LA Civil Rights

LACR Pre-Law Resource Guide

Jamila Cummings
PUBLIC POLICY FELLOW

Mina Anochie
PUBLIC POLICY FELLOW



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EDITED BY:

NICOLE BRYANT, ESQ., MPA
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
LA CIVIL RIGHTS DEPARTMENT, CITY OF LOS ANGELES



Welcome!

Dear Prospective Law Student,

Are you ready to begin your pre-law journey but don't know where to start? This comprehensive Pre-Law Resource Guide is designed to help you navigate the complexities of the Law School Application process and prepare you for your legal journey! Designed to serve as your roadmap, this guide offers invaluable insights into law school admissions, LSAT preparation, and financing your legal education. Whether you're a college freshman or a working professional seeking a career change, this resource is tailored to assist you every step of the way.

I know navigating the law school admissions process can be challenging, filled with complex information about academic, financial, and professional considerations. Rest assured, you're not alone on this journey. As someone who has walked in your shoes, I believe in your potential to succeed. This guide aims to equip you with the knowledge and confidence needed to make your legal dreams a reality. If you're able to lean on this legal journey, do it! We need your lived experiences and commitment to make this world a better place. LACR will be here to cheer you on and lift you as you prepare for this next level.

Keep the faith and keep the fight!

Capri Maddox, Esq.

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DISCLAIMER: All information listed herein are provided for informational purposes ONLY. They are not affiliated with the Los Angeles Civil Rights Department and are based solely on personal choice and recommendations. All students are encouraged to use discretion and conduct their own research.

About the LA Civil Rights Department

The LA Civil Rights Department (LACR) seeks to maintain and strengthen the city's diversity, equity, and accountability efforts. LACR is committed to reducing bias, addressing injustices, and leveling the playing field for underrepresented communities in Los Angeles through increased community engagement, equity initiatives, and upward mobility programming, such as LA Law Day, LA Medical Day, and more.

LACR is excited to represent the city's diversity and fight to create a better LA For All. The department hopes to inspire community members to advocate for their community and lead their neighbors toward a better tomorrow. For more information about the LACR and ways to get involved, please visit LAisForEveryone.com



INTRODUCTION



UNLOCKING YOUR LEGAL POTENTIAL

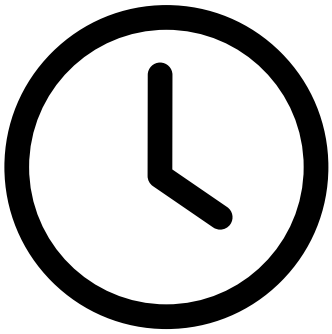
Before we discuss the details of the law school application process, you should focus on the most critical question—why law school? In order to achieve your goals, you need to know your ***"why!"*** Knowing you want to be a lawyer is a great first step, but the law school application process will require you to think critically about your **WHY**. What about law school or the legal field piques your interest? Are you looking for a career change? Are you interested in helping your community in a meaningful way? Are you interested in politics? Or maybe you have always wanted to be a lawyer, but didn't know where to start! Whatever the reason, make sure you understand your ***why*** so you have your goals in mind while crafting your application!

IS LAW SCHOOL FOR ME?

Short answer –yes! Deciding to attend law school is a choice that requires thoughtful consideration of your interests, strengths, and career aspirations. Law school is for anyone willing to work hard and commit to the rigorous academic and professional demands it requires. A law degree can open doors to various careers that encompass different sectors of society, such as human and civil rights, government, medicine, technology, entertainment, sports, and academia, to name a few. Prospective applicants with strong analytical, written, verbal, and oral skills are especially strong candidates for a JD. Many individuals find a legal degree appealing because of its ability to create lasting social change and make a positive impact on an individual level and society as a whole. In order to best gauge if law school is right for you, consider the following:

- ***Why law?*** What draws you to the legal profession? It's okay if you do not have a firm answer yet; consider your motivations and interests in pursuing a legal career!
- ***What are your skills and strengths?*** Do you have the tenacity needed to perform well in law school?
- ***Have you considered the costs associated with law school?*** Consider the financial implications associated with a legal career and the sacrifices you might have to make.

LAW SCHOOL APPLICATION



TIMELINE

The law school application process typically begins one year before the year you plan to enroll in law school. For instance, if you plan to attend law school immediately after undergrad, you need to start preparing your application during the spring of your junior year and plan to submit it during the fall of your senior year. It is **strongly recommended** that prospective applicants apply as early as possible to maximize their chances of admission. In the spring of your application year, your first steps should include creating an LSAC account and registering with Credential Assembly Services (CAS).

