

Preparation for Law School: General Timeline & Requirements

The following information has been created based on gathered information from several law school programs across the U.S. Please note that each institution differs in their admissions process, timeline, and requirements. This document is to be used for a general overview of deadlines, but you should research the specific admissions requirements and deadlines for the institution you are interested in applying to.

Junior Year General Timeline		
FALL	August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start by reflecting on your goals. Visit the COMPASS: Sweet Success Center to complete the Pathway U Assessment.
	September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go to law school admissions fairs, forums, and related events.
	October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make an LSAT study plan and create an LSAC account.
	November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a practice/diagnostic LSAT to familiarize yourself with the test and get a sense of what you need to focus on in your studying.
	December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate your financial aid and student loan options.
SPRING	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take or retake the LSAT, GRE, or GMAT.
	February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask your recommendation letter writers. Give them a timeline of when your law school applications are due.
	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit law schools, go to information sessions, and prioritize the schools on your list.
	April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use LSAT scores (if you have them) to adjust your plans. You can refine your list of law schools and future research utilizing your scores as a benchmark.
	May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update your resume. Visit the COMPASS: Sweet Success Center for resume review.
SUMMER	June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start your personal statement/application essays. Visit Wittenberg's Writing Center for assistance.
	July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take or retake July LSAT.

Senior Year General Timeline

FALL	August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online applications open for Summer and Fall applicants.
	September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish personal statements and essays. Visit Wittenberg's Writing Center for final review.
	October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Review Begins (Last LSAT Accepted and October is the time to take the GRE or GMAT). File the FAFSA (Opens Oct. 1st). Deadline for scholarships vary by institution.
	November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill out applications. Most admissions decisions are made during this time and released by December. Decisions released on a rolling basis for Regular Decision applicants.
	December 1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application deadline for Early Decision Programs. The application and all required application materials must be submitted by December 1.
SPRING	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last chance to take or retake LSAT, GRE, or GMAT for Regular Decision Applicants
	February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Deadline for Regular Decision Applicants.
	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you were waitlisted, write and send a letter of continued interest and confirm next steps you might take.
	April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadline for submitting a seat deposit. The specific date will vary from institution. The Admissions Office will often times notify admitted students of their deadline in their admission email.
	May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend admitted student open houses, orientation, and other events.
SUMMER	June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you've met all enrollment requirements.
	July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank the people who helped you along the way, like recommendation writers, family, and friends. Get ready for Law School!
	Aug. – Sept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law School classes begin.

Deadlines and Information for Top Law Schools in Ohio¹:

- **The Ohio State University:** <https://moritzlaw.osu.edu/admissions/jd/applying/application-materials/#:~:text=Applications%20for%20admission%20to%20the,preferred%20deadline%20of%20March%2031.>
 - Deadline: March 31st
- **University of Dayton:** <https://udayton.edu/law/>
 - Deadline: April 15th (Summer-Start) & May 1st (Fall-Start).
- **University of Cincinnati:** <https://law.uc.edu/admissions-aid/apply.html>
 - Deadline: April 15th
- **The University of Toledo:** <https://www.utoledo.edu/law/admissions/apply/>
 - Deadline: Aug. 1st – Fall-Start applicants who apply by April 15 will receive priority scholarship consideration.

Deadlines and Information for Top Law Schools in the US²:

