your personal statement. Also, do not make conclusions such as “I have great passion for the law” or “I’m committed to helping people” without elaborating further. As you reflect on your life and move through college, take note of experiences that inspire or confirm your desire to pursue the study of law and incorporate these experiences in your statement. Use examples of how you have demonstrated the qualities they are seeking in a successful law

student and legal professional.

- **Specific Guidelines:** Be sure to determine whether there are any specific formatting guidelines or other requirements of the law schools to which you apply. Typically, personal statements are two double-spaced pages, and you should use standard size, readable (12 pt) font. A few schools will limit the number of words permitted and you should abide by those guidelines.
- **Proofread:** You will likely create multiple drafts of your personal statement because its creation involves a process. Proofread carefully, have other individuals you trust review it. Any typographical or grammatical errors will detract from the favorable impression the statement might otherwise make. Do not use large words in an attempt to impress readers; instead, use simple language correctly, and rely on well-organized, interesting content to make an impression. Law schools will be looking for evidence that you can write a coherent statement. Follow general guidelines for writing essays: there should be introductory and concluding paragraphs; each paragraph should begin with a topic sentence; and there should be a clear line of development through the statement.
- **Be Honest and Professional:** Your statement should be serious, honest, and sincere, and the tone should be confident and positive. Any negative information you feel compelled or are required to discuss should be addressed in other parts of the application or in an addendum.

Letters of Recommendation (LOR)

Most law schools request that one or two LORs be submitted on behalf of applicants. If letters are not required, it is a good idea, nonetheless, to submit them. You can submit additional letters even though a school asks for only one or two. Three letters will be acceptable at most schools, and four should be considered the absolute maximum.

You can specify that targeted letters be sent to specific schools. For example, if you have a recommender who was a graduate of the law school, or who will be commenting on your ability to succeed in a particular program the law school is offering, you can request that particular letter be sent to that law school. Otherwise, your LORs will be sent to every school to which you apply. Letters will be maintained for five years from the time you register for CAS or from the time you take the LSAT, whichever comes last.

- **Content:** Admissions committees will be seeking information not provided elsewhere in the applications. LORs should include concrete examples of intellectual strength, judgment, motivation, and leadership, along with an appraisal of communication skills and a comparison to peers. Letters written by members of the academic community carry the most weight, since they can address your performance in an academic setting and discuss your potential for success in law school. Law schools value letters that address a student's writing,

class participation, research, analytical skills, and other academic abilities. They are especially interested in a professor's assessment of a student, as compared to other students he or she has taught over the years.

- **Recommenders Within Academia:** At least one letter should be from a professor in your undergraduate major, if possible. As you consider who you will ask to write a LOR, remember that it is better to have an in-depth letter from a teaching assistant or lecturer with whom you worked closely than to have a cursory letter from a renowned professor who barely knows you.
- **Recommenders Outside Academia:** Letters from people outside academia may carry less weight, since they may be unable to address the topic of greatest interest to admissions committees: your academic potential. However, if you have been in the work force a couple of years or more, letters from supervisors can be very helpful.
- **Meet With Recommenders:** It is important to ask for the LOR in person. Make an appointment to meet with letter writers well in advance of the application deadline. Not providing sufficient time for your recommenders to compose the letter will not give them a positive impression of you. Also, do not request letters from recommenders who you are not sure can provide you with a positive recommendation or those who do not know you that well. Ask them, "Do you feel you know my work well enough to write a positive letter on behalf of my application to law school?" Provide information about your background to assist him/her in writing a detailed letter:
 - ✓ Cover sheet describing your academic relationship, including courses you have taken, research you have conducted, your experience as a TA, etc.
 - ✓ Copy of your transcript
 - ✓ Draft of your personal statement (if available)
 - ✓ Resume or CV
 - ✓ Copies of exams or papers written in his/her class
 - ✓ Recommendation forms from CAS or the law schools
 - ✓ Stamped envelopes addressed to the LSAC or to the schools
 - ✓ List of dates when recommendations are due
- **Follow-Up:** If you have not been notified that your application is complete by about one month before a deadline, contact the school to see if your recommendations have arrived. Speak with those recommenders who have not sent letters yet to remind them politely of the approaching deadline. After you have received decisions, send hand-written thank-you notes to your recommenders, and let them know where you have been accepted and where you intend to enroll.

