LAW SCHOOL APPLICATION CHECKLIST

JUNIOR YEAR

Prepare for the Law School Admissions Test. Take PHIL 1313, Logic and Critical Thinking, if you haven’t already! Familiarize yourself with the test format and question types. Practice questions from released LSATs and use LSAT prep books or take a commercial test preparation course. You can prepare well with either books or courses provided you commit yourself to the method of preparation and take several timed full-length tests until you are comfortable with your consistent performance.

The following are some well-known commercial resources:

Law School Admission Council 215-968-1001 LSAC.org
- Recently released LSAT tests for low cost-practice until you are confident!
- Preparation books available
- Free descriptions of question types, sample questions with explanations, one LSAT, writing sample and videos.

Kaplan 800-KAP-TEST kaptest.com
- Oklahoma City, Norman, Stillwater, Tulsa
- Four to eight weeks of class sessions reviewing question types, diagnostic and practice tests, and access to online prep.

Get Prepped 800-508-4473 GetPrepped.com
- Norman
- 1-3 Weekend prep course and/or extensive online self-study materials.

Princeton Review 800-995-5565 princetonreview.com
- Norman
- 35-84 hours of class time and multiple practice tests during the four to eight weeks prior to each test administration.

Many other resources online!

Decide when to take the LSAT—Check the LSAC.org website. Look over test dates and registration deadlines and consider which test date will work best for you. Students planning nation-wide applications are advised to take the LSAT in February, June or September/October.
Either the Monday June test or the Saturday September/October test will allow time to consider your law school choices with your test score results in mind or if necessary sign up to repeat the test.

Some law schools have early decision deadlines that require a student to take the LSAT by September/October and submit all application materials early (typically November or December 1) to receive an admission decision by a specified date, usually sometime in January or February. Some early decision programs have a binding admission feature so you may only apply to one and are committed to attend only that school if admitted binding early decision.

The Saturday December LSAT administration provides test results in time to meet most law school application deadlines but does not allow time to reassess law school choices with consideration to test score. The December test is also less desirable as it usually falls on the Saturday before pre-finals or finals week.

The Saturday February test administration may place applicants at a disadvantage with schools that have application deadlines prior to April 1. This date may be useful for applicants on a “waiting list” who wish to improve their standing or those applying to schools with flexible application deadlines.

“Rolling” admissions process means that admission decisions are made continuously from the time the first applications are received through the time the first year class is full with qualified applicants who have confirmed a seat. Many schools also have an application deadline after which a candidate’s file would be considered at a disadvantage. In the rolling admissions process the candidate is advised to submit applications early to receive consideration for both admission and scholarship before the class is full or all scholarships are awarded.

Repeating the LSAT. Until 2006 Law Services advised law schools that repeat test scores are most valid for predicting first year performance when considered as average and required reporting of averages in year-end data. Approximately 80% of law schools used average repeat scores when calculating the admission index while the remainder of schools utilized the higher among repeat scores. Beginning in 2007 law schools were required to report the high score for candidates with more than one score reported in their end-of –year data to LSAC. While the averaged test score is still the best indicator of first year success in law school, this reporting change caused many law schools to use the high among repeat scores. Students should contact the individual schools to ask about use of repeat scores.

Read thoroughly LSAC.org website and then use the site to register for the LSAT. You may register for the Credential Assembly Service (CAS) at the same time or wait until later to do so. Nearly all ABA approved law schools require candidates to register with CAS. You must sign up and pay for CAS before you can access Transcript Request Forms or Letter of Recommendation Forms.

A few common reasons candidates choose to register for the CAS at a later date:

1. If you are uncertain about applying to law school and are taking the LSAT to see if your test score impacts this decision.
2. If you do not qualify for a LSAT fee waiver but financially need to spread the application costs out over an extra couple of months.
3. If you are completing the application very near the registration deadline and do not have sufficient time to accurately complete the CAS.

