

LAW SCHOOL ADMISSION

A UMASS BOSTON STUDENT'S GUIDE



Career Services and Internships | University Advising Center
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At this writing, the COVID-19 pandemic is still a factor in how the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) is given and how the Law School Forum is hosted, as well as other aspects of law school admissions such as campus visits.

The LSAT will be given in a remote fashion (known as the LSAT-Flex) through June 2022. Some rules related to the LSAT have been impacted also.

Most Law School forums will be given in a remote format as well, rather than in person; these are known as the *Digital* Law School Forums.

All such practices remain a moving target as the pandemic surges and recedes, and are subject to change.

We will do our best to keep information in this document current, but the best source for updates as to the LSAT, Law School Forums, and law school admissions in general is the Law School Admission Council's website: www.lsac.org, and the websites of individual law schools you are considering.

IS LAW SCHOOL FOR ME?

If you are considering law school, here are some important factors to think about.

Be honest with yourself as you respond to these questions.

- Why do I want to go to law school? Is it something I really want, or am I being pressured by others?
- What are my career goals? Is law school the best way to achieve them?
- How thoroughly do I understand the demands and the rigors of law school?
- Have I researched the financial impact of attending law school?
- Do I have the necessary resources such as money, time, energy, and motivation?
- Do I have the verbal precision, reading skills, and analytical abilities necessary for success in law school and the legal profession?
- How fully do I understand career options in the legal profession? Among those options, is there a good fit with my temperament and interests?
- Is enrollment immediately after graduation the best time for me?
- Have I researched the financial impact of attending law school?

If you find, after honest assessment, that law school is the direction you want to take, begin by gathering as much information as you can from as many sources as possible. Meet with a pre-law advisor to explore your options and learn more about law school admission. Talk with faculty members. Visit law schools, if possible. Attend one of many [Law School Forums](#) held by the Law School Admissions Council.

If offered, come to on-campus visits by representatives of local law schools. Campus visits, even from institutions you may not be considering, can provide you with a wealth of information and insight. The professionals are not on campus to recruit, but to offer you important information about their institution such as admissions procedures and criteria, placement prospects, and possible sources of financial aid.

Talk with current law school students or those who have recently graduated; they are an invaluable resource for you to tap! Read as much as you can. Evaluate at every step of the process.

ALTERNATIVES TO LAW SCHOOL

It is extremely important to reflect on your interests, skills, abilities, and values when exploring careers and career options. There are many career paths that provide job seekers with meaningful careers. Throughout your career exploration process and as you work toward your career goals you are strongly encouraged to discuss your career plans with your pre-law advisors. All students and alumni who are interested in law school should take [Focus 2](#), a free career assessment tool offered by the Office of Career Services and Internships. Once you take all sections of Focus 2, you should meet with the pre-law advisor in the Office of Career Services and Internships to discuss your results. Oftentimes, interests can lead to a variety of career paths and there may be careers you have never heard of until taking this assessment. Choosing to enter the law field and applying to law school is a big commitment; therefore, it is extremely important that you have looked at all of your options as you prepare to move forward with your career.

If you realize after researching your options and reflecting on your interests and goals that law school is not the right path for you, there are many other ways to be involved in law. You might consider a graduate program (Master's or PhD) such as a Master of Public Administration (MPA) or Master of Business Administration (MBA). Another option is becoming a paralegal. A paralegal performs substantive legal work that requires knowledge of legal concepts under the supervision of a lawyer, and can include work such as completing background casework, conducting legal research, drafting legal documents, and other tasks to support lawyers. Paralegals can find employment in a variety of settings such as law firms and government agencies.

Additional career options include advocacy and activism with non-profit organizations. If you have a special area of interest, such as civil rights, immigration, victim support or social justice, there are a variety of organizations in Boston that work in these specialized areas. While some positions may require an advanced degree, such as a Master's degree, you may be qualified for other positions with your Bachelor's degree from UMass Boston. There are a variety of opportunities that stem from the diverse majors at UMass Boston and it is important to research your options and know of the different career paths that can stem from your interests and your major. The Office of Career Services and Internships has a variety of resources to assist you with exploring your career options, including alternatives to law school.