After registering for your first LSAT exam, you should begin researching different laws that pique your interest. Make sure to compile a diverse mix of perspective schools (mix of safety, reach, and target schools). This is also a great time to begin identifying potential recommenders. begin identifying who you want to ask for a letter of recommendation.

In the summer of your application year, ask for a letter of recommendation (LOR) from your recommender and make sure you provide your recommenders with your most up-to-date resume. During the summer, continue studying for the LSAT if you are not satisfied with your first score (most students retake the LSAT 2 - 3 times!) and begin preparation for your personal statements.

Make sure to finish gathering all necessary documents for your application (transcripts, letter of recommendation, resume/CV, and supplemental essays). After submitting your applications, make sure to celebrate your hard work!

THE LAW SCHOOL APPLICATION



LAW SCHOOL APPLICATION OVERVIEW

The law school application consists of several components that will provide the admissions committee with a comprehensive overview of your academic background, qualifications for law school, and motivations for pursuing a legal career. The components are designed to let the admissions committee learn more about you and your legal aspirations. The application consists of a personal statement, LSAT score, undergraduate transcripts, letters of recommendation, resume/curriculum vitae (CV), optional essays/statements, and addenda.

Components of the Application

Personal Statement (PS)

The personal statement is one of the most important components of your application. This is your opportunity to explain to the admissions committee why you want to go to law school and how you will help the legal profession. Use your essays to showcase your unique qualities, lived experiences, abilities, and reasons for pursuing a legal education. This is the time to brag (professionally of course!) about your achievements (academic/professional) and highlight your passion for law!

LSAT

The Law School Admission Test (LSAT) is a standardized exam designed to asses skills associated with success in law school. Your LSAT score is **extremely important** in the admission process, as it helps schools evaluate your academic potential and readiness for legal scholarship.

Undergraduate Transcripts

Law school requires official undergraduate transcripts from **ALL** universities you have attended. Your academic record provides admission committees with information about your academic performance, course selection, GPA, and the rigor of your undergraduate program. Having a formidable academic record can make you a stronger candidate for competitive law schools. Once you graduate your undergraduate GPA is set. Therefore, do all you can to protect your GPA during your undergrad school years.

THE LAW SCHOOL APPLICATION



LAW SCHOOL APPLICATION OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

Components of the Application

Letters of Recommendation

Law Schools typically require 2 - 4 letters of recommendation for the law school application process. If you are applying to law school immediately after undergrad, at least ONE of your letters of recommendation should come from a professor. If you are applying post-grad, recommendation letters can come from employers, volunteer supervisors, or anyone else (outside of family), who can attest to your abilities, character, and potential for success in law school.

Letters of recommendation are really important because they provide insight into your academic achievements, interpersonal skills, work ethic, and suitability for a legal career. Choose individuals who can write a **STRONG** letter of recommendation and really provide concrete examples to support their endorsements.

Resume/Curriculum Vitae (CV):

Your resume or CV should detail your educational background, work experience, extracurricular activities, leadership roles, volunteer work, and other relevant accomplishments. Your resume should highlight meaningful experiences to you and, if possible, demonstrate your commitment to law and the legal industry.

THE LAW SCHOOL APPLICATION



LAW SCHOOL APPLICATION OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

Components of the Application

Optional Essays/ Statements

First things first — I know they may say these essays are optional, but they are not. If the law school offers another opportunity to show your writing skills, highlight your character, or demonstrate your passion for law, take it! These optional essays often allow you to address specific topics, such as diversity, overcoming adversity, or explaining a significant gap in your academic record. If you choose to write an optional essay, make sure you are incorporating new information that cannot be found elsewhere in your application. You can also use these essays to expand on a personal hardship that shaped you or highlight a meaningful experience that captures the essence of who you are.

Addenda

Addenda are supplemental statements that allow you to address specific aspects of your application that may require further explanation or clarification. Common topics, include LSAT score fluctuations, academic performance trends, or significant life events that have impacted your educational journey. The addenda should be concise and factual, providing context without making excuses. ***Do not use this space to highlight insignificant information.***

Ultimately, a well-prepared law school application includes all of the required information (LSAT, transcripts, resume/CV, personal statement), optional essays, and an addenda if needed! A strong application requires proper planning and time to craft. Please do not wait until the last minute to create your application! Quality work takes time! The more thoughtful and considerate you are, the better your chances are of getting into your dream schools. Your lived experiences matter, take the time needed to craft a thoughtful application.

THE LAW SCHOOL APPLICATION



LAW SCHOOL APPLICATION OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

Timeline

For law school admissions, applying "on time" is often already too late. While law schools may advertise their application period being open from September until February, the number of available seats begin to dwindle the day the application cycle opens. Many law school consultants and admission counselors recommend turning in applications as soon as possible.

