

Application Timeline

Graduation from UT:	_____
Begin Law School:	_____
Early App Deadline:	September 1 - November 1, _____
Regular App Deadline:	February 1 – May 1, _____
LSAT Prep Class:	<u>3-4 months prior to taking LSAT</u>

- **Focus on your grades** so that you'll have a competitive GPA (always do as well as you can, even if you decide to attend a community college for summer courses).
- **Get involved** in some extracurricular activities. Join a group on campus that interests you, take a part-time job, and/or volunteer. If you become involved in a group as a freshman or sophomore, the chances for you to hold a leadership position as a junior or senior will greatly improve.
- **Research the legal field** as much as you can. Read books about the law, talk with current law students and lawyers, sit in a law class. Make sure that three years of law school will be worth your time, energy, and money.
- **Secure an internship** as it is a great a way to expand your resume and learn more about career fields. (NOTE: An internship at a law firm is NOT a requirement, nor necessarily recommended.)
- **Get to know your professors and employers.** Eventually, you will need to ask those that know you well for a letter of recommendation.
- **Take an LSAT practice test.** This will help determine if you really need to take a prep class, get tutoring, or self-study.

LSAT test dates:

June: Optimum test date for submitting applications by November 1st early application deadline.

September/October: Alternate test date for early application deadline.

December: Third test date within application cycle; more competitive review category as law schools stake about half of the incoming class from early applicants.

February: Final test date within application cycle; can still apply for following Fall entry, but very competitive review category as applicants are competing for the few remaining spaces in the entering class.

Mastering the LSAT

Practice, practice, practice. Regardless of whether or not you take a prep course, you should still plan on taking as many practice tests as you can.

Get up early. Except for the June test that starts at 12:30 pm, all the tests start in the morning.

Know what to expect. The exam has six total sections: four scored multiple choice sections, an unscored experimental section, and an unscored writing section.

Correct mistakes. Determine what your compulsive mistakes are when taking a test and work to correct them. Talk to someone about good test-taking strategies.

Feel free to guess. Only correct answers count, so it's ok to guess answers.

Recommendation Letters

Choose Wisely. Generally speaking, law schools prefer academic recommendations; letters that can specifically address how well you read, write, and think critically. As a result, it is very important to choose references who can speak highly of your academic work, specifically your analytical and writing abilities from first-hand knowledge.

Ask Early. If at all possible, meet with any prospective recommenders in person. The initial meeting should be a time for you to ask two very important questions: (1) Do you feel comfortable writing me a strong letter of recommendation? (2) Can you send it out by _____ (state a deadline that is at least one month BEFORE your earliest application deadline)?

NOTE: If a prospective recommender so much as blinks when you ask either question, immediately run in another direction. Otherwise, you will probably end up with a letter “damning you with faint praise.”

Letter Format. Unless otherwise specified in the application packet, the information should be in the form of a business letter, on letterhead, with an original signature.

Letter Content

A strong recommendation letter should include information about:

- The length of time and in what capacity the recommender has known you
- Writing, speaking, and other academic strengths you possess
- Advantages you may bring to the law school
- Your ability to think critically and process, analyze, and assess information
- Other “soft” characteristics you might possess, such as motivation, judgment, maturity, creativity, etc.

NOTE: Having a recommender send the letter to the law school directly will alleviate the suspicion of candidate misconduct in the application process. Past unethical practices have included: candidates soliciting letters of recommendation for law schools to which they do not intend to apply and opened the sealed letters; candidates have solicited more letters of recommendation than needed, opened them and submitted only the most favorable; and candidates have been tempted to write and submit their own letters of recommendation.

Personal Statements

The “personal statement” portion of a law school’s admissions application presents a great opportunity to sell yourself to the school. Since law schools rarely, if ever, grant interviews as part of the admissions process, you must consider your personal statement to be your interview.

Possible Personal Statement Topics

1. Something about which you are passionate, such as a sport or volunteer activity and why
2. An experience that resulted in intellectual or emotional growth
3. A challenge that you not only met, but surpassed and how the process/end result has influenced you.
4. Your academic interests and research.
5. A person who really influenced your life.
6. Diversity issues and how they impacted your life, perspective, experiences, relationships and/or choices

For a application checklist and an expanded version of this packet, go to:

<https://moody.utexas.edu/sites/default/files/ccs-pre-law-advising-packet.pdf>

Career Advisors are available to meet with for pre-law advising. Make an appointment with CCS by logging into STAR or by calling our office at 512-471-9421. For additional online resources, visit the Career Toolkit on our website (moody.utexas.edu/ccs).