UNDERGRADUATE PREPARATION

CHOOSING A MAJOR

No specific major is required or expected of law school applicants. However, we advise you to have a strong background in the liberal arts. Given that there is an apparent direct correlation between one's level of interest and one's achievement in an academic subject, choose a major in a field that interests you and one in which you can expect to earn good grades. At UMass Boston you have a wide range of choices to make it easier for you to choose wisely.

UMass Boston also offers a program of study in Philosophy and Law. Many students that have taken one particular class (PhilLaw-300 Basic Legal Reasoning and Research) have commented that it was an excellent exposure to what a first year law school legal writing experience would be like- thus offering interested students hands-on experience to see whether law school is something they want to pursue.

COURSE SELECTION: TYPES

Admissions committees want to see candidates who are educationally well rounded. Plan a program that includes courses in the social sciences, literature, writing, philosophy, mathematics, and economics. Courses that emphasize writing, critical reading, problem solving and oral communication skills and those that strengthen a student's ability to think logically and analyze critically are strongly recommended. The ability to communicate verbally and in writing with absolute clarity is one of a law student's and a lawyer's greatest assets. The importance of this cannot be overstated.

Courses in accounting, management, and statistics can provide a valuable context for the study of law. Below is a list of suggested courses you may find helpful in preparing you, directly or indirectly, for law school. None, however, is a prerequisite for law school admission. This list is subject to change from semester to semester, based on university course offerings.

Subject	Course Number	Course Name
Business Communications	290	Professional Written Communication and Written Analysis
	295	Communication, Negotiation, and Conflict Interactions
Communication Studies	105	Oral Communication
Criminal Justice		Courses for the CJ major are offered under the Sociology rubric. There are many law-related courses, see below:
Economics	101, 102	Microeconomics, Macroeconomics
Environmental Science	340	Planning and Land Use Law
	384	Climate and Energy: Law, Policy, and Management
Environmental Studies	364	Environmental Justice
	205	Statistical Methods

Subject	Course Number	Course Name
English	306	Advanced Nonfiction Writing
History	308	History of Common Law
	371	The American Revolution
Philosophy	108	Moral and Social Problems
	120	Introduction to Logic
	290	The Philosophy of Law
Philosophy and Law	260	Latinx and the Law
	300	Basic Legal Reasoning and Research
Political Science	329	American Constitutional Law & Theory
	332	Civil Liberties in the U.S.
	335	Law and Public Policy
Psychology	339	Psychology of Law
Sociology	260	Ethics of Justice
	338	Criminal Courts
	339	Sociology of Law
Women's Studies	292	Family Law Practice

COURSE SELECTION: TIPS

Don't select a lot of courses at the 100 and 200 levels as a strategy to boost your GPA. Law school admissions committees don't just review your grades; they also take a good look at the level of courses in which those grades were earned. To gain a good understanding of whether or not you can handle the demands of law school, they need evidence that you can handle the demands of advanced undergraduate coursework. Lower division coursework is not considered a strong indicator of academic strengths—and therefore not considered a very accurate predictor of your success in law school.

Avoid electing the pass/fail option if possible—or keep it to a minimum. Law schools are less concerned about the specific courses you take as they are about knowing how well you have done in demanding courses. It is a common assumption that pass/fail indicates the student's lack of confidence about a grade in a course. And since pass/fail grades are not computed into the GPA, seeing them on your transcript decreases an admissions committee's confidence in the value of your GPA in predicting your success in law school.

Do consider taking an independent study course or completing a senior thesis in your major. Researching a topic with a minimum of structure and supervision demonstrates academic maturity and seriousness of purpose. If you undertake independent study, consider discussing the process or results in your personal statement (see "Personal statement" on p. 14). In addition, the person who supervised your work may make an excellent recommender.