Law schools have limited spots and want to begin filling their class seats by December of the cycle; special due dates for scholarship opportunities and honors programs close as early as October. At top law schools with very low acceptance rates, the near perfect applicant can be waitlisted due to limited number of seats. However, there are exceptions to this rule: middle-tier schools (refer to FAQs), ranked under the Top 30 *U.S. News & World Report*, leave seats and scholarship opportunities open for the high scoring applicants that apply later in the cycle. To have the best chance of admittance to reach and target schools, applicants should plan to submit applications between September and December of their respective applicant year. **It is important to note, this timeline is our advice and law school admission boards recommend submitting a quality application over a rushed application earlier in the cycle.**

Applicants are recommended to begin compiling application materials starting the summer before the admission cycle opens to ensure all application materials are submitted by the end of the year. Preparing could include reaching out for letters of recommendations, drafting personal statements, and completing the LSAT before the cycle opening date. A standard rule of thumb in law school applications: October 1st is the early deadline, December 1st is the regular deadline, and February 1st is the late deadline.

ALL ABOUT THE LSAT



COMPONETS OF THE LSAT

The Law School Admission Test (LSAT) is a standardized exam designed to assess the reading comprehension, logical reasoning, and analytical reasoning skills essential for success in law school. It consists of multiple-choice questions and a writing sample, with each section serving a specific purpose in evaluating a candidate's aptitude for legal studies. The LSAT is comprised of four 35-minute test sections. Between the second and third sections, there is a 10-minute intermission. **Please note that those with accommodations may have additional time.*

As of August 2024, the LSAT consists of two Logical Reason (LR) sections, One Reading Comprehension (RC) section, and one unsecured section of either LR or RC.

COMPONENTS OF THE LSAT EXPLAINED

Logical Reasoning: This section of the exam will test your ability to critically evaluate and analyze arguments. You'll be presented with short passages and asked to identify assumptions, draw conclusions, and recognize logical flaws within the arguments.

Reading Comprehension: This section measures your ability to understand and analyze complex texts similar to those encountered in law school. You'll be asked questions about the main ideas, details, and structures of the passages provided, demonstrating your comprehension and critical reading skills.

Writing Sample: While the LSAT writing sample is not scored, they are heavily considered by law school admission committees when reviewing prospective applicants' applications. The writing sample provides law schools with an example of your ability to construct a reasoned argument and communicate effectively. You'll be given a prompt and asked to present a well-reasoned argument supporting or opposing a given position.

SCHOOL SELECTION



HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT SCHOOL FOR YOU?

Choosing the right schools to apply to requires thoughtful consideration of a variety of factors to ensure your school selection is a good fit for your **academic, professional, and personal goals**. Consider factors, including ideal jobs, location, faculty-to-student ratio, and program concentrations. Research all prospective schools you're considering, carefully considering their ranking, ABA accreditation status, reputation, bar passage rates, employment outcomes, and strength of alumni networks.

Finally, consider the available financial aid, and evaluate the cost of tuition and living expenses. If possible, try to visit campuses or attend virtual events. By carefully considering the factors, you can create a good list of prospective schools that best align with your goals and preferences.

Evaluate Your Academic Profile

When selecting schools to apply to, consider your undergraduate GPA and LSAT score, as these are two crucial components the law school admission committee will examine. Before applying to any school, make sure you research the median GPA and LSAT for admitted students to better gauge where you stand as a potential applicant. Place your schools in three tiers **(Safety, Target, and Reach)**.

Safety schools are schools where your GPA and LSAT scores fall above the 75th percentile of admitted students. You have a strong chance of acceptance at these schools, making them **safer** options in your application process.

Target schools are law schools where your GPA and LSAT scores align with the 50th percentile of admitted students. You have a competitive chance of acceptance at these schools, making them realistic targets for your application.

Reach schools are law schools where your GPA and LSAT scores fall below the 25th percentile of admitted students. While these schools may be more challenging to gain acceptance to, they offer the potential for a higher reward in terms of prestige and opportunities.

LAW SCHOOL APPLICATION (CONT.)

TIMELINE

Admitted: Next Steps

Seat Deposits: To officially reserve your spot, law schools require one or two non-refundable deposits (typically between $200 and $1,000). Missing a deadline, typically in April or May, can result in your offer being automatically rescinded.

Scholarship Negotiations: Your journey to law school doesn't end with an initial acceptance and scholarship award; in the application process, everything is negotiable. You can often leverage competing offers from similarly ranked schools to request a scholarship "re-evaluation." This is a professional exchange where you reaffirm that the school is a top choice, while also highlighting the financial feasibility of their competitors.