Make preliminary investigations of law schools. Review law school websites, the ABA-LSAC Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools (available to borrow from prelaw adviser or purchase through Law Services or at many bookstores) to gather general information. Consider school size, location, cost, programs, reputation, and admissions statistics. The Boston College Law School Locator charts law school admissions data and groups schools by 25th percentile GPA and LSAT. 
http://www.bc.edu/offices/careers/gradschool/law/research/lawlocator.html

Begin visiting law schools of interest.

Build your strongest GPA. If you plan to go directly to law school, junior year may be the last course work law schools see when determining your admission. Make it a strong ending in solid courses.

Consider who you will ask to provide letters of recommendation. The best recommendations come from individuals who know you and your work well. At least one should be a faculty member in your major department—keep in touch with and take additional classes with your favorite faculty. A long-term employer or professional with whom you’ve served on campus or community committees might also provide excellent information about your work ethic and ability. Law schools want recommenders to share information about how well and in what situations they know you; observations about work ethic; writing, reading and listening and thinking ability; how you compare to other law school bound students they have known.

Keep good records of educational, housing rental, and employment information. When you register for CAS you must report name and attendance dates for all colleges or universities attended (even if you withdrew after classes began so have no grades from that institution or even if you enrolled from just one course during high school or during a summer session). When you apply for the bar (typically during first year in law school) you will be asked to provide accurate address, employment, and educational history. Make a good list now while this information is still fresh. Include addresses with rental manager/landlord name address and phone; name, address, phone, owner/supervisor name and exact dates of employment.

If the information you provide does not match your transcript/s and or the information revealed in the bar review, a misconduct or irregularity investigation which could have implications or your law school/bar admission is the likely result.

SUMMER FOLLOWING JUNIOR YEAR

Review your law school possibilities. Learn about law schools in the ABA-LSAC Official Guide
to ABA-Approved Law Schools and from law school websites (linked from www.LSAC.org) and bulletins. Consider schools in light of your GPA and LSAT. Make a tentative list of those to which you plan to apply. Include some statistical long shots, a majority of reasonable chances, and a few safer choices among your initial list of schools. The national average is six applications submitted per applicant: OSU applicants average around four applications. If you plan local or regional applications only, this may be enough, but those who plan a national application process should apply to more schools in the middle of their range to increase the likelihood of admission.

Visit law schools of interest. Use your summer vacation, fall break, semester break, spring break and weekends to visit campuses of the schools you are considering. The school’s location, setting, atmosphere, staff and present students are important considerations that cannot be adequately assessed on paper alone. Which feels like the best home for you?

SENIOR YEAR -- FALL SEMESTER

Make tentative decisions about how many and to which you plan to apply.

Keep a record of all materials and correspondence you send and receive for each school. Save documents before submitting electronically.

Letters of Recommendation:

- Letters of recommendation best come from –non-related adults to whom you have reported for some type of work product-*academic, *employment (or internship), volunteer work/community service, or other significant relationship or experience through which they know your strengths well. *preferred
- Schedule visits to faculty/employers/others you are considering asking for recommendations.
- Do not bring recommendation forms on this visit.
- Renew contact with them, explain your goals and try to get a sense of how enthusiastically they support your efforts. You must be certain that recommenders have positive impressions of you and your work. Ill-chosen recommenders can have an affect on your admission. If you have any doubt about receiving a positive recommendation, visit another possible recommender or two before selecting.
- If they express enthusiastic support, collect business card information for entry into CAS Letter of Recommendation service.

You may provide recommendations in one of two ways

1. CAS Letter of Recommendation (LOR) service is provided by Law School Admission Council. This service allows unlimited number of general letters (sent to all law schools) and targeted letters of recommendation (sent to only specific school/s with message or recommender fit to the school).
In CAS, you may specify if the recommender wants to receive the Letter of Recommendation Form electronically or you may print off a paper copy. If they receive the form electronically, they are agreeing to provide their letter of recommendation electronically also. Those recommenders who prefer to mail a letter must be given a paper Letter of Recommendation form from you. Both electronic and paper versions provide a place for candidates to waive their right to review the letter which assures a candid and confidential recommendation to law schools.