WITHDRAWALS AND INCOMPLETES

Work hard to avoid withdrawing or taking an “incomplete” from a course once you’ve started it. If you’re having trouble with a class, seek help with it as early in the term as possible. Reach out to your professor, academic advisor, and other campus offices for support—they are valuable resources that will help you stay on track. Seeing more than just one, maybe two, withdrawals and/or incompletes on your transcript gives an admissions committee reason to question your ability to withstand pressure and meet deadlines—not to mention your judgment in making academic choices. These are all crucial factors in admissions decisions. If your record has more of these entries than you are comfortable with, plan to provide some form of explanation with your application. Do not allow the committee to draw negative conclusions about you, if you can explain your record in a manner that is cogent, concise, and substantiated whenever possible.

BEFORE YOU APPLY

START GATHERING DATA

Begin thinking about your law school preferences with respect to size, affiliation (e.g., public or private university), setting (urban or suburban), and location.

The *ABA-LSAC Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools* is a comprehensive source of information on law schools approved by the American Bar Association (ABA). A searchable database and ordering information for the publication are available online at the website of the Law School Admission Council (LSAC) at www.lsac.org.

LSAC Law School Forums. Every year, representatives of LSAC-member law schools participate in one- and two-day forums held for prospective law students in eight cities across the U.S., including Boston. **To learn more about this year’s law school forums and fairs, visit this site:**

<https://www.lsac.org/choosing-law-school/law-school-forums-and-fairs>. We strongly encourage you to attend the Boston LSAC Law School Forum or the Digital Law School Forum, based on what options are available. Admission is free, and you can register online. You’ll meet and talk with admissions representatives, pre-law advisors, and law students, and collect admissions and financial aid materials. You can also attend workshops on admissions, financial aid, diversity recruitment, the application process, and more!

THE LSAT

The LSAT is not a test of legal knowledge. It is intended to measure skills that are considered essential for success in law school: reading and comprehending complex texts with accuracy and insight;

organizing and managing information, and drawing reasonable inferences from it; critical reasoning; and analyzing and evaluating others' reasoning.

The LSAT is administered into two parts. The first is a [multiple-choice exam](#) that includes reading comprehension, analytical reasoning, and logical reasoning questions. Currently, the LSAT will be offered in an online, live remote-proctored format through June 2022. The LSAT is administered multiple times each year, typically in January/February, March, June, September/October, and November/December. The LSAT is an essential piece of the law school admission process as it provides a standard measure of acquired reading and verbal reasoning skills.

The LSAT consists of five 35-minute sections of multiple-choice questions. The four sections that contribute to your score include the reading comprehension section, the analytical reasoning section, and two logical reasoning sections. The section that is not scored is often used to pre-test new test questions. This section is usually described as the variable section. At the end of the test there is a writing portion, where you will produce a writing sample in 35 minutes. The writing sample will be administered separately from the rest of the LSAT exam. LSAT Writing is administered online using proctored software. Your LSAT is not complete without the writing sample, and you will need to finish it in order to see your score or have your scores released to schools. The writing sample is not scored by LSAC, but copies are sent to all law schools you are applying to. More information about the new changes to the writing portion can be found on LSAC.org under [LSAT Writing FAQs](#).

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE LSAT

It is important to familiarize yourself with test directions and question types through taking practice tests. You are also encouraged to research test-taking techniques and strategies. Preparation is key to performing at your highest potential. **Do not go into the LSAT cold.** Three months is considered to be the optimal amount of time to prepare for the test. For example, if you plan to take the LSAT in June after your junior year, you should start studying for the test in March. Spending a few months with concentrated, intensive preparation is considered more beneficial than studying for six months with less consistency and shorter amounts of study time.

LSAC.org recommends familiarizing yourself with the LSAT instructions and question types so that when you take the test you are not delayed or distracted from thinking about how to best answer questions. You are encouraged to review [descriptions of the question types](#) and take practice tests, including doing a writing sample, under the actual time limits that you will experience taking the test. Taking practice tests allows you the opportunity to grasp approximately how long you can spend on each question in the different sections of the LSAT. Additionally, taking practice tests helps you understand what areas you need to spend more time on before the test. LSAC.org offers a variety of [free materials](#) to help you prepare for the LSAT, including free personalized test prep materials from Khan Academy. Both free and reasonably priced resources are available from LSAC LawHub.