Navigating the Waitlist

Once you have submitted your applications, you may receive a decision placing you on a "waitlist." This means the school has not yet made a final decision on your application. It's important to follow the instructions provided to accept a spot on the waitlist; failing to do so may result in the withdrawal of your waitlist offer.

Remember, being on the waitlist is not the end of the road; it's just a step in the process. Stay positive and don't get discouraged! You can still be accepted at any point in time, so it's essential to stay engaged. It is important to take this opportunity to connect with current students, ask admissions any clarifying questions you may have, and visit the campus, if possible. These connections can help you stay motivated and informed while you await a final decision.

Keep in mind that admissions decisions can move quickly, even up to the first week of classes. Most movement on or off a waitlist happens in May, June, and July, typically after deposit deadlines. It's important to stay patient and proactive during this time.

Letters of Continued Interest (LOCI):

A LOCI is a critical tool for waitlisted students. This one-page letter should be sent to the admissions committee to reaffirm your interest in their program. In a LOCI, you should highlight any new achievements since your initial application, such as improved grades, new professional responsibilities, or continued "commitment to law." A LOCI is a way to "brag professionally" one last time to try to secure a seat in the admitted class.

FINANCING YOUR LEGAL EDUCATION

PAYING FOR LAW SCHOOL

There's no beating around the bush; law school is **extremely expensive**. The average cost of attending law school can range anywhere from $150,000 - $300,000. When applying to law school it is important to develop a financial strategy that includes creating a realistic budget that includes tuition, living expenses, and other relevant costs. As you embark on your educational journey, it is paramount that you create a comprehensive strategy that will help you manage these expenses realistically. Your budget should encompass repayment options, financial aid packages, and anticipated future income based on your legal specialty and location. Keep in mind, depending on your legal specialty, location salaries can vary. Questions to consider while choosing a legal specialty are:

- **What** fields are growing the most rapidly?
- **What** is the range of salaries of people in my area and field? Consider the low, average, and high salaries.
- **What** are the job prospects like in the area of law I want to study? Consider location as well.

By carefully evaluating this information, you can make the most informed decision that aligns best with your interests, skills, and financial goals, ensuring the best financial career path for you. Now that you have considered those questions, we can delve into the primary funding options available for law school. The primary funding options in law school financial aid packages are scholarships, grants, and loans.

Budgeting

Creating a realistic budget and closely managing your finances can help you successfully navigate the financial challenges of law school. Our resources section, which is at the back of this guide, includes links to helpful budgeting templates and tips for saving money as a student. Effective budgeting and money management will help relieve financial strain while you pursue your legal education.

Financing your law school education can be challenging, but it's certainly not impossible. With careful budgeting and thorough financial planning, you can make informed decisions that best suit your circumstances.

FINANCING YOUR LEGAL EDUCATION



PAYING FOR LAW SCHOOL (CONTINUED)

Federal Work-Study:

Many law schools offer a part-time work program for eligible students to help cover education costs. Participation in the program depends on factors, such as: financial need, the school's participation in the program, and available funds. To determine eligibility, it's important to file the FAFSA early and ask if your law school offers Federal Work-Study (FWS) opportunities. Be sure to ask about the types of jobs available, the number of hours you can work, and whether there are off-campus work options.

Employer Tuition Reimbursement Programs:

These programs can be a valuable resource if you are a law student interested in attending school part-time and are already working in a law-related field. Many employers offer full or partial reimbursement for tuition, books, and other educational expenses. However, tax-free assistance is generally limited to $5,250 per year. Be sure to check your employer's rules regarding eligibility, repayment terms, and any work commitments tied to the assistance. This benefit may be especially relevant for part-time, evening, or working students.

Loan Repayment Assistance Programs (LRAPS):

Some graduates pursuing public-interest or government careers may receive assistance with loan repayment. These programs may be offered by law schools or state governments and often come with specific income and employment requirements. For more information, check ABA resources for law school-based and state-run programs available in your area (refer to page 28 for more details).

COSTS BEFORE LAW SCHOOL

Before applying to law school, it is important to consider the expenses that come with and before applications, especially since federal financial aid does not cover these costs.