LSAC Letter of Recommendation and Evaluation Services

These services offer a way for recommenders to electronically submit LORs or an evaluation of the applicant. A few law schools may require the use of these services. An evaluation is a questionnaire that provides information beyond your objective criteria and LORs. The evaluator is asked to rate certain attributes, which are good indicators of success in law school and in the legal profession. She or he may also include personal comments after each category as well as in the final comments section of the evaluation.

LORs may be submitted electronically or on paper, depending on the recommender's preference; evaluations may only be submitted electronically. You must follow the directions on LSAC.org.

Dean's Certification

A dean's certification (or letter/clearance) is required by some law schools to confirm that applicants have not been involved in academic or disciplinary transgressions as undergraduates.

The certification is generally a formality handled by a designated university official such as an academic advising dean, professor, or registrar, in consultation with those offices responsible for judicial administration on campus.

Filing Your Applications

It is important that you follow the instructions of each law school to which you apply and those provided by LSAC and CAS. Remember to check and monitor the status of your file online, including your transcript, LORs, and law school requests for your CAS report. Make copies of your completed application, and most importantly, keep track of important deadlines!

Considering Admissions Decisions

Perhaps the most difficult part of the application process is waiting to hear your law schools' decisions. You will be informed by e-mail or letter of whether you are accepted, denied, or wait-listed, which means the applicant is considered a desirable candidate and may be admitted later.

Law schools often place applicants on "hold" or "reserve" prior to reaching a decision and frequently notify candidates of this status. Applications of those on hold or reserve are reconsidered at a later date, usually before the files of those who have been wait-listed.

Updating or Enhancing Your Application

There are a few things you may do to improve your chances of admission if you are on reserve or have been wait-listed:

- Write a letter to the director of admissions to inform him/her of your strong interest in the school and provide an update on your activities since you submitted your application.
- If the school is your first choice, state that you will attend if accepted.
- If you are a senior, inform the school of accomplishments since you applied; for example, that you have completed your Honors Thesis Requirement.
- If you are currently working or you completed an internship, describe your professional responsibilities and other worthwhile activities in which you are engaged; include an updated resume.
- Send an additional recommendation from a professor or employer; however, the total number of your recommendation letters should not exceed four.
- Visit the law school to demonstrate your strong interest; contact the admissions office to arrange for a tour and to sit in on a class or two. Some admissions officers will agree to meet with applicants, but generally these discussions are not evaluative. Always follow up with a thank-you letter to the person or office that accommodated you and tell them what impressed you about the school.

Making a Decision

You should try to visit the law schools when deciding among schools that have accepted you. Make arrangements to take tours and attend classes, make an effort to meet faculty and staff, and speak with students to get their perspective on factors important to you, such as accessibility of faculty, competitiveness of students, career services, assistance of library personnel, etc. Some law schools hold “Acceptance Day” and invite all accepted students for a day of touring, class observations, and other programming to help you get acquainted with the school.

- **Talk to Students/Alumni:** Try to meet other students and alumni who attend(ed) your schools of interest and learn about their experience. Contact the schools to inquire about speaking with current students and whether they have an alumni network you can access. This can provide you with some unique insight and be very helpful in making your decision.
- **Financial Considerations:** The cost and financial aid awards should be an important factor in making your decision. Refer back to your research on this issue when you were deciding which schools to which you would apply. Remember to learn about any conditions attached to scholarships and consider those conditions when comparing other offers.
- **Competing Offers:** What if you have an offer from a lower ranked school that will award you a 100% scholarship, and an offer from a top ranked school that offers only a partial scholarship? What if one school is in the city and state where you want to reside upon graduation, but another offers a specialized legal clinic in which you want to participate? When you have competing offers, there are many factors you will have to weigh, and they are all personal to you. Make a list of the pros and cons, do a cost-benefit analysis, talk to friends, family, and mentors to help you decide which school is right for you. Also, consult with a pre-law advisor who can help you weigh your options. Remember this is a personal decision for you, and one you should not take lightly.
- **Deposits:** Schools that accept you will probably ask for a deposit to hold a space for you. Deposits may be due before you hear from all schools. Contact schools that accept you to explain your situation and ask if they would be willing to extend the deposit deadline. You should be aware of standards and policies that exist for conduct in the admissions process and on multiple deposits.
- **Ethics and Conduct in the Admissions Process:** You are encouraged to refer to two important documents available at LSAC.org:
 - ✓ LSAC Rules Governing Misconduct and Irregularities in the Admission Process
 - ✓ LSAC Statement of Good Admission and Financial Aid Practices

- **Final Decision:** Once you have reached a final decision on which school you will attend, notify schools that accepted you so that they can offer your place to someone else.

