So You Want To Go to Law School?  
A One-Stop Guide for the Honors Student

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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As a student who is currently involved in the law school admissions process, I have found that there are several things I did not know before I began the process. There are many guides available on the market to help one prepare for the LSAT and explain the basics of applying to law school. However, I never was able to locate an all-inclusive guide that detailed the entire experience of law school admissions. It would have been extremely informative and helpful to have had access to a "one-stop" guide that could have told me about everything from the LSAT to the time it takes to receive acceptance letters in the mail. In response to the need for such a guide, I have decided to create one as a senior honors creative project. This guide will be in the form of a handbook that will hopefully be used by future Ball State University students and help make the law school admissions process a little easier.

Through the use of various sources, I will compile information regarding all aspects of the law school admission process including the procurement of application materials and preparing for and taking the LSAT. I will also highlight my own personal experiences within the application process. In order to ensure that this guide is different from the handbooks currently available, I plan to include items not found in such books. These include a section of interviews with current law students and a section on ways to make an individual appealing to law schools. I will also include information about the application process, financial information, and other relevant items in my handbook. Hopefully, once all of this information is compiled in one place, the result will be a useful guide that can be utilized by Ball State students for many years to come.
Acknowledgements

Thank you to Ange Cooksey, my advisor, for all of her help and guidance with this project. Thanks also to all of my wonderful family and friends for their support throughout my four years at Ball State University.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who can go to law school?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Process</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What to look for in a law school</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How can I make myself appealing to law schools?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The LSAT</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What is the LSAT?</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- When should I take it?</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How much does it cost?</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How do I register?</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How do I study for the LSAT?</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Should I repeat the test?</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSDAS</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How did I get started?</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- When should I apply?</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How much does it cost?</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are schools looking for in my application?</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Waiting Game</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Current Law Students Have to Say</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Final Checklist</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful Information</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works Cited</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>A-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sample LSAT Questions</td>
<td>A-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ball State Law-Related Courses</td>
<td>A-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sample Applications</td>
<td>A-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

As a student who is just finished going through the law school admissions process, I have found that there are many things I did not know before I began the process. There are many guides available to help one prepare for the LSAT and explain the basics of applying to law school. However, I never was able to locate an all-inclusive guide that detailed the entire experience of law school admissions. It would have been extremely informative and helpful to have access to a "one-stop" guide to law school admissions. Since I never had such a useful source, I have decided to create one for the Ball State Honors College. Hopefully, it will help to make interested students' lives a little easier as they go through the process.

This guide contains information I have compiled regarding all aspects of the law school admission process. I have also highlighted my own personal experiences with regard to the application process. One of the most important things I have learned is that many questions will arise along the way. Law school admissions can take a very long time. There is a lot of waiting and wondering involved once you put those applications in the mail. Hopefully this guide will help to ease your mind as you go through the admissions process.

I believe that this guide is different from the handbooks currently available on the market. It includes statements from current law students, a section on ways to make yourself appealing to law schools, and a segment on college courses that might be useful if you feel you have an interest in pursuing a career in law. I also have included information about the application process, financial information, and other relevant items in this handbook.
Who can go to law school?

These days, people who go to law school come are coming from many different backgrounds and experiences. Some are coming right out of college while others have been out in the “real world” working and have decided to go back to school.

Based on images portrayed on television and in books, popular opinion portrays lawyers as if they only work in the courtroom. This is not the case however; people go to law schools for many other reasons other than to become trial attorneys. Lawyers are needed for all branches of business such as real estate and banking. They are also needed in health fields and with large corporations.

Contrary to popular belief, you do not have to major in Political Science to go to law school. For instance, I majored in Chemistry during college since I planned on going into patent law. You can attend law school with most any academic major. Law schools want a diverse student body filled with people from all academic walks of life. Unlike medical school, where you are expected to have had specific classes before you enroll, there are no such requirements for law school. Basically, law schools want a student that has had a broad liberal-arts education containing classes in writing and analytical thinking. Most schools require that an applicant has received a baccalaureate degree from an approved college or university. They also require that at least 90 credit hours of undergraduate work must have been done in academic courses and not skills-training classes (Indiana University School of Law’s Bulletin 1998-2000 4).