LSAT/GRE Fees:

- Registration fee: $220-$248
- May be eligible for a fee waiver through LSAC

Auxiliary Fees:

- Test center change: $50-$125
- Test date change: $50-$248
- Returned check or insufficient funds fee: $30+

Preparation for Exam:

- Guidebook(s): $15-$50+
- Course(s): $800-$1500+
- Sample exam(s): Free-$40+

Additional Exam Fees

- Credential Assembly Service (CAS): $215
- Additional CAS law school reports: $45

Application Fees:

- Academic transcripts: Free-$10+
- Admission Application Fees: Free-$90+
- Fee waivers may be available through LSAC and school websites

Additional Fees

- School visits
- Seat deposit: $0-$500+
- Tuition deposit: $0-$500+
- Moving expenses

LSAC FEE WAIVER INSTRUCTIONS

1. Login to your LSAC account to apply through JD Services
2. Upload documents within 45 days
3. Watch for conditional approval
4. Complete required LawHub tasks
5. Redeem LSAT/CAS benefits before they expire

Apply early, because LSAC does not waive fees retroactively.

COST OF ATTENDANCE

The Cost of Attendance (COA) is the law school's estimate of the student's total expenses for one academic year, which is used to determine financial aid eligibility. It is typically the largest expense in the law school journey.

1. What does COA include?

- Tuition and fees
- Books and Supplies
- Housing and Food
- Transportation
- Personal Expenses

2. Why It Matters

COA helps determine your aid eligibility and how much you can borrow.

3. What To Watch For

COA is an estimate, not your exact bill. Please note that some schools may budget for only nine months, which mean summer and winter break is not included in the estimate. Be sure to plan ahead.



THE FAFSA

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the free federal aid application used by schools to determine eligibility for federal loans, work-study, and sometimes school-based aid. Complete the FAFSA as early as possible, which is usually the fall before you start law school.

When to File

Opens: Fall before you plan to start law school
Priority deadline: Check each school's financial aid deadline
Federal deadline: Varies by FAFSA cycle, typically in the summer months prior to start date
Best practice: Submit it before each law school's priority financial aid deadline, as schools may use earlier dates to consider you for institutional aid.

What You'll Need

- A StudentAid.gov account
- Your Social Security Number or eligible non-citizen documentation
- Tax and income information
- Records of assets, if applicable
- A list of the law schools you want to receive your FAFSA information

What Law Students Should Know

- J.D. students are generally treated as independent students on the FAFSA, so parent information usually is not required.
- Completing the FAFSA can help you access Direct Unsubsidized Loans and, if eligible and offered by your school, Federal Work-Study.
- Graduate and professional students may borrow up to $20,500 per year in Direct Unsubsidized Loans under current federal guidance; students who need more have historically used Grad PLUS, though federal loan rules have changed recently and schools may vary in how they communicate those changes, so always confirm with the law school financial aid office.

After You Submit

- Review your FAFSA Submission Summary
- Check for mistakes and make corrections if needed
- Watch for financial aid offers from the schools that admit you
- If your financial situation changes, you may contact the school's financial aid office and ask whether they review special circumstances or aid adjustment requests.

Note: Always check official dates for each FAFSA cycle (See page 28 for more details).

SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS

Scholarships and grants can reduce how much you need to borrow and usually do not need to be repaid. Law school funding may come from the school itself or from outside organizations, and some awards are automatic while others require separate applications.

Start Here:

- Check each law school's financial aid page
- Ask whether aid is automatic or requires a separate application
- Confirm the application deadline
- Ask whether the award is renewable each year
- Review any GPA, enrollment, or other renewal requirements

What to Ask:

- What scholarships or grants are available?
- What are the eligibility requirements?
- Is there a separate application or essay?
- When is the deadline?
- Is the award renewable?
- Will the amount change after 1L year?
- Does the award apply to summer study or special programs?

Search Tools:

- AccessLex Law School Scholarship Databank: free database of 800+ scholarships and writing competitions totaling more than $3 million
- Law school financial aid offices: often list school-based merit and need-based awards

ABA Standard 509 Reports:

Before selecting a law school, be sure to review each school's ABA Standard 509 Information Report. These reports provide standardized data on tuition, living expenses, scholarships and financial aid, admissions, bar passage rates, and employment outcomes. They can help you compare schools more effectively and highlight key details, such as whether scholarships are conditional or likely to change after your first year.

FEDERAL LOANS

If scholarships, grants, and savings fall short, federal loans are typically the first borrowing option to consider. Many students rely on loans to cover essential expenses, including tuition, books, living costs, and other educational fees.

WHY FEDERAL OVER PRIVATE LOANS?

- Fixed interest rates for each loan year
- More repayment flexibility and borrower protections than most private loans
- Possible eligibility for federal forgiveness programs
- Do not require a credit check or financial need
- You do not have to borrow the full amount offered

ELIGIBILITY AND KEY FEATURES FOR DIRECT UNSUBSIDIZED LOAN

- Half-time enrollment
- U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen
- No financial need required
- Interest accrues in school, varies by year
- Repayment begins 6 months post-graduation

Note: Students attending non-accredited law schools are NOT eligible for federal student loans.