ADDITIONAL TIPS WHEN PREPARING FOR THE LSAT

Start by taking a practice test. You can purchase an LSAT prep book and take a practice test. You are also encouraged to review [sample tests](#) through LSAC.

Be sure to simulate real test-taking conditions. Set aside enough time to take a complete test and time each section exactly. Review test-taking strategies so that you are familiar with the test instructions and understand the differences in the sections. Your score on the practice test will be higher than what you can expect to get in the real test, but it will give you an approximation of your likely score.

Take multiple practice tests, then decide whether to prepare on your own or to take a commercial LSAT preparation course. If your score is within 5 points or so from where you would like it to be, and you are self-disciplined in studying, you may decide not to consider a commercial course. However, keep in mind that other students may be taking a commercial prep course, which could give them an edge when taking the LSAT. If you choose to study on your own, plan several months ahead and create a study schedule for yourself, using the LSAT prep book and other materials from the LSAC as your guide. *Tip:* Study with a friend whose academic strengths complement your weaknesses, and vice-versa.

Consider a commercial prep course. Course length, material, and class sizes vary greatly from company to company. We strongly recommend researching options before you sign up, including how the various companies you are considering teach to different learning styles. If possible, ask others who have taken prep courses for their opinions on how effective the course was and whether it helped them improve their scores.

TAKE THE LSAT

For current LSAT dates, registration deadlines, and score release information, please visit the [LSAT section](#) on the Law School Admission Council website.

Depending on when you plan on attending law school, we recommend either taking the LSAT in June after your junior year or in the year before you plan to enter law school, if possible. We believe this is optimal for the following reasons:

- You'll get the results early enough to give you plenty of time to research appropriate law schools, make informed choices, and start gathering applications.
- You have more free time throughout the summer to work on your personal statement and résumé, and prepare packets for recommenders.
- Without the weight of test preparation, you can get off to a strong start on your senior year courses.
- You'll have time to retake the exam if you are not satisfied with your score; see the next section.

- You'll be able to submit your applications as early as October, an advantage in rolling admissions.

If June is not a good time for you, then September/October of your senior year is the next best time. We strongly encourage you to apply by Thanksgiving.

HOW OFTEN TO TAKE THE LSAT

The rule is: take it once when you're at your peak and fully prepared, and do as well as you possibly can. Law schools discourage multiple test taking. Taking the test more than once, they believe, gives you an advantage. They expect a student to do better the second time, so if you don't score reasonably higher on the second test, you haven't done yourself any favors. You've put yourself through at least two more months of intense preparation—perhaps compromising time dedicated to coursework, job, or applications—only to reinforce your first score. And if, in the worst case scenario, you get a lower score on the second test, you'll do even more damage to your chances.

Under some circumstances, however, you may need to take the test again. Examples:

- You scored significantly lower than the scores you were consistently getting on your practice tests.
- You scored so low that it would be almost impossible for you to do worse.
- You froze or there was a disruption to your test taking session.

You do have an option of cancelling your score, either while you are taking the LSAT or within six calendar days of the test. If you choose to cancel your score, you will not receive your score and you will also not receive a copy of your answer sheet. If you feel certain that you did poorly on the test, you may consider this option as it is better to have a cancellation on your report than a poor score. In addition, LSAC offers, for a fee, a score preview option for first time test takers **only** who wish to see their LSAT score before deciding whether to keep it and have it reported to law schools.

But never take the test as a dry run, intending to cancel the score. Instead, focus on taking practice exams and taking prep courses to prepare for the LSAT. If you do need to re-take the exam, just be prepared to explain your reasons behind re-taking the LSAT on your application.

REGISTER FOR THE LSAT

When registering for the LSAT, it is important to plan accordingly and register as early as possible to secure your ideal test date and location. There are two ways you can register for the LSAT. Registering online is one of the easiest ways to register. If you have not done so already, create an account on www.lsac.org and log into your account to register to take the LSAT.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- **Read all instructions carefully and be aware of all pertinent deadlines**
- **If you need accommodations start planning early:** Visit <https://www.lsac.org/lsat/lsac-policy-accommodations-test-takers-disabilities> to learn more about documentation requirements and important policies
- **Understand the Candidate Referral Service:** Some schools seek to balance the make-up of a first-year law class by recruiting qualified applicants based on LSAT scores, GPA, age, race, economic and geographic background, and other factors, such as program of interest or undergraduate major. When you register for the LSAT, you can make your information available to these schools by registering for the CRS.

