



AZUSA PACIFIC
UNIVERSITY

**Department of History
and Political Science**

**A Guide to
Law School Applications**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| <u>General Requirements</u> | <u>3</u> |
| <u>Getting Started</u> | <u>4</u> |
| <u>The LSAT</u> | <u>6</u> |
| <u>Suggested Application Timeline</u> | <u>8</u> |
| <u>Asking for Recommendations</u> | <u>9</u> |
| <u>Advice from Graduates</u> | <u>10</u> |
| <u>Resources</u> | <u>11</u> |
| <u>People to Contact</u> | <u>11</u> |
| <u>Department Faculty</u> | <u>12</u> |

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.com. 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.

➤ **Transcripts**

Another very important factor in your admission is your academic performance as an undergraduate.

➤ **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, civil procedure, international law), but if you are looking for a particular specialty, such as entertainment law or public policy advocacy, then be sure that your interests are covered in the curriculum.

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. In fact, some schools look for students with non-law backgrounds in an intentional effort to diversify their student body. 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, then this may be a good indication that 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 154. 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.

Time Off and Work Experience *Before* Law School?

Many law students report that they wish they had taken time off in between college and law school to work or travel, and those who did take time off often say it was a good decision. You can be successful in law school either way, but taking time off from academia has benefits you should consider. Time off can give you a “mental breather” from academic rigors and diversify your experiences. It can provide you with more time to focus on studying for the LSAT. If you can find a job for a year or two, you can save money for school. If you find a job or internship in the legal profession, you can get an “inside look” at what practicing law is really like and see if it’s right for you.

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 averaged, and 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. 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 4 times a year: February, June, October, and December. For fall admittance to law school (following your graduation from APU), it is recommended that you take either the June test at the conclusion of your junior year OR the October test in the fall of your senior year.
- Registration deadlines are generally one month before the test date.
- The test fee for the LSAT is approximately \$170; there is an extra fee for late test registration, and a reporting fee for your scores to be sent to additional schools.
- Plan on only taking the LSAT only once. Repeats are possible, but the scores are averaged – and you cannot take the LSAT more than 3 times in any two-year period.
- The LSAT is scored on a scale from 120-180. Aim for a minimum score of 150.
- The exam will last approximately 170 minutes. Make sure to take a passport-sized photo with you to the test center on the day of the exam.

| 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. Analytical Reasoning questions reflect the kinds of complex analyses that a law student performs in the course of legal problem solving. |
| 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. The questions are designed to assess a wide range of skills involved in thinking critically, with an emphasis on skills that are central to legal reasoning. These skills include drawing well-supported conclusions, reasoning by analogy, determining how additional evidence affects an argument, applying principles or rules, and identifying argument flaws. |
| Written Section | |
| Essay | A 35-minute writing sample is administered at the end of the test. LSAC does not score the writing sample, but 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"> • Start researching potential Law Schools that fit your interests • Get in touch with the pre-law advisor • If taking the June LSAT, start preparing; Register for an LSAT preparation course | |
| Spring of Junior Year | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign up on the LSAC website and become familiar with its procedures • Register for the June LSAT • If taking the October 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 • Take the June LSAT; if necessary, register for the October LSAT to retake it |
| 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 • If taking the October LSAT, continue to prepare |
| 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 the October LSAT • Complete your application materials and send everything in 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 and the grades 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.

- If applicable, include stamped, addressed envelopes (paper-clipped to each corresponding form)

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 with relevant and clear information about yourself and the programs to which you are applying

Advice from Graduates

“I wish that I would have taken a year off to work and study for the LSAT before applying to law school. I am happy with where I am at now, but I think that I would have done better on the LSAT with more prep time, and without a full class load.”

-Jack Anderson, Political Science 2012
San Diego Law School

“I think the main thing I wish I had done was take a year or two off, get a job at a law firm as a paralegal (or something else law-related that you don't need a law degree for), and study for the LSAT a bit longer.”

-Ryan Loofbourrow, Political Science 2011
Vanderbilt University Law School

“Make sure you take research and writing focused courses so that you can really refine your personal style of writing, develop the ability to be concise and to the point, and to make sure you understand the fundamentals of research strategies. Do not pick a school that has a prestigious reputation over a school that focuses on practical skills. Check the school's bar passage rate. The bar pass rate is a good indicator of how solid the education at that school is. Finally, make sure that this is really the path for you before you go and spend thousands of dollars on a legal education. Most people don't realize that most of a lawyer's working hours are spent reading and writing about the law. Talk to practicing attorneys about their experiences and what their jobs are like.”

