Law School: What It Takes & How to Get There

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San Francisco State University

March 11, 2019
Basics on Law School Application Process

- We’ll talk today about the basic processes for looking at law school.

- I will give an honest assessment. No sugarcoating; just the facts!

- Keep in mind that this is a process; you don’t eat the elephant in one bite.

- In other words...
Don’t Freak Out!
Before we go into the processes for applying to law school, I want to show you the factual reality of what the law school application market looks like.

You need to understand how supply and demand impacts the assessments made by law schools in their admissions process.

Law schools are no different than any other school or industry; macro-economic conditions impact funding, which impacts admissions and scholarship considerations.

Let's take a look at some data first...
Applicants: Total

**APPLICANTS BY LSAT SCORE BANDS**

Highest LSAT Score Counts ABA Applicants to All Terms 1993 through 2016

- Total
- 150-159
- 120-149
- 160-180

LSAT Score Group Count vs. Academic Class Year

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Applicants: Number of Applications

ABA APPLICATIONS PER APPLICANT
FALL 2000 – 2016

15+
10-14
5-9
2-4
1

Note: Data prior to 2016 include applicants to fall terms only. Data 2016 and onward include applicants to all academic terms.
Applicants: Age

% OF TOTAL ABA APPLICANTS BY AGE GROUPS
ALL TERMS 2016

PRELIMINARY END-OF-YEAR APPLICANT VOLUMES

- 22 & Under: 25.75%
- 23-25: 36.27%
- 26-30: 21.28%
- 31-35: 7.28%
- Over 35: 9.42%

Note: Beginning academic year 2016, applicant counts include applicants to all academic terms and exclude deferrals.
### ABA Applicants by Sex

% of Total Applicant Population  
Fall 2012 – Fall 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Indicated</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Prior to 2016, applicant volumes included only applicants to fall academic terms and included deferrals.
Basic Steps

1. Research Law Schools
2. Register with LSAC (and CAS)
3. Take LSAT
4. Do Fall of Application Tasks
5. Finalize List of Schools
6. Tailor Materials (as necessary)
7. Complete FAFSA
8. Await Decisions
9. Negotiate
Research Law Schools

- Look at rankings.
- Consider regional concerns.
- Consider location of school.
  1. Can you *live* there?
  2. Area feeds into legal market?
- Consider clinics.
- Can you get in?

https://officialguide.lsac.org/release/ugpalsat/ugpalsat.aspx
LSAT & GPA.

- Yeah, other stuff too…
Register for LSAT

- Remember deadlines (about 3 months out).
- Fee Waiver...?
- Accommodations request...?
## 2019-2020 LSAT Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, June 3, 2019</td>
<td>12:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, July 15, 2019</td>
<td>12:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, September 21, 2019</td>
<td>8:30 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, October 28, 2019</td>
<td>12:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, November 25, 2019</td>
<td>8:30 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, January 13, 2020</td>
<td>12:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, February 22, 2020</td>
<td>8:30 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, March 30, 2020</td>
<td>12:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, April 25, 2020</td>
<td>8:30 a.m.</td>
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</table>
Take LSAT

- Recommended: June/July.
- Re-do: September/October.
- Test Components:
  1. Logical Reasoning.
  2. Reading Comprehension.
  3. Logic Games.
  4. Writing Section.
- Changes coming:
  1. Separate writing test (allegedly by June 2019).
  2. Fully electronic LSAT (allegedly by September 2019).
LSAT Strategies

- Study 4-6 months.
- Take a baseline test; do continual diagnostics to see which areas you’re better/worse in.
- **Do a test review course.**
  - Kaplan
  - Power Score
  - Fox
  - Princeton Review
  - Alpha Score
  - Many, many others...
Fall of Application Year Stuff

- Send Transcript to LSAC.
- Get Letters of Recommendation.
  1. Typically need 2-3.
  2. Recommend 1-1 split (1 academic; 1 practical).
- Finalize resume.
- Write personal statement.
- Write addenda and supplemental essays:
  - Grade addendum.
  - LSAT addendum...
- Apply (early is good).
My Story
Accepted; Now What?

- Negotiate.
- How closely ranked are the schools?
- What’s the worst that can happen?
The Law School Application Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Ideal Deadline</th>
<th>Drop-dead Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study for the LSAT †</td>
<td>4-5 months prior to the test date</td>
<td>3 months prior to the test date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for LSAC ‡ fee waiver, if needed</td>
<td>As soon as possible</td>
<td>As soon as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register for the LSAT</td>
<td>June test: by March</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sept. Oct.: by June</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec.: by August</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for LSAT accommodations, if needed</td>
<td>After LSAT registration</td>
<td>After LSAT registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research law schools</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register with the CAS Δ</td>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>October 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send transcript(s) to the CAS</td>
<td>August 31</td>
<td>October 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write resume</td>
<td>September 15</td>
<td>November 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure letters of recommendation</td>
<td>September 30</td>
<td>December 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write personal statement</td>
<td>October 15</td>
<td>January 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write addenda and supplemental essays</td>
<td>October 30</td>
<td>January 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take the LSAT</td>
<td>June or Sept./Oct.</td>
<td>December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize list of law schools</td>
<td>November 10</td>
<td>January 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor materials to schools’ requirements</td>
<td>November 19</td>
<td>January 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply to law schools</td>
<td>November 20–30</td>
<td>January 10–20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank your recommenders</td>
<td>December 10</td>
<td>January 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive admissions decisions</td>
<td>December - August</td>
<td>February - August</td>
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<tr>
<td>File taxes</td>
<td>February 10</td>
<td>February 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete the FAFSA *</td>
<td>February 15</td>
<td>February 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete financial aid applications</td>
<td>February 28</td>
<td>February 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respond to wait lists</td>
<td>As needed</td>
<td>As needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit law schools</td>
<td>February - April</td>
<td>February - April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Send first deposit</td>
<td>March - May</td>
<td>March - May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Celebrate¹</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Summer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Send second deposit</td>
<td>May - July</td>
<td>May - July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter law school</td>
<td>August or September</td>
<td>August or September</td>
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Other Resources II
Timeline for Applying to Law School

**January before application year**
- Create your LSAC Online Services account at https://os.lsac.org/Release/Logon/Access.aspx
- Read the Law School Admission Council's LSAT & LSDAS Information Book (available online at http://www.lsac.org/).
- If you plan to take the June LSAT (recommended), begin preparing for the LSAT:
  - Take the sample test on a timed basis.
  - Order additional practice materials from...
- Approximately three weeks after you take the LSAT, the LSDAS will e-mail your LSAT report to you, indicating your current test results and the results of any previous tests for which you registered in the last five years.
- Visit http://officialguide.lsac.org/ to view the Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools. Identify schools that meet your specialty criteria, read their literature/visit their websites, and begin reviewing their applications.

**August before application year**
Syracuse University

College of Arts & Sciences
Advising and Career Services

Law School Application Timeline

The following timeline is designed to walk you through the application process. To maximize your chances of acceptance to your desired schools, we suggest that you send in completed applications between Halloween and Thanksgiving (if you plan to enroll the following fall semester). Consider the first week in January as the latest time to submit completed applications to your selected schools. The deadlines posted by the law schools, which fall anywhere from January 1st to May 1st (and even beyond), represent the period when admissions officers must read through thousands of applications. Since it is a rolling admission process, you...