Financing Law School

Law school is an important investment in your future. Consider the financial aid process as seriously as you do the law school application process. Before you apply to law school, spend money wisely and pay your bills on time to ensure a good credit record. Bad credit will affect your ability to borrow money. If possible, pay off credit cards and other consumer debt before law school.

Federal Financial Aid

Many students rely primarily on federal loan programs to finance law school. Total federal aid is available to cover (but not exceed) the law school's cost of attendance (COA), which includes tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, transportation, and other expenses.

- **Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** This is a free application processed by the Secretary of Education that must be completed each year to determine your need and eligibility for federal aid. You should file your FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1 when your income tax information from the prior year is complete. The earlier you can complete the federal financial aid forms, the earlier you can be notified of available financial aid packages to you during the admissions process.
- **Cost of Attendance (COA):** The COA is each law school's tuition and fees, plus the estimated living expenses calculated by each law school. Your eligibility for federal aid is based on your need, which is calculated by subtracting the amount of your resources, as well as any scholarships or grants you receive, from the total COA.
- **Types of Federal Loans:** These are the largest federal student loan programs available:
 - ✓ **Direct Stafford Loan:** Unsubsidized, but has a lower interest rate and postpones repayment upon graduation.
 - ✓ **Grad PLUS Loan:** This loan is based upon credit history. Interest accrues while in school, and repayment begins upon disbursement.
 - ✓ **Perkins Loan:** May be available at some schools.

Private Financial Aid

Credit is an important factor in securing private loans, and interest rates, fees, and terms of repayment vary significantly. Beware of direct marketing from private lenders. It is possible to finance your legal education entirely through federal aid, which is regulated by the federal government and typically has lower interest rates.

Law School Financial Aid Office

It is best to work with your law school financial aid office early in the application process before making any decisions about loans for your legal education, and to check important deadlines. In addition to the FAFSA form, many law schools may require you to complete a supplemental application in order to award institutional funds. Law schools vary in how they distribute their own funds, and they may offer different types of scholarships or grants to qualified applicants with an offer of admission.

When law schools consider your financial need, they may require family income information even if you are considered independent for tax purposes, or for federal education loans. If you have special circumstances, provide this information to the law school financial aid office. This can be critical for law students who have been working full-time in the prior year or who have unusual medical or family expenses.

Free Financial Aid

With proper research and preparation, you may be able to pay for your legal education with funds that do not require repayment by applying for scholarships and grants, as well as through federal work-study programs and loan repayment assistance programs.

Making the Decision

Once you have provided all required information, law schools can offer you a financial aid package based on your financial need. In deciding which law school to attend, it is important to balance your financial considerations with other criteria, such as reputation, location, size, faculty, programs and placement success. Compare the net of your projected costs at each school you are considering, offset by any offers of grants or scholarships from the school, to determine the amount you will need to make up through loans or personal funds.

Applying for Loans

Once you have chosen a law school, expect to receive important additional financial information from the school. Even though you have already completed the FAFSA and law school financial aid forms, you must still apply for the loans.

Your law school financial aid office will help you identify the correct process for securing federal loans, and, private loans if needed. Do your homework to compare fees and repayment terms for all of your loans, using loan calculators available on financial aid websites. Keep good records of all loan transactions.

Borrow only what you need, and not more, to keep your debt low and your monthly repayment amount manageable.