Although the majority of law students attend school full time, many schools offer part-time programs for students who have family or work commitments during the day and wish to go to school at night.

The competition to get into law school is fierce. Therefore, it is important to get started on the right foot from the very beginning.
Application Process

What to look for in a law school

Law school ranking systems such as the one developed by U.S. News and World Report provide an indication of which law schools they deem to be "the best." These rankings are based on a variety of factors such as average LSAT score and GPA of the entering class, success in job placement, and student to faculty ratio. Although these statistics are informative, it is important to choose a law school based on criteria that are important to you. This is the school where you will be spending the next three years of your life.

Interestingly, one study found that 58% of all law students end up living within one hour of where they went to law school (Kaplan LSAT 1999-2000 261). Detailed information regarding all of the 196 LSAC-member law schools is located in The Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools. This guide is available for purchase from LSAC as a book or CD-ROM and can help in your decision-making. Here are some items you might consider when looking at law schools:

- **Reputation**
  - Depending on what you want to do after law school, a school's reputation can be important. Earning a degree from a school with a big reputation might help law students in the job search since the school has name recognition and a widespread alumni base. However, such schools are often very expensive and attending them could put graduates into heavy debt. You must be willing to think about how willing you are to go into debt following law school. Also, schools with such a reputation are known for being very competitive. If you don't want a law school experience that is so competition-oriented, a big-name school may not be for you.

- **Location**
  - The experience of attending law school will likely be a difficult one. Therefore, choose a school in a location with which you feel comfortable. Again, you will be there for at least three years. Visit the campuses of law schools that interest you and inquire about housing and other information such as cost of living, campus safety, and social opportunities.

- **Cost**
  - The cost of financing law school varies. If you decide to go to a public school in state, you will find the cost to be lower than the cost of attending a private law school or one out-of-state. Many institutions offer some scholarships, but the majority of law students pay their way with student loans offered by the federal government and private banking institutions. Such loans are not "free money," they must be paid back after the completion of law school. Contact the schools and ask them for up-to-date information regarding the amount of money you could expect to spend in one year at their school. Remember to include items such as living, travel, and miscellaneous expenses.
• **Job Placement**

Since it is getting harder to find employment in the legal field, a school’s job placement statistics are important. Find out the percentage of graduates who were employed in law jobs at graduation and the percentage of those who were employed six months after graduation. Also, visit the school’s career services office. Speak with one of the career counselors about what you could expect from their office. Take note of any bulletin boards with job postings and internship opportunities.

Sources: *Kaplan LSAT 1999-2000* pp. 261-268

www.lsac.org

**How can I make myself appealing to law schools?**

The best way to gain acceptance into law school would be to start in the freshman year of college and earn the best grades you can in a broad variety of subjects. Also, prepare yourself well for the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) and do your best on the test. A strong GPA and LSAT score are the most important factors in the law school admissions process. However, since schools look at other factors when admitting students, there are other things you might do to make yourself appealing to law schools.

• **Law Firm Employment**

I worked at a law firm for three years of my collegiate career. Although the work can be less than glamorous, I think it helps you gain a sort of understanding and appreciation for the practice of law. Some of the things I did included filing pleadings in federal and state court, maintaining the firm’s law library, and running errands. If you go into a job such as this and expect that it will be fun all of the time, likely you will be disappointed. In the long run, such employment will indicate to admissions committees that you possess a desire to learn about a career in law.

• **Internships**

There are many opportunities to participate in internships during college. If your collegiate major requires an internship, such an experience will likely look good on a law school application. A friend of mine recently interned at the Indiana Statehouse. Although she was not planning on attending law school, she worked with many others who were intent on pursuing a legal education.

