



AZUSA PACIFIC
UNIVERSITY

**Department of History
and Political Science**

**A Guide to
Law School Applications**

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General Requirements

Law school applications are time-consuming, but the more informed you are, and the sooner you begin the process, the easier it will be. Your best resource when applying to law school is the Law School Admission Council website, www.lsac.org. Applications for every law school are completed through the LSAC, and you must create an account in order to register for the LSAT or submit law school applications.

The general requirements for a law school application include:

- **LSAT**
 - A very important factor in your admission is your LSAT (Law School Admission Test) score. You can register for the LSAT on the LSAC website.
- **Resume**
 - This is not a normal employment resume, but is meant to highlight traits, experiences, honors, and educational activities that are relevant to your law school candidacy.
- **2-3 Letters of Recommendation**
 - Choose professors who know you well and can address what the recommendation form is asking.
- **2-3 page-long Personal Statement**
 - Each law school has different criteria for what they want in a personal statement. Generally, law schools use the personal statement to evaluate an applicant's writing ability and to look for qualities not expressed elsewhere in the application.
- **Application Fee/Application Form**
 - Application fees vary and are not included in the CAS fee (see below). Be aware of resources that can help you save on application fees (such as fee waivers).

Credential Assembly Service (CAS)

The Credential Assembly Service (CAS) is a service of the LSAC. CAS will compile your transcripts, letters of recommendation, essays, and LSAT scores when you submit or send them into LSAC, and they will create a report for each law school you choose to apply to. Most law schools require that you submit your application materials through CAS. There is a fee to register for the service, and an additional fee for every law school that you choose to have a report sent to.

Getting Started

Look for Law Schools

Start thinking about what you are looking for in a law school: location, size, emphasis, etc. All law schools will cover the basics (criminal law, constitutional law, contracts, torts, property), but if you are looking for a particular specialty, such as entertainment law, environmental law, or public policy advocacy, then be sure that your interests are covered in the curriculum and that there are externships and practicums covering your area of interest.

Schools that are accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA) are generally preferred over schools accredited by state bar commissions because ABA-accredited graduates are eligible to sit for the bar exam in any state in the nation. As a result, ABA-accredited schools are more prestigious, but that also means they are more competitive and more expensive.

Here are some useful places to begin your search:

- Law School Admission Council (LSAC)
- The Princeton Review
- U.S. News and World Report Rankings

Pre-Law Minor

The History and Political Science Department offers a 21-unit minor that is designed to prepare you for and give you a glimpse into law school. It is not necessary for you to major in political science, to minor in Pre-Law, or to take any law-related classes at all prior to applying to law school. But, classes offered in conjunction with a Pre-Law minor will guide you through courses like Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, Business Law, and Legal Studies in order to expose you to materials and instructional methods you will likely encounter in law school. If you enjoy your law classes at APU, this may be a reason to look further into whether law school is right for you.

Pre-Law Advisor

Our campus pre-law advisor is Prof. Doug Hume. Prof. Hume teaches political science and legal courses for the department and is a practicing attorney. He is a great resource, and can help guide you through the application and decisions. Get in touch with him early on so he can help you get started. Location: Ronald Building Room 124. Email: dhume@apu.edu.

GPA

One of the most important components of your application will be your GPA, and that is something you can start working on now. Do not focus only on the grade, but also on the quality of the courses you are taking. Take classes that will develop your analytic, critical reading and thinking, communication, research, writing, and management skills. All of these things serve as good preparation for the LSAT exam, and they will help to prepare you for law school and your legal career.

The LSAT

The LSAT is unlike any other test you have encountered. You will need to spend a lot of time preparing for it. We suggest that you commit to studying four hours a day, four days a week, for four months of the year before you taken the LSAT exam. You may retake the exam, but that should be a last resort, not a preferred plan of action. All scores are reported to law school admission committees. Please note: It is not recommended that you prepare alone, and LSAT preparation courses are available throughout the year. Good test preparation can be expensive (\$1,200 - \$1,500), but they can dramatically help improve your score. Free and low-cost options for test preparation are also available. A better score means that you may be eligible for scholarships and may have a chance of being admitted to a more competitive school.

LSAT scores range from a minimum score of 120 to a maximum score of 180. Individual law schools should provide a range of scores that corresponds with their recent admission decisions. Generally, to be eligible for admission to ABA-accredited law schools, you should aim for a score of 150 or higher.