-Brian Williamson, Political Science 2010
Phoenix School of Law

Resources

Law School Admission Council

<http://www.lsac.org/>

Searching for a Law School

Official LSAC Guide

https://officialguide.lsac.org/release/OfficialGuide_Default.aspx

Top Law Schools

<http://www.top-law-schools.com/>

Law School Predictor

<http://www.lawschoolpredictor.com/>

LSAT Test Prep Companies and Resources

Blueprint

<http://blueprintprep.com/>

Kaplan

<http://www.kaptest.com/LSAT/Home/index.html>

TestMasters

<http://www.testmasters.net/Lsat>

PowerScore

http://www.powerscore.com/lSAT/content_index.cfm

Princeton Review

<http://www.princetonreview.com/law-school.aspx>

People to Contact

Doug Hume – Pre-Law Advisor, Assistant Professor of Political Science, practicing attorney, and department alum. Prof. Hume will be your primary contact for all questions concerning the law school application process: dhume@apu.edu.

Michael Hestrin – District Attorney for Riverside County and Adjunct Professor of Political Science. Mr. Hestrin is available to discuss career possibilities and offer general words of wisdom on the legal profession: mhestrin71@gmail.com.

Chris Jennings – Associate General Counsel for APU, Adjunct Professor of Political Science, and department alum. Mr. Jennings is available to discuss career possibilities and offer general words of wisdom on the legal profession: cjennings@apu.edu.

Department Faculty

Still not sure where to start? Here's where your professors earned their degrees.

History

Verónica A. Gutiérrez, M.F.A., Ph.D.

Ph.D. University of California, Los Angeles, 2012
C.Phil. University of California, Los Angeles, 2007
M.A. University of California, Los Angeles, 2006
M.F.A. Pennsylvania State University, 2004
B.A. University of San Francisco, 2000

Brad Hale, Ph.D.

Ph.D. University of Connecticut, 2005
M.A. University of Connecticut, 1993
B.A. Vassar College, 1989

David Lambert, Ph.D.

Ph.D. Claremont Graduate University, 2008
M.B.A. Stanford University, 1970
M.A. University of Pittsburgh, 1966
B.A. Georgetown University, 1965

Bryan Lamkin, Ph.D.

Ph.D. University of California, Riverside, 1997
M.Div. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1990
M.A. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1989
B.A. University of Washington, 1981

Edmund Mazza, Ph.D.

Ph.D. City University of New York, 2004
M.A. City University of New York, 1998
B.A. City University of New York, 1993

Ethan Schrum, Ph.D.

Ph.D. University of Pennsylvania, 2009
M.A. Wheaton College, 2004
M.S. Northwestern University, 2001
B.S. Illinois Wesleyan University, 1999

Political Science

Christopher Flannery, Ph.D.

Ph.D. Claremont Graduate School, 1980
M.A. Claremont Graduate School, 1976
M.A. The London School of Economics and Political Science, 1975
B.A. California State University, Northridge, 1971

Doug Hume, J.D.

J.D. Pepperdine School of Law, 1997
B.A. Azusa Pacific University, 1993

Dan Palm, Ph.D.

Ph.D. Claremont Graduate School, 1991
M.A. University of Chicago, 1980
B.A. Augustana College, 1979

Abbylin Sellers, Ph.D.

Ph.D. Claremont Graduate University, 2012
M.A. Regent University, 2002
B.A. Westmont College, 1999

Jennifer Walsh, Ph.D.

Ph.D. Claremont Graduate University, 2000
M.A. Claremont Graduate University, 1998
B.A. University of California, Riverside, 1992

David Weeks, Ph.D.

Ph.D. Loyola University, Chicago, 1991
M.A. Indiana State University, 1981
B.S. Indiana Wesleyan University, 1980

Adjunct Faculty

Charles Carrillo:

M.A., California State University, Fullerton, 2008

Steven Childs:

Ph.D., Claremont Graduate University

Derek Fowler:

Ph.D., Claremont Graduate University

Wade Harrington:

M.A., California State University, Fullerton, 2006

Michael Hestrin:

J.D. & M.A., Stanford University, 1997

Sabrina Jimenez:

M.A., University of California, Riverside, 2011

Ea Madrigal:

Ph.D., University of California, Riverside (in progress)

Stephen Nelson:

M.A., University of California, Riverside, 1992

Brian Plummer:

Ph.D., Claremont Graduate University, 2011