• **Governor’s Fellowship**

The Governor’s Fellowship is a program instituted by the Governor of Indiana that introduces recent college graduates to the different branches of state government. Fellows are employed for one year and rotate throughout different areas of the government. Polly Kubesch, a 1999 Ball State graduate, served as a fellow during 1999-2000. She decided to apply for the fellowship in hopes of gaining experience before entering law school and felt that working as a Governor’s Fellow had helped her in the law school admissions process. She
saying, "As a fellow, I felt comfortable requesting a recommendation from the Governor's Senior Executive staff. All of the Governor's staff has been extremely helpful ensuring our success at the post-graduate level. I felt very confident turning in my applications with such a great seal of approval."

Information regarding applying for the Governor's Fellowship can be obtained from the Governor's website at www.state.in.us/gov.

- **Classes at Ball State**
- If you think you maybe be interested in attending law school, it might be a good idea to take a class or two at Ball State in law-related areas. Although these classes will not teach you everything that you will learn in law school, they do provide a starting point for students who think they want to go to law school. Examples of such courses offered at Ball State are located in the Appendix of this guide.
The LSAT

What is it?
The Law School Admission Test (LSAT) is a required examination for admission to all 196 law schools that are members of the Law School Admission Council. It is a half-day examination that tests reading and verbal reasoning skills. The test consists of five 35-minute sections of multiple-choice questions. One of the sections is for experimental use and is not scored. However, the test-taker does not know which of the sections is experimental. The four scored sections include:

-One analytical reasoning section
-One reading comprehension section
-Two logical reasoning sections

These tests measure skills deemed important for success in law school. According to the LSAT & LSDAS Registration and Information Book, such skills include “the reading and comprehension of complex texts with accuracy and insight; the organization and management of information and the ability to draw reasonable inferences from it; the ability to reason critically; and the analysis and evaluation of the reasoning and argument of others”(1).

In addition to the multiple-choice sections, a 30-minute writing sample is administered at the end of the examination. For the writing sample, a prompt is given stating two different sides to an argument. You will write an argument supporting one of the given sides. There are no wrong or right answers. The writing sample is designed to show law schools how well you are able to present a logical argument within a short time span. The writing sample is not scored, but a copy of it is sent to all law schools with the individuals LSAT score.

LSAT scores range from a low of 120 to a high of 180. The average score usually falls around 150. Approximately 3 ½ weeks after the test, LSAT scores can be obtained over the phone for a $10 charge. About one week after that, the score report is mailed. The score report includes the score and percentile rank of the score as well as any previous scores earned.

When should I take the LSAT?

The optimal time to take the LSAT is the summer following your junior year. That way, you can retake the test in October or December if you wish. The LSAT is given four times each year, usually on Saturday, in February, June, October, and December. Saturday Sabbath observers may take the test on the Monday following the Saturday administrations (LSAT & LSDAS Registration and Information Book 4). Most law schools require you to take the LSAT by December for admission the following fall (LSAT & LSDAS Registration and Information Book 3).
**How much does it cost?**
The cost to take the LSAT is $90.00 and payment can be made by check or credit card. If you are unable to pay the fee, a fee waiver may be requested through Law Services. A fee waiver form is included in the LSAT & LSDAS Registration and Information Book.

**How do I register?**
Registration must be done prior to the test date. Walk-in registration is not allowed. The LSAT & LSDAS Registration and Information Book provides a listing of the registration periods for each administration of the test. It is also advisable to register early in order to ensure you can take the test at your preferred test center.

There are several ways to register for the LSAT. The LSAT & LSDAS Registration and Information Book can be obtained from the university’s political science department. You may also request a book by phone at (215) 968-1001 or by e-mail at www.LSAC.org.

In addition to the paper method, registration may also be done over the phone at (215) 968-1001 or online at www.LSAC.org. However, it is recommended that every interested individual obtain a copy of the LSAT & LSDAS Registration and Information Book prior to any type of registration as it contains many other helpful resources.

After Law Services has received your registration materials, you will be sent an LSAT admission ticket that you must present at the testing center the morning of the LSAT along with a picture ID.

