



Gap Year(s) & Law School

Once you have decided that you want to go to law school and start planning your timeline, you may want to ask yourself if you would benefit from taking a gap year or years before going.



– Here are some questions to ask yourself:

Would you benefit from a break?

If you are a traditional student, you have been in school for quite some time. Do you want to commit yourself to another three years of school after four years of undergrad? If you find yourself saying “I want to directly go to law school because I’m afraid of losing momentum by waiting and I will just never go”, ask yourself if this is really true? If you are afraid you will never go, how committed are you then to law school? Many students experience burn out during their graduate studies. A great way to prevent that from happening is making sure you give your mind, body, and mental health some care before committing to law school.

How prepared and confident are you to go to law school?

Did you do any internships, gain experiences, and/or network while you were an undergrad? Although academics prepared you in one aspect, internships, jobs, and other experiences can help you learn and gain real world experience about the profession. If you were unable to gain this insight and experience, consider taking gap years to do so. Going to law school is a big commitment. A great way of building confidence and showing this commitment is by experience.

What should I do during my gap years? What looks best to law schools?

Law schools are not looking for anything in particular. What is most important is that you are active during your gap year(s). This can mean working full-time, a fellowship, community service (e.g Teach for America, AmeriCorps, or the Peace Corps), or traveling. It can also be a combination of activities. Consider what type of experiences you want to gain that can help you feel confident about your commitment to law school and becoming a lawyer. By all means, these experiences do not have to be legal related and in fact, this can make you a more interesting applicant.



– Here are some factors to consider:

The average age of a 1L Law school student is 24

This means the average time a student takes off is between 2-3 years before going to law school. It is very common among students to take more than just one gap year. Giving yourself time to mature, gain self-confidence and real world experience can be a great advantage not just personally and professionally, but in preparation for law school.

Your senior year grades will be included in the GPA calculation

If you apply after you graduate, your senior year grades will be included in your LSAC GPA calculation. This may potentially increase your GPA and make you a more competitive applicant compared to using your end of junior year GPA.

Gap years allow time for full-time work, which can make you more attractive to legal employers for internships during law school and jobs after graduating with your JD

Many students assume that once they get into law school, they will not have to think about internships and career for the next three years. This is not true and most 1L students have to decide very early on where they want to do their internships and what area of law they want to study. If you are a student that has worked full-time in a related field, this will be advantageous to you not only getting the 1L and 2L summer internships you want, but also getting jobs after you graduate. Your resume in comparison to other law students will be more comprehensive and competitive to employers.



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GAP YEAR FACTS

A Gap Year is a structured time of personal growth when students take a break from formal education to increase self-awareness, challenge comfort zones and experiment with possible careers.



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