General Information about the LSAT

- The LSAT is offered multiple times per year. For fall admittance to law school (following your graduation from APU), it is recommended that you take either the LSAT sometime during the summer after your junior year or the early fall of your senior year. Some students decide to take a “gap year” following undergrad in order to focus additional attention on the LSAT.
- Registration deadlines are generally one month before the test date.
- The test fee for the LSAT is approximately \$200; there is an extra fee for late test registration, and a reporting fee for your scores to be sent to additional schools.
- The best advice is to plan on only taking the LSAT only once, but repeating the test is possible if you do not score the way you hoped, or you believe you can score higher by taking the test again. Law schools will look to your highest score as representing your potential, but may take into account the fact you took the test more than once.

WHAT IS ON THE LSAT?	
Multiple Choice Section	
Reading Comprehension Questions	These questions measure the ability to read, with understanding and insight, examples of lengthy and complex materials similar to those commonly encountered in law school. The Reading Comprehension section contains four sets of reading questions, each consisting of a selection of reading material, followed by five to eight questions that test reading and reasoning abilities.
Analytical Reasoning Questions	These questions measure the ability to understand a structure of relationships and to draw logical conclusions about that structure. You are asked to reason deductively from a set of statements and rules or principles that describe relationships among persons, things, or events.
Logical Reasoning Questions	These questions assess the ability to analyze, critically evaluate, and complete arguments as they occur in ordinary language. Each Logical Reasoning question requires the test taker to read and comprehend a short passage, then answer a question about it.
Written Section	
Essay	A 35-minute writing sample is administered at the end of the test. The writing sample is designed to let you demonstrate your persuasive writing skills. The writing sample is not scored by LSAC, but law schools will examine the reasoning, clarity, organization, language usage, and writing mechanics you display in your sample. Copies of the writing sample are sent to all law schools to which you apply. This portion of the LSAT tests ability to form an argument based on given facts, support an argument, and use written English to express an idea.

From: <http://www.lsac.org/JD/LSAT/about-the-LSAT.asp>

Suggested Application Timeline

Before Junior Year	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on getting good grades, especially in classes that relate to law, writing, and reasoning • Try to get experience in the field through an internship related to the legal profession • Talk to people who have been through the process and can give you an idea of what to expect 	
Fall of Junior Year	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign up for a student account on the LSAC website and become familiar with its procedures • Start researching potential law schools that fit your interests • Get in touch with the pre-law advisor • If taking the LSAT following your junior year, start preparing; Register for an LSAT preparation course 	
Spring of Junior Year	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If taking a summer LSAT, register and continue your preparations for the test • If taking a fall LSAT, start preparing; Register for an LSAT preparation course 	
Summer Before Senior Year	
May- June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to prepare for the LSAT • Start narrowing down the law schools you are interested in
July-August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare your personal statement and resume; have them both reviewed by an advisor • Register with the Credential Assembly Service (CAS) on the LSAC website • Start compiling the information and sending in official transcripts to CAS
Fall of Senior Year	
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Professors about letters of recommendation and provide them with the forms and information they need to complete your recommendations • Continue polishing your resume and personal statement • Visit law schools and continue to narrow down your list • Fill out the application forms on CAS
October- November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a fall LSAT if necessary • Complete your application materials and submit well ahead of the due date • Make copies of all the application materials you upload or send • Start looking for financial aid
December- January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up with law schools to confirm that all your materials were received • Send your updated transcript to CAS
Spring of Senior Year	
February- April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weigh your options and, if possible, negotiate financial aid packages • If possible, visit the law schools at the top of your list • Make a decision, and send an acceptance letter to your top choice, and “no thank you” letters to the other schools

Asking for Letters of Recommendation

Professors receive many requests for letters of recommendation. The best thing you can do for yourself and your professor is to be organized and to ask *well in advance* of the due date. You will more than likely ask each professor for several recommendations, so make it as simple and clear as possible.

Make a folder for each professor and include:

- A document with information about you:
 - Contact information
 - Majors/minors
 - How long you have known the professor
 - Courses you have taken from the professor/ grade you received
 - Extra-curricular activities
 - Career and educational goals
- A list of the schools you are applying to. For each entry include:
 - The name of the school and the specific program
 - Date the letter of recommendation is due
 - Note if it is to be submitted online or by mail
 - Address where it is to be sent
- Include the forms they are to fill out and sign or links to the online forms
 - Completely fill out your portion and sign where appropriate
 - Clearly label the required fields, due dates, etc.

Some tips:

- Ask professors who know you well, and who you think can comfortably evaluate your work and character
- Give professors the information and forms as early as possible
- Don't be afraid to remind professors about an upcoming due date (a card thanking them for writing the letters of recommendation is a great reminder!)
- Provide them relevant and clear information about yourself and the programs to which you are applying

Contact APU's Pre-Law Advisor to get started!

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