Through the CRS, law schools can search the database for applicants whose characteristics they seek. If you're registered, you may be recruited by interested law schools that you may not have otherwise considered. For more information and to register, follow this link: <http://www.lsac.org/lm/choosing-a-law-school/lm-crs>.

- **Uniformity of Communication.** Always write your name in exactly the same way in all written communication with LSAC: requesting reports, sending transcripts, or requesting other information, etc. A missing initial or change of any kind may create a second file or prevent a second report from being sent to the schools of your choice.
- **Record-Keeping.** Keep all the information sent both ways between you and LSAC together in one file. This will provide easier reference for any future inquiries. And if there are any problems, solving them will be much easier if you keep all records and have them in one place. Be sure to read all fine print on any document you send to LSAC or any that they send back to you. It is strongly recommend you make electronic copies and/or photocopies for your records.

Overall, be sure to read everything carefully, follow all directions stated on LSAC.org, and keep accurate records of all documents you have filled out and received.

LSAT SCORES

Scores are reported on a scale from 120 to 180. Your score is based on the number of questions you answered correctly. There is no deduction for incorrect answers and all questions are weighted equally. For more information on how your score predicts performance in law school, please read the [LSAT Reliability and Validity in Brief](#) section of LSAC.org.

ASSESS YOUR CHANCES

The law school admission process is deliberately intensive. It is designed to weed out students who lack the motivation and persistence to complete a rigorous professional education and succeed in a field that can be extremely competitive.

CRITERIA

The LSAT and your transcript/GPA are the most important criteria. Next in importance are letters of recommendation addressing your academic abilities and character, and your personal statement. Work experience (law-related or not), and outside interests and activities help to round out the picture of you as a candidate. *Remember:* Interviews are not normally a part of the admission process; so the subjective elements in your application take on greater significance in terms of describing who you are as a person.

SELECTIVITY

Selectivity differs from law school to law school. In evaluating your chances for admission to various law schools, begin by comparing your LSAT score and undergraduate GPA against each law school's admissions guidelines as you browse the [ABA-LSAC Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools](#) and visit various schools' websites. Every law school is required by the ABA to publish, in a standardized format, their admissions statistics. This includes median GPAs, test scores, percentage of applicants admitted, and aid distributed. This report is called the 509 Report and is a required part of every law school's website. It is invaluable when comparing schools and seeing where your credentials place you as an applicant. However, do not base decisions of whether or not to apply solely on this information.

NARROW YOUR CHOICES

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

Review admissions materials from the law schools you're most interested in. Talk to informed people (faculty, advisors, employers, etc.) to determine answers to questions like these.

- What are your realistic chances for admission, given the school's admission criteria and the relative weight given, for instance, to GPAs vs. standardized test scores?
- What percentage of students receive financial aid, and in what form? After the first year, how much money is allocated for financial aid?
- Are the "culture" and ideology of the institution in line with your preferences?
- Are you satisfied with the program concentrations and electives available to you?
- Does the curriculum include components that are important to you, such as co-ops, internships, or Law Review?
- Are major curricular or administrative changes being contemplated within the next three years? If so, what direction will the institution or program take as a result?
- How accessible are faculty? What are typical class sizes in first-year and higher level courses? What's the student/faculty ratio?

- What are the credentials of the faculty, and are there specialists in areas important to you?
- Will you be happy spending the better part of three years in that law school's facility?
- What percentage of graduates pass the bar exam the first time they take it?

IDENTIFY YOUR RANGE

You may increase your chances of acceptance by applying to a range of law schools, as long as all of them meet your most important criteria. Select one or two that, in the best of all worlds, you would really like to attend, but are a “reach” for you. Your middle range of schools should be a solid match between your credentials and those of the most recent entering class. Finally, identify one or two schools where acceptance is likely. The total number of schools you apply to will depend on how much you want, and are able, to invest in expensive application fees.