Appendix A: Pre-Law Resources

The Honors College Pre-Law Handbook

General Pre-Law Information

- Law School Admissions Council (LSAC): www.lsac.org
- The American Bar Association (ABA) Section of Legal Education and Admission to the Bar:
http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/pre_law.html
- PreLaw Insider Magazine: The National Jurist
<http://www.nationaljurist.com/prelaw-home>
- Law School Podcaster (podcasts by legal professionals):
www.lawschoolpodcaster.com
- Law School Numbers: www.lawschoolnumbers.com

Challenges in Legal Education and the Legal Profession

- The New York Times: www.nytimes.com
- The Wall Street Journal: www.wsj.com
- Above the Law: www.abovethelaw.com
- ABA Journal: www.abajournal.com
- Law School Transparency: www.lawschooltransparency.com
- USNews Education (articles and rankings):
<http://www.usnews.com/education>

Legal Employment and Salary Information

- The Association for Legal Career Professionals (NALP):
www.nalp.org
- ABA Individual Law School Employment Summary Reports:
<http://employmentsummary.abaquestionnaire.org/home.aspx>
- NALP Pre-Law Questions for Law Schools:
http://www.nalp.org/pre-law_questions
- Occupational Outlook Handbook: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

Resources Determining Competitiveness

These resources can assist you in comparing the number of applicants accepted, to the overall number of applications received, by different law schools. You can also compare your objective criteria with law school class profiles:

- LSAC Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools (includes GPA/LSAT search tool):
https://officialguide.lsc.org/release/OfficialGuide_Default.aspx
- The Boston College Online Law School Locator:
<http://www.bc.edu/offices/careers/gradschool/law/lawlocator.html#the25>

Information on Law School Programs and Selection Criteria:

- The NAPLA/SAPLA Book of Law School Lists (PDF link on Boston University website):
<http://www.bu.edu/cas/academics/undergraduate-education/student-academic-life/pre-professional-advising/>
- The National Jurist (search by specialty)
<http://www.nationaljurist.com/law-schools>.

LSAT Preparation Services (Listings are NOT endorsements!)

- Cambridge LSAT: www.cambridgelsat.com
- Get Prepped: www.getprepped.com
- Kaplan: www.kaptest.com/lsat
- LSAC LSAT Prep Materials: <http://www.lsac.org/jd/lsat/lsat-prep-materials.asp>
- LSATnow: www.lsatnow.com
- PowerScore: www.powerscore.com
- Prepmaster: www.prepmaster.com
- Princeton Review: www.review.com
- TestMasters: www.testmasters180.com
- Test Prep Review: www.testprepreview.com

Financial Aid Resources

- LSAC: Financing Law School:
<http://www.lsac.org/jd/finance/financial-aid-overview.asp>
- U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid:
www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid: www.fafsa.ed.gov
- Equal Justice Works (Public interest law programs and law school loan repayment assistance programs (LRAP):

www.equaljusticeworks.org

- FinAid: www.finaid.org
- AccessGroup (private loans): www.accessgroup.org
- Law School Scholarships:
<http://www.aboutlawschools.org/career/scholarships/>
- Free Annual Credit Report: www.annualcreditreport.com
- Financial aid search engine: www.fastweb.com

Minority Candidates and Diversity in Law School

- ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession:
http://www.americanbar.org/groups/diversity/resources/aba_groups_with_minority_programs.html
- Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF):
<http://www.aaldef.org/>
- Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO):
<http://www.cleoscholars.com/>
- Discover Law: <http://www.discoverlaw.org/>
- Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA): <http://www.hnba.com/>
- Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF):
<http://www.maldef.org/>
- NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund:
<http://www.naacpldf.org/>
- National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA):
www.napaba.org

- Native American Rights Fund (NARF): www.narf.org
- National Black Law Student Association (NBLSA): www.nblsa.org
- Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF):
www.latinojustice.org

Appendix B: Courses of Interest

The Honors College Pre-Law Handbook

General Knowledge

COM 2101 PUBLIC SPEAKING

COM 2106 ARGUMENTATION AND ADVOCACY

COM 3155 PERSUASION

COM 3305 COMMUNICATION LAW

FIN 2860 PERSONAL FINANCE (PERSONAL FIN. MGMT.)