- **University of Chicago:** <https://www.law.uchicago.edu/application-calendar>
 - Deadline: Dec. 1st Application deadline for the Early Decision Program and the Chicago Law Scholars Program. The application and all required application materials must be submitted by December 1.
- **New York University:** <https://www.law.nyu.edu/graduateadmissions/whentoapply>
 - Deadline: February 1st (priority scholarship deadline), April 1st (final) for Fall-Start. Deadline for Spring-Start – Sept. 2nd
- **University of California Berkley:** <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/admissions/jd/applying-for-jd-degree/ready-to-apply/>
 - Deadline: Nov. 15th application deadline for Binding Early Decision Applicants
- **Harvard Law School:** <https://hls.harvard.edu/dept/graduate-program/apply/>
 - Deadline: Varies by program: S.J.D. Program – April 1st, VS/VR Program – Sept. 15th, LL. M. Program – Dec. 1st
- **Yale Law School:** <https://law.yale.edu/studying-law-yale/degree-programs/graduate-programs/llm-program/llm-admission>
 - Deadline: Dec. 1st
- **The University of Texas at Austin:** <https://law.utexas.edu/master-of-laws/application-information/>
 - Deadline: March 1st
- **University of Notre Dame:** <https://law.nd.edu/academics/degrees/ll-m-degree/>
 - Deadline: April 1st

¹ U.S. News & World Report. (2022). *2022 Best Law Schools*. U.S. News & World Report. <https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-law-schools/law-rankings?location=Ohio>.

² U.S. News & World Report. (2022). *2022 Best Law Schools*. U.S. News & World Report. <https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-law-schools/law-rankings>.

Application Requirements* (Institutions may require some additional or fewer documentation):

- **Undergraduate Transcript**
- **CAS Registration:** [The Credential Assembly Service](#) is the clearinghouse for your LSAT score(s), transcripts and evaluations. You may also apply to any ABA-accredited law school through this site.
 - Register for LSAC's [LL.M. Credential Assembly Service \(CAS\)](#). You should register and pay for LSAC's LL.M. Credential Assembly Service (CAS) at least four to six weeks before your first law school application deadline.
 - The [CAS fee](#) has a few hundred dollars' worth of costs that include payment for an account and payment for each law school report.
- **LSAT or GRE:** Most graduate programs accept a score that was earned within five years of the expected date of entry into law school. Visit [LSAC](#) for dates, locations, and registration deadlines throughout the year. Learn more about a month by month [LSAT study schedule](#).
- **Letters of Recommendation:** Most law schools require at least two professional letters of recommendation from people who can substantively comment on your academic or employment record. We recommend academic references, if possible. Letters may be required to be sent by the recommenders to LSAC.
- **Personal Statement:** Share your passions, interests, and reasons for applying to Law school that makes you stand out as an applicant that is not already on your resume.
- **Resume or Curriculum Vitae:** a resume listing and describing your professional, educational or other related experience.
- **Credential Evaluation:** We must receive a course by course evaluation of your previous higher education before we can consider your application. You may choose from the following organizations to provide your evaluation: ECE ([www.ece.org](#)) or WES ([www.wes.org](#)).
- **TOEFL, IELTS, or CEFR Score:** If your native language is not English, you must supply evidence of your English proficiency.
- **Bar Exam:** If you are planning to take a bar exam in the US, please contact the bar authority in the relevant state to determine whether online classes will interfere with your eligibility.

Other Factors to Consider:

- Graduate Coursework
- Work Experience
- Extracurricular Activities
- Volunteer or Community Service
- LSAT/Academic Statement
- Diversity Statement

*Please note that the information above is the general application requirements for most Law Schools. Every institution has their own application requirements that may differ from the list above, so make sure to look at all the requirements for your desired program and institution.