Even with your “safe” schools there is no 100% guarantee of admission. The best you can do is to work with the available data to make informed choices. Stick to a well-planned strategy: clearly think through what you want in a law education and career, and evaluate law schools accordingly. To do otherwise may be costly in terms of time and money, result in poor choices, and may even diminish your chances of acceptance. Under no circumstances should you waste time, money, and energy applying to a law school where you're not fully prepared to spend three years.

MASSACHUSETTS LAW SCHOOLS: POPULAR—AND COMPETITIVE

Many Boston-area college and university students applying to law school want to stay in this area; plus many students who live in Massachusetts but attend out-of-state colleges want to “come home” to attend law school. Add to them people who live and work in Massachusetts and plan to go back to study law, as well as applicants from all around the country, and the result is keen competition. Adding law schools outside New England to your list, therefore, can be a smart strategy for increasing your chances of acceptance.

PREPARE YOUR APPLICATIONS

Submit applications, including your personal statement and résumé, directly to each law school through LSAC's [Credential Assembly Service \(CAS\)](#).

ABOUT THE LAW SCHOOL CREDENTIAL ASSEMBLY SERVICE (CAS)

Most ABA-approved law schools require you to register with the CAS, a central clearinghouse for the applications process. The CAS makes the application process more efficient by allowing you to submit your transcripts, recommendations, and evaluations online. This information along with your LSAT score and writing samples is summarized into a report and sent to all law schools you apply to.

WHAT THE CAS REPORT INCLUDES

- Transcript summarization
- Letters of recommendation
- Creation of your law school report (\$45 per school at the time of this writing)
- LSAT scores and writing samples (Please note that **all** scores are reported to law schools)

IMPORTANT TIPS

- Make sure to let CAS know if letters of recommendation will *not* be sent to them. Otherwise they will assume the letters are on the way and will refrain from sending your file to waiting law schools.
- Your CAS account will remain active for five years.
- You should sign up and pay the fee for the Credential Assembly Service at least four to six weeks before your first law school application deadline. It takes about two weeks for CAS to process a transcript or letter of recommendation from the time it is received.

REGISTRATION FEES AND WAIVERS

The current fee for the Credential Assembly Service is \$195. [Fee waivers](#) are available by application for the LSAT and Credential Assembly Service. **Documentation of need is required.**

Please note that individual law school application fees are not included as part of CAS. If you can demonstrate that you are unable to pay the registration fee, you can request a fee waiver through any LSAC member law school. Contact the admissions office directly to inquire.

WHERE TO REGISTER

Register for CAS online at www.lsac.org.

RECOMMENDATIONS

If the LSAT score is meant to give law schools an idea of your intellectual capabilities, your transcript and recommendations are meant to show them what you can do with those capabilities. The best letters of recommendation provide evidence to a law school admissions committee that you can do well in a challenging learning environment.

Most schools require two to three letters from professors or others well acquainted with you, your abilities, and your work habits. These should come from faculty members who have had you in class, and if possible from professors whose classes involved analytical reasoning, critical reading, and a major

research paper. Your best recommender is not necessarily one who gave you the best grades. A professor who watched you improve over two or more semesters, or whose course you repeated after initially receiving a low grade, may write a great letter, which could also help explain any special circumstances or low grades that may appear in your transcript. Supplemental recommendations could come from a faculty advisor to a student group you're active in. Don't seek a recommendation from a highly placed person who may be well known, or have ties to the school you're applying to, but who doesn't know you well; a letter like that does more harm than good.

If you've decided to apply to law school by the summer after your junior year, select and contact your recommenders early in the school year to give them enough time to write the best possible letter. By asking faculty members before the end of the fall semester, for example, they're more likely to take the time over the semester break to write a thoughtful letter on your behalf. If you're asking someone who taught you in a previous semester, or who only knows you as one of a large class, make an appointment to visit with the professor. Bring backup materials with you to refresh the person's memory of your work; give them something concrete to write about like a copy of a paper or a summary of a project that earned a high grade from the professor.

