

LAW SCHOOL APPLICATION TIMELINE



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Whether it's always been your ideal career, or it came to you in a dream one night, you've decided you want to apply to law school. If you've chosen not to take a gap year before law school, balancing your junior and senior years of college along with law school applications could be tough. Of course, the same difficulty applies to a gap year when you might be working a 9-5 job and struggle to find the energy to study for the LSAT.

No matter your situation, knowing important dates and deadlines can help you stay on top of the law school admissions cycle. We have a timeline for law school applications outlined below:

BEFORE YOU BEGIN APPLYING DECEMBER-JANUARY

- Rack up extracurriculars for law school - common ones such as debate or Model UN are great, but think outside the box as well. Try to find volunteer experience that can help you stand out. Conduct research with a professor in an area of law that appeals to you. Find an internship as a legal assistant at a law firm. Volunteer to help refugees in your community. The possibilities are endless.
- Beef up your legal résumé through relevant jobs, honing skills that would be useful in the legal world. You can work as a legal assistant at a law firm, or as a secretary for a senator. It doesn't always have to be directly related to law though. As long as you're able to connect your goals and skills to those tied to pursuing a legal career, working in almost any field is okay!
- Prepare for the LSAT. If you are ready, register for an LSAC account and take the LSAT in February.

ONCE YOU HAVE DECIDED TO APPLY

FEBRUARY-MAY

- Continue studying for the LSAT. Create a study schedule and take many, many timed practice tests.
- View upcoming LSAT dates and register for the June LSAT if you haven't taken it before then.
- Start talking to potential recommenders so that they can prepare to write letters for you in the upcoming months. Choose recommenders who actually know you well.
- Start formulating your law school list. Don't just apply to the T-14 schools! Consider a range of fit and safety schools as well.
- Sign up for the Credential Assembly Service (CAS), a service by the LSAC, which provides law schools of your choice with your law school report consisting of your transcript, LSAT scores, and letters of recommendation.
- Visit law school campuses if possible. Visiting a school can help you get a feel of the environment, get a glimpse of a typical day, and ask current students any questions you might have about their experience. If you schedule an appointment ahead of time, you can even meet with admissions or financial aid officers and talk through the opportunities available and application requirements.
- Prepare for the LSAT. If you are ready, register for an LSAC account and take the LSAT in February.

JUNE-AUGUST

- Finalize your law school list with a good balance of reach, fit, and safety schools. Students usually apply to 10-12 schools.

The opening date for each application depends on the school. Most open September 1, but some, such as Stanford, open earlier in August.

- Prepare to retake the LSAT in September if needed. To avoid mistakes you might have made the first time, practice as much as possible, especially emphasizing trouble areas. Create a study schedule, form a study group, use flash cards - pull out all the stops to make sure you get a higher score this time.
- Start drafting your personal statement. This essay should showcase what makes you a must-have candidate. What unique experiences do you bring that your peers can't?
- Finish working on your resumé. Proofread and polish it, ensuring that the most relevant and impressive experiences are listed first.
- Request that your transcript from college be sent to LSAC.
- Check in with your recommenders about their letters. Inform them of academic and resumé updates if applicable. Be enthusiastic and appreciative!



SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER

- Remember that the length of the personal statement varies by program, so be prepared to modify it according to each law school's requirements. Or, stay ahead of the game, and prepare multiple versions of different lengths.
- Law schools provide the opportunity for a diversity statement, a prompted response, or an addendum. If not about identity, the diversity statement can elaborate on a unique activity that you've engaged in that others may not have.
- Law schools also ask for supplemental essays. Many schools, like Yale, ask you to write a 250-word essay on a topic of your choice to get a sense of your passions, character, and your analytical and writing skills. Use this as an opportunity to talk about your goals and interests, an anecdote that might define you, or your thoughts on a current event.
- Finish putting the final touches on your personal statement and diversity statement. Edit, edit, edit.
- Urge your recommenders to submit their letters by the end of September so that they don't slow down your application process.
- Retake the LSAT in October if needed.
- Be aware that the FAFSA opens in October. If you require financial aid, don't delay!
- Finish updating the information in your law school report.
- Check and double check all the components of your application. Proofread your essays as much as possible. Make sure all of the information is correct.
- Submit your applications when you are ready, ideally by Halloween!
- Confirm that schools have received your completed applications.

DECEMBER-MARCH

- Most schools' applications close around March-May, so double-check the deadline for each of the schools on your list if you're still working on your application.
- Attend interviews if they are available and if you are invited. Remember to clearly state why you want to become a lawyer, as well as why you are interested in the particular law school you are interviewing for. Prepare at least a couple of questions to ask the admissions officer at the end of the interview.
- Wait to hear back from law schools on a rolling basis. Early decision applicants hear back between mid-December and early January. The latest Regular Admissions applicants hear back is mid-May.
- If you are waitlisted at a school you really want to attend, send in a letter of continued interest and an updated resumé.
- Make your final decision, and send your letter of acceptance to your school of choice.



APRIL-JUNE

- If you're still in college, submit updated transcripts to CAS to be sent to your future law school.
- Inform the law schools which you won't be attending of your decision.
- Make sure you have housing arrangements for the fall - whether on campus or off campus.
- Send thank you notes to your recommenders for taking the time to write letters on your behalf.
- Attend admitted student open houses, and prepare for law school.