More Detailed Timeline

Junior Year: Fall Semester

- **Start by reflecting on your goals.** Why do you want to go to law school, and what do you need to succeed while you're there? Turn those reflections into a list of law school search criteria.
- **Research legal career paths.** If you want to go to law school, you probably already have a pretty distinct career path in mind—but how much do you really know about the work? Before researching law schools, you should get to know the legal field, including any specializations that interest you. You'll be better prepared for the application process and may even uncover law schools you should consider along the way.
- **Talk to your pre-law advisor, graduate advisor, or COMPASS team.** They can offer valuable insights for the law school admissions process, make sure your timeline is on track, and even recommend schools. You might be able to access services as an alumnus too.
- **Make an LSAT study plan.** [The LSAT is now offered seven times a year.](#) Most people take a winter and/or a summer test the year *before* they intend to enroll in law school, so they have time to retake the test if necessary. Work backwards from when you plan to take the LSAT to schedule time to study, take practice tests, complete an LSAT course, and perhaps work with a coach or tutor. Keep in mind that you'll need to register for the LSAT at least a month in advance too.
- **Start searching for law schools that fit you.** Take the list of criteria you brainstormed and use law school databases, guidebooks, and Google. Keep your options open for now, including geographically if you can. Remember this list is a rough draft; you'll do more research later to narrow your options.
- **Go to law school admissions fairs, forums, and related events.** Your undergraduate institution might host one, or you could go to an [LSAC law school forum](#). If you're still in school, you might also go to other pre-law events, like speaker panels with law students, admissions representatives, and working lawyers.
- **Create a tracking system (like a spreadsheet) for your law schools and search criteria.** You can track everything from application deadlines to info session dates.
- **Take a practice/diagnostic LSAT** to familiarize yourself with the test and get a sense of what you need to focus on in your studying.
- **Request information from law schools.** Requesting a law school's view book or brochure will give you a sense of how the school interacts with students, which can be telling. You'll see the school's "highlight reel," and you'll learn what they value.
- **Create an LSAC account.** You'll need this to register for the LSAT and apply to law schools. You can also use it to check your status once you've applied.
- **Familiarize yourself with the potential costs of law school,** including living costs, and assess your savings and potential borrowing ability.
- **Investigate your financial aid and student loan options.** Include any separate financial aid applications in your law school admissions plans too.

Junior Year: Spring Semester

- **Take or retake the January, February, March, or April LSAT, if relevant.** You'll get your scores about four weeks later. Then things *really* get interesting...
- **Research your potential law schools.** Make sure you're doing a deep dive into your schools, and use varied resources, like law school search websites, ABA reports, student reviews and forums, faculty ratings, guidebooks, the pre-law advisor at Wittenberg, and even chatting with any lawyers you know. Make sure you collect admitted student stats too (known as the "class profile"), and seek out schools that would constitute as your "reach," "safety," and "target/match" schools, based on your GPA and test scores.
- **Use your LSAT scores (if you have them) to adjust your plans.** Once you have a real set of LSAT scores, you have an important benchmark to work with. You can refine your list of law schools and future research, focusing on schools within a reasonable range of your score. And you can decide if you want to retake the test and re-up your studying accordingly.
- **Visit law schools.** This is your chance to get a feel for life at a particular school. So visit law schools, go to information sessions, and spend some time in the surrounding area for as many law schools as you can. You want to prioritize the schools on your list, of course, but even a visit to a law school you're not seriously considering can be helpful.
- **If retaking the LSAT, register for the appropriate exam and study *strategically*.** Use practice tests to zero in on your weak spots and come up with a real plan of attack! Remember too that law schools vary in how they consider multiple LSAT results; many only consider the highest score, but some look at all scores, some take an average, etc. Be sure to confirm with the schools you're applying to.
- **Ask your recommendation letter writers.** These should be professors, employers, mentors, and others who *actually* know you and can speak to your strengths and character. Give them your résumé and a timeline of when your law school applications are due to guide them in their writing.

Summer Before Senior Year

- **Take or retake the July LSAT, if relevant.**
- **Start your personal statement/application essays.** At this point you can focus on just getting through a rough draft, because you'll have time to revise later. But you should still keep personal statement best practices in mind.
- **Update your résumé.** It may not be required for your application packet, but it can be a helpful resource you can share with the COMPASS: Sweet Success Center, and updating it is a good exercise in remembering all the great things you've been up to and should include in your law school applications.

Senior Year: Fall Semester

- **Take or retake the September, October, or November LSAT, if relevant.**
- **Finalize your list of law schools** using the research and insights you've collected over the past year. You should know exactly what their admissions requirements are, track down their application materials, and add all of their deadlines/overarching enrollment timeline to your calendar.