2. Individual recommendations mailed to each law school. This requires more work of you and your recommenders so is only a good option if you are applying to only one or two law schools.

Deliver recommendation packets to recommenders approximately 4 weeks before you expect them to be sent. Packets might include the following:

- Note from you, thanking them in advance and reiterating your goals
- College transcript
- Resume
- Copy of a paper, essay, test, or project you completed for them. Choose your best work complete with their comments. This allows the recommender to recall specific examples of your best work to refer to in the letter.
- Letter of Recommendation Form/s from the CAS website if they want to mail the letter rather than submit it electronically.

Personal Essay or Statement:
Since most law schools do not conduct admission interviews (in OK-University of Tulsa College of Law does have an interview), your personal essay may be the only chance you have to share unique personal experiences (upbringing, obstacles overcome, work, volunteer, travel) with the admissions committee. Use this essay to demonstrate your best writing and show your unique personal characteristics.

Brainstorming for personal statement, think about:
- Why you want to go to law school? You may have a life experience that has motivated your interest in law. If not, don’t feel obligated to focus heavily on this issue unless the school asks applicants to address it.
- What about your background and life experience makes you unique and has been most pivotal in shaping who you are today?
- What you are truly most proud of accomplishing? Be more specific than making good grades.

Answers to those three questions will most likely bring up some topics that you will shape into your unique story in a personal statement. Then consider:

- Providing examples to illustrate general ideas reveals both actions and personality.
• Stick to one or two pages unless a law school gives you a lower limit or your story is so compelling that it demands a little more explanation.
• Revise it yourself; have your best friend or parent read it to see if your personality emerges from the essay; have another source review it for grammar, and prelaw advisor makes a good fourth opinion on the essay.

If you need to explain any glitches in your academic record, standardized testing history, life crises, or legal matters consider including an addendum—a separate sheet of explanation to keep such negative issues from becoming the focus of your essay.

Have transcripts from all higher educational institutions you have attended sent to CAS. Take or send Transcript Request Form found on the LSAC website to the registrar’s office of each institution. (Yes, you need to do this even for high school concurrent work or one summer course taken at another institution that appear on your unofficial OSU grade report!)

Prepare and send final applications (October through March). The CAS registration fee includes access to electronic applications for all ABA-approved law schools. Personal statements, resumes and other documents can be attached to each application electronically. Applications and attachments, as well as CAS reports, are available to law schools electronically.

**SENIOR YEAR -- SPRING SEMESTER**

Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) ([www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)) as soon as income taxes for the previous year are completed. While all graduate and professional students are considered independent, many law schools require supplemental parent information for applicants. Check with law schools to see if parent information is required and complete appropriate section of FAFSA or preferred supplemental need analysis form.

Once offer and rejection letters begin to arrive, seriously assess your options and finances. Many highly qualified applicants have choices between a generous scholarship and small debt-load at a regional school and an admission with large debt load at a nationally known school, often with cost and competitiveness options in between. Only you can assess the value of the school reputation/cost of attendance in relation to your career aspirations and personal goals.

Accept what you consider to be your best offer by April 1st and send a deposit to reserve your seat in the class. The Law School Admission Council’s Statement of Good Admission and Financial Aid Practices designates April 1st as the earliest date an applicant should have to place a deposit to hold their seat in a class (unless they applied early-admission/decision). If asked to pay a deposit earlier, a candidate may
request an extension to this date.

Notify other schools to which you were accepted that you are declining their offers. If you still have not heard from some schools or are on the wait list at others, do not be surprised if you receive offers between April and August that will present you with a late choice and the necessity of paying another seat deposit and declining the original acceptance and losing that seat deposit.

Inform your recommenders (and thank them again) and the prelaw advisor of your results and decision.

Print another Transcript Request Form from CAS website and take it to the Registrar’s Office to request a final transcript be sent to the law school after final semester grades and your degree have been posted.