Law students primarily use these two federal loan options:

Loan Type	Before July 1, 2026	For new borrowers on or after July 1, 2026
Federal Direct Unsubsidized	Available to eligible law students. $20,500 annual limit and $138,500 aggregate limit, including undergraduate federal loans.	Available to eligible professional students. $50,000 annual limit and $200,000 aggregate limit.
Federal Direct GRAD PLUS	May cover remaining cost of attendance after other aid, subject to eligibility and credit check.	**Not available for new graduate/professional borrowers**

Loan options, limits, and rates may change. Confirm current information at StudentAid.gov and with your law school's financial aid office.

PRIVATE LOANS

PRIVATE LOANS

Private loans may help cover remaining costs, but they usually offer fewer protections than federal loans and should be compared carefully before borrowing. Private loans are issued by banks, credit unions, state agencies, or other private lenders. They are usually used after federal aid when other resources have been exhausted. Approval is typically credit-based, so it is important to check and maintain a decent credit standing. Additionally, some students may need a cosigner. Private loan rates may be fixed or variable, depending on the lender.

SCHOOL-BASED LOANS

Some law schools may offer their own institutional or school-based loan programs. Eligibility for these loans may or may not be based on financial need. Availability and terms vary by school, so check with each financial aid office directly.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

For private loans, there are a few important things to keep in mind. You do not have to borrow the full amount offered to you, and borrowing less can reduce your repayment burden later. Unlike federal loans, private loans usually do not include the same repayment flexibility or forgiveness protections. They are also generally limited to your cost of attendance minus other financial aid, and some lenders may require a self-certification form before releasing funds. If your lender allows it, paying accruing interest while you are still in school can also help reduce the total amount you repay over time.

INTRODUCTION TO LAW SCHOOL

Law schools focus on core competencies, including analytical reasoning, critical thinking, and high-level writing. These abilities are assessed through specific academic and teaching or pedagogical methods that help develop the skills necessary for success in legal practice.

The Socratic Method

A cornerstone of law school pedagogy, the Socratic Method relies heavily on oral communication skills. Professors use rapid-fire, directed questioning rather than traditional lectures to encourage students to "think like lawyers." This method is often paired with "cold calling," where professors randomly select students to analyze cases in front of the class, fostering both individual responsibility and classroom engagement.

Core 1L Courses and Pedagogy

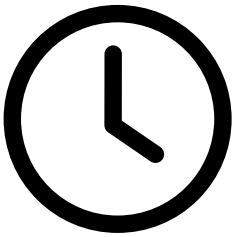
In your first year (1L), you will dive into foundational courses that form the backbone of legal education, including Constitutional Law, Contracts, Torts, Civil Procedure, and Criminal Law. These courses are designed to help students master essential legal principles and concepts, while honing analytical abilities.

Case Briefing

Law students must demonstrate research abilities and comprehension by summarizing complex legal texts. This involves case briefing, which requires identifying the "Issue, Rule, Application, and Conclusion (IRAC)." IRAC helps students develop reasoned arguments and logical thinking, which are essential both for success in law school and on the bar exam.



TIPS FOR SURVIVING 1L YEAR



Health, Wellness, and Sustaining Success

Law school is a rigorous journey that requires thoughtful consideration of the sacrifices students are required to make for academic success. Beyond the financial burden of the hefty price tag, the true toll of law school lies in the daily grind: the relentless case load, the public anxiety of being cold-called, and the agonizing months waiting for grades. To survive these rigorous academic and professional demands, you should treat your mental health and sleep as non-negotiable priorities.

Suggested Habits of a Successful Law Student

1. The "Timer" Method: Law school reading is dense, and retention significantly drops after an hour of complex analysis. As such, to avoid burnout, read in 50-minute increments followed by 10-minute breaks.

2. Collaborative Outlining: Don't wait until finals to begin outlining. Meet weekly with a small study group or review your own notes, and synthesize all notes from the week into an outline.

3. Mandatory "Off" Time: Set a hard "books closed" time. Prioritizing sleep helps maintain mental stamina needed for the demands of the next day.

4. Resisting the Urge to Isolate: It is important to make time for a weekly dinner or social outing. It can serve as a safeguard against the burnout.