If you're entering your senior year and expect to apply for law school in the future but not right away, consider asking one or two professors to write letters on your behalf now. This gives them a chance to write about you while you—and your work—are fresh in their minds. Save their letters. When you're ready to apply, return them to the professors to refresh their memory, and request updated versions.

It's poor form to ask to see letters of recommendation before having them sent. But it's certainly acceptable to ask people in advance whether or not they're comfortable writing a strongly positive letter on your behalf. If the answer is a no, you should try someone else. But even if the person hedges with, "I'm not sure I have the time to do a good job," or, "I don't know if I remember your work very well," thank them and move on. Most likely they're trying to say "no" without hurting your feelings. They may not feel they are familiar enough with you or your academic work to write a strong recommendation letter.

Read each school's admissions materials carefully to learn its policy regarding recommendations. If the law school requests or requires that the letters come directly from recommenders, don't worry if the letters arrive before your application. The school will open a file for you and hold the letters until your application arrives.

Remember: If you don't intend to have CAS handle your letters of recommendation, be sure to notify CAS. Otherwise, they'll assume your recommendation letters are on the way and keep waiting for them before releasing your file to law schools.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Your personal statement is a critical part of your application. Admissions committees look to it to help them go beyond the grades and the test scores and round you out as an individual. It is crucial that your personal statement speak to the admissions committee in a "voice" that is authentically yours. It should

clearly reveal your level of determination, maturity, and potential. It should not duplicate what is in your transcript and résumé, but go beyond it to paint a self-portrait that will help set you apart in the mind of the reader. Be specific, using concrete examples to document your claims. And be direct; don't expect the reader to read between the lines. Stating factual information is not bragging about yourself. If it's important, say it—and articulate it clearly.

The personal statement should be something of which you are proud. It should be grammatically perfect, with no typographical or spelling errors. It should be concise, clear, and to the point, and show a logical development of ideas. Inundating the admissions committee with vast amounts of paper guarantees that the committee will not give it as careful a reading as they will give a concise and carefully constructed essay.

These are examples of information worth mentioning in your personal statement.

- Discuss an independent study project you've completed or are in the process of completing, and its importance to you.
- Cite recent instances in which you have clearly demonstrated leadership ability, such as a leadership role in an extracurricular or community activity.
- Describe any unusual elements in your family background that have influenced your intellectual or personal development.
- Discuss any serious obstacles you have had to overcome.
- Describe any elements of your work or college experience that have made a transformative impact on you.
- Cite examples that demonstrate highly developed interpersonal skills.
- If you have paid for all or part of your college expenses, include that information.
- State the impact you plan to make through your legal career.

Writing about yourself could be the most difficult task of all in preparing your application.

Your job is to prepare a well written, carefully thought-out statement about yourself. Consider yourself as providing the kind of information that would be part of an interview. And remember that you are demonstrating your writing ability as well as presenting important information about yourself. Ask individuals who know you to review the statement. Do they feel it is a good representation of you? Ask others who do not know you well to evaluate it, too. After reading your statement, do they feel they know you better? Their reactions may be similar to those of an admissions committee.

APPLICATION REFERENCES

APPLICATION RESOURCES

There are a variety of resources you can utilize as you prepare to apply to law school. We strongly recommend you visit the Law School Admission Council website at www.lsac.org. Please see below to learn more about the benefits of LSAC as well as other resources you can utilize.

ONLINE SERVICES

Create an LSAC online account free of charge to streamline your interactions with LSAC. You can sign up for law school forums, register with CAS, register for the LSAT (and receive scores early via e-mail), buy publications and test prep materials, and apply online using electronic applications.

DATA SEARCH

The [ABA/LSAC Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools](#) is an online database you can use to search for LSAC law schools that meet your selection criteria.

[Law School Transparency](#) provides a wealth of reliable data, including comparing law school reports, with detailed information on admissions, finances, bar exam outcomes, jobs and salaries, and more!

[DiscoverLaw](#) was developed by the LSAC to encourage students from diverse backgrounds to discover career opportunities in law and provides resources, tips, and tools on how to become a competitive law school applicant. The site also offers a list of scholarship opportunities, legal education resources, and events.

