



LAW SCHOOL ADMISSION

The Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools is published by the Law School Admission Council and provides the most up to date admission profiles and program descriptions of most law schools. Law schools approved by the American Bar Association (ABA) provide legal education that meets a minimum set of standards as set forth by the ABA. Graduates from ABA approved Law schools are recognized by all states and may take the bar exam in any state. Graduates from non-ABA-approved schools may have limitations as set forth by the state in order to sit for the exam. Law schools that are ABA approved require a bachelor's degree and completion of the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) prior to admission. Although there have been some majors more commonly used for law school admissions such as Political Science, English, History, or Business no particular major is required, however a broad understanding of American history, political thought and theory, ethics, economics, understanding of diverse cultures within and beyond the United States, and a basic understanding of human and social interaction is desirable. When selecting a major, consider what other fields would be of interest as an alternative career opportunity. You may also look at majors related to "pre-law" at www.assist.org to find related majors at CSU and UC campuses. Requirements vary between schools. It is the student's responsibility to contact the individual law schools for exact admissions requirements.

Law schools require the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). The Official LSAT Prep Test, also published by the Law School Admission Council, contains sample questions of the LSAT designed to assess reading comprehension, verbal and analytical reasoning, and writing skills. Students are advised to take this test in the spring semester of their third year of undergraduate study, after they have transferred from El Camino College to a four-year college or university.

Admission is competitive. The average grade point average (G.P.A.) of students accepted by accredited law schools is 3.5 or higher. Although law schools are most interested in applicants with high GPAs and (LSAT) test scores, they will consider other factors such as recommendations and personal statement that indicate responsibility, leadership, and experience in community or legal work. Law schools are looking for well-rounded individuals with highly developed skills in written and verbal communication, critical reading and analysis, problem solving, general research, and organization. Three years of full-time study or sometimes four years of part-time study is generally required to earn the Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree.

SAMPLE SPECIALIZATIONS WITHIN LAW

Civil Rights Law: Civil Rights law focuses on the balance of governmental power and individual liberties. Many work for non-profit organizations or public interest law firms.

Corporate: Corporate law is more likely to deal with the financial and structural status of an established company, as well as the provision of daily legal advice. Other examples of corporate law include contract, intellectual property, legislative compliance, and liability matters.

Criminal Law: Prosecution or defense of cases involving offenses against society or government.

Environmental Law: In this field, lawyers may deal with regulatory issues relating to air and water quality, hazardous waste practice, natural gas transportation, oil and gas exploration and development, electric power licensing, water rights, toxic torts, public land use, marine resources, and energy trade regulation. They may work for governmental agencies, corporations, public interest groups, and entities concerned about protecting the environment.

Family/Juvenile Law: Annulment, separation, dissolution of marriage, adoption, child custody, estate planning, living trusts, settling an estate, guardianships, and inheritance tax laws.

Health Law: Health law practice can also cover medical malpractice, licensure, patient rights, and bio-ethical policy.

Intellectual Property Law: Intellectual property (IP) law is a general category of law that deals with the acquisition and enforcement of patents, trademarks, and copyrights, and one that has seen tremendous growth in the past decade. *Intellectual property* encompasses the exclusive rights to a registered idea, product, or name, and includes anything from words and symbols to internet domain names. Intellectual property law not only deals with unauthorized use of property and plagiarism, but also with the protection of image and personality through use of registered property.

International Law: International law consists of rules and principles which govern the relations and dealings of nations with each other.

Tax Law: Tax law focuses on assisting clients in understanding and minimizing tax liabilities and understands the complexity of changes in statutes, court decisions, and administrative rulings.

REFERENCES

- Law School Admission Council <http://www.lsac.org>
Includes online LSAT registration; information about Law School Forums (at the L.A.X. Marriott every November)
- The Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools
- American Bar Association <http://www.abanet.org>
- U.S. News Rankings & Specializations <http://www.usnews.com>
- Barron's Guide to Law Schools