ALL ABOUT THE BAR



After law school, you have one last hurdle — **the bar exam,** which is your ticket to officially practicing law as a licensed attorney. It is ***challenging*** and comes with a hefty price tag. However, do not fear! With thorough preparation and budgeting, you'll be ready to sit for the exam and prepare to launch your legal career. *Please note:* dedicating time to bar prep is imperative because to pass the bar, you must have a solid understanding of the law, including foundational principles, legal theories, and the exceptions to those rules.

What is the Bar Exam?

The bar exam is a standardized test that prospective attorneys must pass to become licensed to practice law in a specific state or region.

Scope of the California Bar Exam

In California, you must pass the bar exam to practice law. The California Bar Exam is held over two days and consists of the following:

Written Portion: The written portion consists of **five essay questions** and a **Performance Test (PT)**. Three essay questions are asked in the morning, and the remaining two in the afternoon, followed by the performance test, a 90-minute written assignment requiring you to complete a "real-world" lawyer task. The performance test packet will contain a task memo, a file, and a library. This portion tests seven subjects: Business Association, Civil Procedure, Community Property, Constitutional Law, Contracts, Criminal Law and Procedure, Evidence, Professional Responsibility, Real Property, Torts, Trusts, and Wills and Succession.

Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQ): The MCQ portion of the General Bar Examination is an objective six-hour examination containing 200 questions. The multiple-choice portion is typically administered on the second day, with 100 questions given in the morning (divided into two morning sessions) and 100 questions given in the afternoon (divided into two afternoon sessions). This portion tests seven subjects: Civil Procedure, Constitutional Law, Contracts, Criminal Law and Procedure, Evidence, Real Property, and Torts.

PAYING FOR THE BAR



Paying for the bar exam is a significant financial commitment. Common costs include bar review courses ($2,500 - $4,000), study materials ($500 - $1,000), registration fees ($700 - $1,000 in California), and lifestyle adjustments (e.g., reducing work hours). Overall, you should expect to budget $5,000 - $6,000 for bar prep. Though the costs are high, this is an **investment in your future.** Financial aid options, such as scholarships, grants, and loan forgiveness programs, are available to help. Be sure to plan your finances carefully to minimize stress during your preparation.

Other Costs to Consider:

Bar Review Courses: For many law students, bar review courses are the most significant expense for bar prep. A robust course should provide comprehensive study materials, lectures, lecture notes, practice exams, and access to online resources. Prices for bar prep courses can range from a few hundred dollars to several thousand dollars, depending on the courses you choose and the level of preparation you need! The most popular providers (e.g., Barbri, Themis, Kaplan) offer comprehensive prep courses, but there are also more affordable options. Some students decide to study independently in lieu of a formal bar review course, which is fine, so long as you **STUDY** for at least 60 days before the exam!

Study materials: Study materials can consist of bar review books, flashcards, and other materials. Consider purchasing used books or using free resources, like bar prep forums or law school libraries, to offset costs.

Registration fees: Like many standardized exams, you must pay to take the test. The fees associated with the California Bar Exam are approximately $1,000, but this cost does not include fees for other requirements, like the Moral Character application. Register as early as possible to avoid late fees, and confirm if your school offers any reimbursement options for these fees.

FAQs

Whether you are just beginning your pre-law journey or deep in the Law School application process, this Frequently Asked Questions section is here to answer any lingering questions you may have!

Do I need a specific major to apply for law school?

Nope! Unlike certain graduate school programs like medical school or psychology, any major is acceptable for law school. Law schools do, however, want applications that exhibit strong foundational skills and prospective applicants' potential to succeed in law school.

What foundational skills are law schools looking for?

Law school requires a variety of strong skills, such as analysis, critical thinking, strong writing skills, oral communication skills, time management, research abilities, commitment, and a desire to serve others.

Are there any classes that can prepare me for law school?

Classes that strengthen your writing and logical reasoning skills are always helpful. If possible, try to take at least one intensive writing English class (especially classes focused on law and policy) and Philosophy classes centered around critical thinking and logic. These classes will better prepare you for the LSAT.

Should I pay for a tutor or self-study?

There is no inherent advantage to paying for an LSAT tutor. At the end of the day, your LSAT score is based on your level of discipline and willingness to study. Both options have pros and cons. Consider the type of student you are and the support you need!

Do you trust yourself to create a study plan and stick to it? Or do you study better with a strict regimen? For more advice, check out this **helpful guide** on self-studying for the LSAT.

What is the difference between early decision and non-binding early action?

Early Decision (ED) is binding:, early action (EA) is not. With ED, students can apply to one school and promise to commit should they be accepted. Early Action is non-binding and allows students to submit multiple early applications without a commitment to attend.

FAQs

Whether you are just beginning your pre-law journey or deep in the Law School application process, this Frequently Asked Questions section is here to answer any lingering questions you may have!