- **Register with LSAC's Credential Assembly Service (CAS).** For a fee, they'll package up your LSAT scores, transcript(s), and letters of recommendation into an official report and send it to *all* the law schools you want to apply to. It makes your life a little easier, but, more importantly, most ABA-accredited law schools actually require it.
- **Fill out your law school applications**—thoughtfully, thoroughly, and with plenty of time to go back and edit with fresh eyes. Don't forget to review application instructions carefully too!
- **Start submitting applications, if you can.** Though many law schools have rolling admissions and deadlines stretching well into the spring, you don't want to drag your feet applying, in case the class fills up. Whenever you submit an application, be sure to log into your LSAC account and make sure all materials have been received.
- **Finish your personal statements/application essays.** Give each one a painstaking edit, ask people you trust to do the same, and visit the [Wittenberg Writing Center](#).
- **Request transcripts from all undergrad and graduate schools attended.** Have the school's registrar send your transcript to LSAC's CAS.
- **File the FAFSA.** Yes, [the FAFSA](#) still counts in law school. It opens on October 1 now (it used to be January 1), and you should file ASAP to get your share of federal financial aid.
- **Check your CAS account** to make sure they have all of your documents.
- **Try to visit all of the law schools** you plan on applying to, if you haven't already.
- **Search for any scholarships or grants** you may be eligible for, and submit polished applications to those as well.

Senior Year: Spring Semester

- **Take or retake the January, February, March, or April LSAT, if relevant.**
- **Investigate housing options, if needed.** Most law schools do not offer on-campus housing, so if you're relocating, get a sense of the rental market beforehand.
- **Submit applications with later deadlines.** Don't forget to confirm all application materials have been received.
- **Attend admitted student open houses, orientation, and other events.** These can be particularly helpful before you've made your final law school decisions, because you'll be able to consider your schools in a new light and ask more pointed questions.
- **Consider your options.** Once you have some acceptances or waitlist decisions on your hands, you can compare your schools and financial aid packages. But wait until you've received decisions from all of your law schools before making your final choice.
- **Submit financial aid appeal letters, if needed.** Include anything new that can bolster your request, like a higher GPA, awards won, or even a significantly improved LSAT score, if you retook the exam.
- **If you were waitlisted, write and send a letter of continued interest** and confirm whatever next steps you might take.
- **If you're still in school, submit updated transcripts to CAS** that reflect senior year grades. Be sure to keep finish the year strong!
- **Make your final law school decision—and pay the deposit.** Even if you're holding out for a straggling waitlist decision, it's best to make a deposit elsewhere, because you want to secure your spot in the entering class and start preparing for the year ahead.
- **Let law schools you didn't choose know of your decision,** so they can open your spot to someone else.

Summer Before Law School

- **Take or retake the July LSAT, if relevant.** Though it's late in the game, you may be able to parlay a significantly higher LSAT score—by *at least* three points—into an acceptance at a school that waitlisted you or into more financial aid.
- **Make sure you've met all enrollment requirements.** From sending final transcripts to immunization records, you have a few more things on your enrollment checklist before arriving on campus!
- **Attend admitted student open houses, orientation, and other events,** if you haven't already.
- **Finalize your housing arrangements** for the coming academic year. If you're moving, send your law school an updated mailing address.
- **Confirm when you'll get your fall semester financial aid refund check,** if you plan to use it for living expenses and books. Law schools aren't allowed to release any federal funding prior to the beginning of classes.
- **Confirm the deferment status of any existing education loans you have.** Federal loans should go into an automatic in-school deferment once you start your law school classes, but sometimes a private lender needs additional deferment paperwork. Contact your lenders if you have questions.
- **Thank the people who helped you along the way,** like recommendation writers, your family and friends, and even the admissions folks.
- **Complete readings and assignments.** You'll likely receive new student orientation instructions by now, including readings or other assignments you may need to complete for the beginning of the year. In law school, you'll hit the ground running!
- **Get ready for law school!** Enjoy the end of the summer as much as you can. Relax. Take some time to appreciate the journey you just completed. And get excited for the adventure ahead.