FL XXXX FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSES (PREFIX MAY VARY-EX:
FRE, SNH)

HPC 2200 LIFE/CAREER PLANNING

LAT XXXX LATIN

US 3538 TIME MANAGEMENT IN COLLEGE

US 3539 EFFECTIVE STUDY SKILLS

Research/Analysis Skill Set

ACC 1050 SURVEY OF ACCOUNTING (NON-BUSINESS MAJORS)

ECO 2030 PRINCIPLES OF ECONOMICS (PRICE THEORY)

PHL 1040 CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

PHL 1110 LOGIC I

PHL 2100 LOGIC II

PHL 2800 LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESEARCH IN PHILOSOPHY

STT 1810 BASIC STATISTICS

US 1531 ELECTRONIC RESEARCH SKILLS

Ethics Skill Set

CIS 3820 ETHICS AND PRIVACY

MGT4770 BUSINESS ETHICS

PHL 2000 PHILOSOPHY, SOCIETY, AND ETHICS

PHL 4300 ETHICAL THEORY

Reading/Writing Skill Set

ENG 3120 WRITING AND LAW

RE 1010 POWER READING

Business-Related

FIN 3071 PRINCIPLES OF RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE

FIN 3350 INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS

IDS 2450 INTRODUCTION TO NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

LAW 2150 LEGAL ENVIRONMENT OF BUSINESS

LAW 3910 BUSINESS LAW I

LAW 3930 HOSPITALITY LAW (MUST TAKE HOS 2000)

LAW 3960 INSURANCE LAW

MGT3010 SURVEY OF MANAGEMENT (NON-BUSINESS MAJORS)

MGT3660 NEGOTIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

MGT4770 BUSINESS ETHICS

Media and the Law

- CIS 3820 ETHICS AND PRIVACY**
- ENG 2410 LITERATURE AND LAW I**
- ENG 2420 LITERATURE AND LAW II**
- ENG 3160 LAW AND JUSTICE IN FILM**

Political Science

- PS 1100 AMERICAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**
- PS 2130 STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**
- PS 3115 RESEARCH METHODS (POLITICAL SCIENCE)**
- PS 3150 CONSTITUTIONAL LAW**
- PS 3660 ADMINISTRATIVE LAW**
- PS 3888 DIVERSITY IN JUSTICE AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS**
- PS 4550 LAW AND SOCIETY**
- PS 4661 COURT ADMINISTRATION**
- PS 4721 HUMAN RIGHTS**

Criminal Justice/Criminal System

- CJ 1100 INTRODUCTION TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE**
- CJ 2120 POLICE PROCESS**
- CJ 2150 THE JUDICIAL PROCESS**
- CJ 2430 CORRECTIONS**
- CJ 3050 AMERICAN LEGAL SYSTEMS**

CJ 3400 THEORIES OF CRIME AND JUSTICE
CJ 3551 CRIMINAL LAW
CJ 3552 CRIMINAL PROCEDURE
CJ 4450 THE DEATH PENALTY
ENG 3160 LAW AND JUSTICE IN FILM
SOC 3340 CRIMINOLOGY
SOC 3350 CORRECTIONS
SOC 3360 JUVENILE DELINQUENCY
SOC 3370 SEXUAL DEVIANCE AND VIOLENCE
SOC 4650 WOMEN IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Law and Society

ENG 3160 LAW AND JUSTICE IN FILM
HIS 3424 HISTORY OF WOMEN AND THE LAW
PHL 2000 PHILOSOPHY, SOCIETY, AND ETHICS
**PSY 1200 PSYCHOLOGY: HISTORICAL, SOCIAL, AND SCIENTIFIC
FDNTNS.**
SOC 1000 THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE
SOC 1100 SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN AMERICAN SOCIETY
SOC 3340 CRIMINOLOGY
SOC 3350 CORRECTIONS
SOC 3360 JUVENILE DELINQUENCY
SOC 3370 SEXUAL DEVIANCE AND VIOLENCE
SOC 4150 SOCIOLOGY OF LAW

SOC 4650 WOMEN IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Special Topics

HCM 4910 HEALTH LAW AND POLICY (MUST TAKE HCM 2110)

HIS 3424 HISTORY OF WOMEN AND THE LAW

HON 1515 THE FOURTH AMENDMENT

MUS 3423 LEGAL ISSUES IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY (MUST TAKE MUS 2420)

PLN 4460 ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND PLANNING

Appendix C: Pre-Law Timeline

The Honors College Pre-Law Handbook

The following timeline is recommended for students who plan to attend law school in the fall following spring or summer graduation. Adjustments will likely be necessary for each individual student. Meet with your pre-law advisor regarding a four-year plan.