What are common pre-law abbreviations?

Common pre-law abbreviations are

HYS: Harvard, Yale, Stanford

CCN: Chicago, Columbia, NYU

T-14: Top 14 law schools in the US

T-30: Top 30 law schools in the US

T-40 to T-100: Middle-Tier Law Schools

K-JD: (Kindergarten - Law School)

PS: Personal Statement

LOR: Letters of Recommendation

LOCI: Letter of Continued Interest

How many times can I take the LSAT?

You can take the LSAT a total of **seven times over your lifetime**, and no more than **five times in a reportable score period**. In a single testing year, you can take the LSAT three times in a single testing year from July to June. Visit the **LSAC website** to learn more about testing policies.

How do law school admissions committees review multiple LSAT scores?

When you apply to law school, the admissions committee will receive a copy of every LSAT score. Some schools take the average score while other schools use the highest score. Contact prospective schools if you have specific questions about the admissions process.

What is the difference between an accredited and unaccredited law school?

Accredited law schools have a curriculum that meets the standards of the American Bar Association (ABA), while unaccredited schools do not. Students who attend unaccredited law schools do not qualify for federal grants and may have a harder time preparing for the bar exam upon graduation. Additionally, students who attend unaccredited law schools have low earning potentials, lower bar passage rates, and may have a hard time finding full time employment upon graduation. Please view this **report** for additional information.

Resources

**Disclaimer: All resources listed herein are provided for informational purposes ONLY. They are not affiliated with the Los Angeles Civil Rights Department and are based solely on personal choice and recommendations. All students are encouraged to use discretion and conduct their own research.

Paying for Law School

LSAC: Paying for Law School: A Preliminary Guide

LSAC Fee Waiver

Scholarships For Law School: Where And How To Get Them

Pipeline Programs

AccessLex Diversity Pathway Program Directory (Masterlist of Pre-law Programs)

East Los Angeles College Pathway to Law School Transfer Program | AccessLex *(College Freshman/Sophomores)*

King Hall Outreach Program (KHOP) | School of Law

LSAC Plus Program | The Law School Admission Council

Legal Education Access Pipeline

Sidley Prelaw Scholars Program | Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Stanford Law Scholars Institute

UCI Pre-Law Outreach Program

UCLA Law Fellows

Yale Law School Launchpad Scholars Program

Resources for First-Gen/Low-Income Students

About the Program | AT Foundation

Barriers Breakers

Collective Success Network

Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO)

Eversheds Sutherland Scholars | Client Tools

For People of Color, Inc.

Honors Program in Legal Studies at the Colin Powell School

Immigrants Rising

J.D Sample Application Materials

LAWBound™ | LatinoJusticePRLDEF

PracticePro

SEO Law

LSAT Resources

7 Sage Fee Waiver Program for LSAT Prep

Khan Academy LSAT Prep

LawHub LSAT Prep ***(As of June 2024, Khan Academy Prep is available Law Hub)***

Resources

***Disclaimer: All resources listed herein are provided for informational purposes ONLY. They are not affiliated with the Los Angeles Civil Rights Department and are based solely on personal choice and recommendations. All students are encouraged to use discretion and conduct their own research.**

Resources for 1L Law Students

Cali Law School Materials for Success

UC San Francisco Resources for 1L

JD Advising's Scholar Program

Loyola Marymount University 1L Survival Guide

Pipeline to Practice Foundation

Practice Pro Scholars

Resources for Post-Bar Students

Los Angeles City Attorney's Post-Bar Fellowship

Los Angeles City Attorney's Law Clerk and Volunteer Program

Affinity Groups

Arab American Lawyers Association of Southern California (AALASC)

Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Los Angeles County (APABA)

Asian Pacific American Women Lawyers Alliance (APAWLA)

Black Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles (BWL)

Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles (CAALA)

Italian American Lawyers Association (IALA)

Iranian American Lawyers Association (IALA)

Japanese American Bar Association (JABA)

John M. Langston Bar Association

Korean American Bar Association of Southern California

LGBTQ+ Lawyers Association of Los Angeles

Muslim Bar Association of Southern California (MBASC)

Mexican American Bar Association (MABA)

Philippine American Bar Association

Vietnamese American Bar Association of Southern California (VABASC)

Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles (WLALA)

Special Thanks to our Contributors

Brooke Helmick

Nora Haeri

Reiley Williams

Jennifer Williams

Melody Yuan

Connect with the LA Civil Rights Department

www.LAisForEveryone.com

civilandhumanrights@lacity.org

(213) 978-1845

250 E. 1st Street, Suite 1000
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Follow us on social media:

@lacivilrights