A pre-law advisor may also suggest additional resources to meet your specific needs during an advising session.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
ABA	American Bar Association, the professional association to which all practicing lawyers in the U.S. must be admitted. Admission requires passing a rigorous examination (“passing the Bar Exam”) after finishing law school.
CRS	Candidate Referral Service, an LSAC recruiting service that allows law schools to search the LSDAS database for particular applicants whose characteristics they seek. When you register with LSDAS you have the option to appear (or not) in law schools’ recruitment searches.
LSAC	The Law School Admission Council, a nonprofit corporation whose members are 200+ law schools in the United States and Canada. All law schools approved by the American Bar Association (ABA) are LSAC members.
LSAT	Law School Admissions Test, a standardized entrance exam required of applicants to over 200 law schools in the United States and Canada. The test is administered by the LSAC.
CAS	Law School Credential Assembly Service, administered by the LSAC to manage the transmission of applicants’ credentials to its member law schools.

FINANCING LAW SCHOOL

The following websites are highly recommended as resources when evaluating financing law school:

[AccessLex Institute](#): AccessLex Institute has a strong commitment to inform students of the economic realities of law school without limiting students' aspirations.

[Michigan State University College of Law Webinars](#): View a variety of webinars ranging from Getting into Law School, Succeeding on the LSAT, Writing Your Personal Statement, Financing Your Legal Education, and more!

Scholarships: [American Bar Association Legal Opportunity Scholarship Fund](#)

APPLICATION TIMETABLE & SUPPORT

Start the process a year before you plan to enter law school; for example, start in May 2023 for entry in September 2024.

Time Period	Action
March	LSAT: register for the June or July test if you plan to submit applications in the fall.
June	LSAT: if you're fully prepared, take the test. Begin working on your personal statement and update your resume.
Summer	Begin creating and narrowing your school choice list.
Summer	LSAT: register for the September/October test, if you didn't take it over the summer.
September	Consult with the pre-law advisors. Solicit recommendation letters.
Late September/ Early October	LSAT: take the test no later than this date, if at all possible.
Early Fall	Visit Boston-area law schools.
Late October/ November	Attend an annual Law School Forum. LSAT: register for the early December test, if you haven't already taken it or must take it again.
Early December	LSAT: this is your final opportunity to take it and be considered for admission into the following September's entering class, for most schools Financial aid: obtain the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at www.fafsa.ed.gov or from the UMass Boston financial aid office.
January	Financial aid: prepare your federal income tax return as soon as possible after January 1.
February/March	Admission and financial aid application deadlines for most law schools (Please note some deadlines are in December).
Spring	Notification of admission decisions by law schools. Pay close attention to deposit deadlines to schools where you are accepted

PRE-LAW ADVISING

The pre-law advisors serve current and former students of UMass Boston who are interested in law school or considering careers in law. We encourage you to meet with a pre-law advisor to evaluate your career goals and discuss if attending law school is the right path for you. Below are a variety of topics we can assist you with:

PRE-LAW ADVISING TOPICS

Undergraduate Preparation

- Choosing a Major/Evaluating Minors or Programs of Study
- Selecting Courses
- GPA Requirements

Career Preparation

- Career Exploration and Career Planning
- Strategies for Finding Internships
- Conducting Informational Interviews

Researching Law Schools

- How to Research Financing Law School
- Evaluating Admissions Requirements/Competitiveness of Programs

Preparing to Apply to Law School

- Approaching the LSAT
- Recommendation Letters
- Personal Statements
- Timelines

Evaluating Programs

- Narrowing Law School Choice

Pre-law advising sessions are available by appointment. Please use the information below to schedule your meeting:

Joyce Morrissey

Academic Advisor
University Advising Center
Campus Center, 1st Floor, Room 1100

Appointments:

<https://go.oncehub.com/JoyceMorrissey>

Jennifer Barone

Career Specialist, College of Liberal Arts
Career Services and Internships
Campus Center, 1st Floor, Suite 1300

Appointments:

<https://app.joinhandshake.com/appointments>

We are looking forward to working with you!

University of Massachusetts Boston • 100 Morrissey Boulevard • Boston, Massachusetts 02125-3393