

Four-Year Law School Admissions Checklist

Freshman and Sophomore Years of College

1. Establish initial contact with the College of Arts & Sciences Pre-Law Advisor: Dr. Roger Handberg, Colbourn Hall, Rm 416 (telephone # 407-823-2608)
2. Choose an undergraduate major that will challenge you to write, read, and think critically. Be flexible with your degree and career goal –**law is not for everyone**.
3. Regardless of your chosen major, choose a balanced and diversified course of study, including classes that encourage **logical reasoning** and good **writing skills**. You will need these skills to do well on the LSAT and in law school.
4. Select an academic advisor or faculty mentor who has an interest in your academic career and will be able to write a solid letter of recommendation for you at a later date.
5. Get to know several faculty members who inspire you intellectually and whose interests can help guide you later, including writing letters of recommendation.
6. Get involved in any pre-law related activities on or off campus (e.g., political science student organization or law club).
7. Participate in extracurricular activities that can help build needed skills in leadership, self-confidence, verbal and written communication, and mental development (e.g., debate, student government, judicial board, literary magazine or school paper, research assistantship, election campaigns or activities in the community including religious or helping others). The number of activities you participated in does not impress Law schools but the quality of the experience is more important. In your personal statement that is completed as part of the admissions package, you will have the opportunity to relate those activities directly to your potential to contribute the law school environment. So, mere membership is not as important as active participation including leading different projects or programs sponsored by the group with which you are affiliated.
8. Read broadly, including law-related materials (see **Suggested Readings**) and talk to lawyers about the legal profession (including the negatives as well as the positives).
9. Purchase a LSAT PrepKit or any of the commercial LSAT prep manuals and begin working through them to identify weak areas which you might be able to mediate through coursework or a commercial LSAT prep course.

10. Build an outstanding lower-division record and GPA. Take corrective steps to improve any low standings. **It is increasingly difficult to gain acceptance into nationally recognized law schools.**

Junior Year of College:

1. Evaluate your record thus far, making sure that your course of study demonstrates substance as well as breadth. Improve GPA and select elective courses that emphasize **reading** and **writing** skills.
2. Take a law-related course if you have not already done so to see if the materials interest you. You may find that the law doesn't really interest you after all and it is better to find this out now rather than your second year of law school.
3. Study The Official Guide to U. S. Law Schools to determine which law schools interest you and at which you appear eligible for admission. Obtain the schools' catalogs (catalogs are available for examination from the College of Arts & Sciences Pre-Law Advisor) and, if possible, visit the law schools that you find interesting.
4. Get a copy of the LSAT Information Book from the College of Arts & Sciences Pre-Law Advisor, the Department of Political Science, Colbourn Hall, Rm. 415 (telephone # 407-823-2608), or the Counseling and Testing Center, Recreational Services Bldg, Rm 203 (telephone #407-823-2811). Familiarize yourself with its contents.
5. Register to take the June LSAT or the early Fall exam. Subscribe to LSDAS.
6. Continue working on LSAT prep materials; do a LSAT Prep Test. Should you take a commercial prep course?
7. Evaluate your career goals in light of your undergraduate record thus far and your performance on LSAT materials or test.
8. At the end of the year, begin gathering materials for LSDAS. This allows time for colleges to send copies of all your transcripts to LSDAS as early as possible in your senior year. You must supply a transcript from every academic institution you attend up to the time of application.
9. Pick up letters of recommendation materials from College of Arts & Sciences Pre-Law Advisor. Discuss writing letters of recommendation with those faculty you would like to do so, alerting them that you will be in touch with them the beginning of Fall semester.

10. Spend the summer polishing your personal statement or essay. The College of Arts & Sciences Pre-law Advisor will read your statement and give you a reaction to what was written. Be careful about spelling and grammar since law school admissions committees are looking for evidence of writing skills whether bad or good. Remember the personal statement is your opportunity to put the best case forward for your application. Be honest, lies or exaggerations can often be detected given the other information in your admissions file. If a lie is discovered, your chances just went to zero.

Senior Year of College:

1. Obtain **Law School Admissions Process Checklist for Seniors** from College of Arts & Sciences Pre-Law Advisor.
2. If you are worried about a particularly difficult course, put it off until Spring Semester if you can. Don't divert your attention from the major tasks of Fall semester – the **LSAT** (unless you already took the exam last June) and getting your law school **applications** out. Law school admissions committees will make their decisions based upon your GPA at the end of the Fall semester.
3. If your LSAT score was low on the June or October exams, consider retaking the exam in the following cycle (October or December). But honestly evaluate your score. Was it lower than you expected? Why? Were you sick, stressed, personal matters hampering your ability to concentrate? Did you walk in cold or did you use prep materials or take prep courses? If it is the latter, you need to be realistic about your career goals. In any event, be cautioned that law school admissions committees will likely average your scores. If your application is already on file, notify the law school of your intention to retake the exam if you decide to do so.

Suggested Readings:

Edmond Cahn. The Moral Decision: Right and Wrong in the Light of American Law. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1981

Benjamin Cardozo. The Nature of the Judicial Process. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1921

Elizabeth Dworkin et al. Becoming a Lawyer: A Humanistic Perspective on Legal Education and Professionalism. St. Paul: West Publishing Co. 1981.

Thomas Ehrlich and Geoffrey C. Hazard, Jr. (eds.). Going to Law School? Readings on a Legal Career. Boston: Little, Brown. 1975.

Anthony Lewis. Gideon's Trumpet. New York: Random House. 1964.

Karl N. Llewellyn. The Bramble Bush: On the Law and Its Study. New York: Oceana Publications. 1951.

Roscoe Pound. Law and Morals. South Hackensack: Rothman Reprints. 1969.