
APPLYING TO LAW SCHOOL

WHAT TO DO & WHEN TO DO IT



THE APPLICATION

You will apply to law school through the Law School Admission Council (LSAC).

Law Schools follow a rolling admissions process.

Applications become available in September and should be completed by early November, well before Spring deadlines.

Apply with the intention to matriculate in the Fall. Deferrals are possible, but not guaranteed.

A complete application consists of:

- ① Individual Law School Application
- ② Personal Statement
- ③ Law School Resume
- ④ 1-3 Letters of Recommendation
- ⑤ Dean's Letter/Certification
- ⑥ LSAC Law School Report with official academic transcript(s) and LSAT score(s)

PHASE I

BEFORE YOU APPLY



ACADEMIC RIGOR & ACHIEVEMENT

In your undergraduate career, aim to demonstrate academic initiative.

Taking one course Pass/Fail or withdrawing from one course is not a problem. Avoid a pattern.

When applying, you will need to have your official transcript sent to LSAC. Request an official transcript through the Penn Registrar at <https://www.registrar.upenn.edu/student-services/transcripts.html>



Take increasingly advanced, upper-level coursework as you progress through college.



Take advantage of opportunities to challenge yourself academically, such as independent research, an honors thesis, graduate level coursework.

CREDENTIAL ASSEMBLY SERVICE (CAS)

To apply to **US** and **Canadian** law schools, you need to create a **CAS** account through **LSAC** for a **\$195** fee.



CAS is the online portal where you will obtain all electronic applications and submit your application materials.



Open a CAS account by registering at www.lsac.org.
Creating a CAS account is a separate step from registering for the LSAT.

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Your account will be valid for five years. You can open a CAS account even if you are not yet ready to apply.

THE LSAT

Prepare for and take the LSAT in advance of applying.

For more advice on the LSAT,
visit our pre-law website at
[https://careerservices.upenn.edu/
law-school-admission-test-lsat/](https://careerservices.upenn.edu/law-school-admission-test-lsat/)

- ① The LSAT is offered approximately **9** times each year. You should register **2-3** months in advance.
- ② Test scores are valid for **5** years.
- ③ We recommend taking the LSAT by October and applying by early November of your chosen application cycle because law schools follow a rolling admissions process.

PHASE 2

IN THE SUMMER BEFORE YOU APPLY



LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Most law schools require 2 letters of recommendation with a strong preference for academic letters. If a law school accepts more than 2 letters, consider getting a third letter from a supervisor, especially if you are in the work force.

Your recommenders will send their letters directly to your CAS account.



Your recommenders should know you and your work well. Their title or position is less important than what they have to say about you.



Cultivate relationships with your letter writers through office hours and by staying in touch.



Give your recommenders at least 4-6 weeks to complete their letters before you intend to submit your applications.

LAW SCHOOL RESUME

This is an opportunity to explain your experiences in detail. Unlike a job resume, most law school resumes can be 2 pages in length. Highlight the following:

For more advice and sample resumes, visit our prelaw website at [https://careerservices.upenn.edu/summary-for-law-school/](https://careerservices.upenn.edu/resume-for-law-school/)



Extracurricular Activities

Leadership
Community Service



Education

Honors
Awards



Professional Experiences

Full-Time Employment
Summer Internships

PERSONAL STATEMENT

This essay will provide a personal, non-quantitative impression of you as an applicant.

For more advice on personal statements, visit our pre-law website at

<https://careerservices.upenn.edu/law-school-personal-statement/>

- ① Discuss your strengths and/or passions through 1 or 2 anecdotes that illustrate who you are as a person.
- ② You can begin drafting a 2-page personal statement before you have access to the individual law school applications. For the most part, you will submit the same essay to all law schools, abiding by their particular instructions regarding formatting. The prompt will differ by school, but the prompts are intentionally open-ended.

PHASE 3

IN THE FALL OF YOUR APPLICATION CYCLE



LIST OF LAW SCHOOLS

Apply to a realistic range of law schools, including reach schools, in-range schools and safety schools. Applicants apply to an average of 9 to 11 schools.

Your GPA and LSAT are important, but they are not predictive of admission.

There are Penn-specific admissions statistics available on our website at <https://careerservices.upenn.edu/law-school-statistics-for-penn-applicants/>

When creating your list, consider:



Program



Career
Placement



Class Size



Location

ADDENDA & SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAYS

Some law schools will invite you to submit additional, shorter essays.

Explanatory Addenda

An explanatory addendum provides an opportunity to address anything in your application that you think requires context or explanation.

Not every applicant will submit an addendum.

Potential topics include a health issue or other extenuating circumstance that may have impacted your LSAT or academic performance.

You must submit an addendum if you have a disciplinary violation.

Supplemental Essays

Supplemental essays may include a diversity statement or an explanation of why you are a good fit for a particular school.

These are optional. However, completing these essays will convey your enthusiasm for the law school.

Interpret “diversity” broadly; however, you should not submit a diversity statement if you really do not have anything to say on the topic.

RESOURCES

Pre-Law Website

<https://careerservices.upenn.edu/applying-to-law-school/>

Advising Appointments

30-minute appointments in-person, over the phone, or by video conference

Schedule via Handshake at <https://upenn.joinhandshake.com/> or by calling 215.898.1789

Walk-In Hours

15-minute, in-person meetings for quick questions

Call 215.898.1789 for days and times

Email

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