Summer Before Freshman Year

- Review the Honors College Pre-Law Handbook and familiarize yourself with the referenced resources.
- Contact the Honors College Pre-Law Advisor, Lisa Kirscht, J.D., regarding plans for your fall class schedule.

Freshman Year

- Earn good grades!
- Explore majors that interest and challenge you.
- Get to know your professors and supervisors and build rapport with them for future recommendation letters.
- Explore activities and organizations that interest you, provide leadership opportunities, and offer community service and involvement.
- Register for courses that will build skills necessary to succeed on the LSAT and in law school.
- Examine your goals for your future – begin your research to explore whether a legal career is what you want.

Summer Before Sophomore Year

- Seek jobs or experiences that provide exposure to the legal profession. Conduct informational interviews with legal professionals and alumni who have attended law school.
- Continue to explore and research your goal of pursuing a legal career.

Sophomore Year

- Earn good grades!
- If still undecided, narrow your focus on what major you want to declare.
- Continue building rapport with your professors and supervisors for future recommendation letters.

- Register for courses that will build skills necessary to succeed on the LSAT and in law school. Sign up for a course in logic or critical/analytical reasoning to take during the fall semester of your junior year.
- Refine your goal of pursuing a legal career explore specific areas/fields of law.
- Begin to identify specific law schools to which you may want to apply.
- Become familiar with the LSAT and its components; research and plan how you will prepare.
- Review information for pre-law students found at LSAC.org.
- Speak with your Honors and departmental advisor about planning for any internships or study abroad plans so that it does not conflict with your LSAT study during your junior year.

Summer Before Junior Year

- Seek jobs or experiences that provide exposure to the legal profession. Conduct informational interviews with legal professionals and alumni who have attended law school.
- Review LSAC.org for information regarding registration, the LSAT, and the CAS.
- If possible, attend a Law School Forum or visit law schools to which you intend to apply.

Junior Year

Fall

- Earn good grades!
- Plan your course schedule carefully for the Spring so that it does not compromise your ability to properly prepare for the LSAT.
- Continue to familiarize yourself with the LSAT; establish a firm plan regarding how you will prepare.
- If possible, attend a Law School Forum or visit law schools to which you intend to apply.
- Create a list of law schools to which you want to apply, including their admissions statistics.
- Meet with your pre-law advisor to assess your academic, extracurricular, and work experiences, and to discuss your application plan.

Spring

- Earn good grades!
- Register for the LSAT. Online registration becomes available in December for the June administration of the LSAT. Early registration will help secure your preferred testing center.
- PREPARE FOR THE LSAT!

- Meet with your recommenders and confirm those who are willing to write your letters of recommendation. Provide them your information packets and application deadlines.
- Take the June LSAT.

Summer Before Senior Year

- Enter your LSAT score and current GPA into LSAC's online search tool found in its Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools to help narrow your choice of law schools
- Evaluate your June LSAT score and determine whether you should retake it in October to enhance your competitiveness in your targeted law schools.
- Finalize the list of schools to which you will apply.
- Review the prompt questions on the applications of your law schools and prepare your personal statement/essays.
- Prepare your resume.
- Check on the status of your letters of recommendation. Provide your recommenders with any updates to your information packet.

Senior Year

Fall

- Earn good grades!
- Register early for CAS on LSAC.org (should be no later than September).
- Send all transcripts to CAS.
- Meet with recommenders to confirm completion of letters and submission to CAS.
- Send hand-written "Thank You" notes to your recommenders.
- Edit and complete your personal statement and resume.
- If retaking the LSAT, register for the October administration of the test and prepare.
- Prepare application forms and submit (Thanksgiving or earlier).
- Request Dean's certification letters for law schools that require them.

Spring

- Earn good grades!
- Complete the FAFSA form (try to have your tax returns completed early).
- Complete each law school's financial aid application and submit according to each school's requirements.
- Send updated transcript to CAS reflecting fall grades.
- Follow-up with law schools to make sure your files are complete.

- Wait.
- Weigh offers of acceptance/scholarships.
- Make a decision.
- Pay seat deposit.
- Notify other schools that accepted you so that they can offer your place to someone else.