**How should I study for the LSAT?**
There are various study aids available to help one prepare for the LSAT. These study aids are produced by companies such as Barron’s and Kaplan and often contain a book and CD-ROM. The Law School Admission Council (LSAC) also distributes old copies of the LSAT for purchase. These publications can be purchased from bookstores, on-line booksellers, and through LSAC.

**LSAC Study Aids**

*LSAT PrepTest* – Contains one actual LSAT with answer key, writing sample, and scoring information.
**Cost:** $8.00

*LSAT – The Official TriplePrep.* - There are three volumes of this publication and each volume must be purchased separately. Each volume contains three actual LSATs with answer keys and scoring information as well as test-taking strategies.
**Cost:** $16.50 per volume

There are many other LSAT study aids available. According to Amazon.com, their top two-selling LSAT study aids include:
Princeton Review's Cracking the LSAT  
Cost: Approximately $16.00

Kaplan LSAT 2000-2001 w/CD-ROM  
Cost: Approximately $28.00

Studying for the LSAT is something to which you must devote some time. I purchased a study guide by Kaplan as well as some LSAT PrepTests from LSAC. The Kaplan guide had some helpful information, but the PrepTests were more informative. Since they were actual LSAT exams, it helped me to get a better feel for what the questions would be like and how to identify my weak areas.

Example LSAT questions can be found in the Appendix of this handbook

Should I repeat the test?

If you believe that your LSAT score is not an accurate indicator of your ability, you may want to take the test again. Maybe you were suffering from anxiety or illness the morning of the test. It is important to remember that if you repeat the test, your score may not increase at all or it could decrease. Since each score report contains data from every LSAT that has been taken, it is important to remember that law schools will see each score.

LSDAS

The Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS) is a service that is required by most law schools that are approved by the American Bar Association (ABA). LSDAS serves as a clearinghouse to simplify the law school admission process. You, the applicant, will submit your actual applications, personal statements, and application fees to law schools. LSDAS will be responsible for providing the rest of your information to the law schools. Each school to which you apply will receive from LSDAS a report containing an undergraduate summary of grades, copies of transcripts, LSAT scores, copies of the LSAT writing sample, and copies of letters of recommendation (LSAT & LSDAS Registration and Information Book 17).

You can register for the LSDAS when you register for the LSAT or you can subscribe to the service later. However, registration must be done before a law school’s application deadline. An LSDAS subscription costs $95 for twelve months. Like the LSAT fee, if you feel that you cannot pay the LSDAS fee, it may be waived if a request is made through Law Services. The fee includes an LSDAS report to be sent to one school. If you are applying to more than one school, you must indicate the number of additional reports you need on the LSDAS registration form. Each additional LSDAS report costs $9. You do not give Law Services the names of the schools, just the total number of reports you need. After you have applied to schools, the schools will request the LSDAS report from Law Services.
Also important is for you to request that transcripts from every undergraduate or graduate institution you attended to be sent from the university to Law Services shortly after registering for the LSDAS. Law schools will receive copies of the transcripts with your LSDAS report; therefore it is not necessary to send the transcripts directly to the schools.

After you have registered for LSDAS, you will receive a confirmation of your subscription in the mail. It will include your biographical information that you submitted with your LSDAS registration form. It is important to check and make sure that all information included is accurate. Mistakes are rare, but they do occur. Then, when your file is complete and all information has been compiled, a Master Law School Report will be sent to you. This includes your biographical information, analysis of grades, and LSAT scores. Again, it is important to check all information to make sure that it is accurate. This report will be sent to law schools in addition to the following:

It is important to note that the LSDAS method for calculating GPA is different than the way your Ball State GPA is calculated. Let’s say you took a class your freshman year of college and received a grade of F. A year later, you decide to retake the course and this time you earn an A in the class. Ball State leaves the F on your transcript but replaces it with the A when calculating your GPA. LSDAS, on the other hand, has a policy of including every college grade ever earned in its GPA calculation. They do not acknowledge the repeated courses as does Ball State. Keep this in mind, since law schools will see the GPA calculated by LSDAS on your Master Law School Report.
Applications

The law school application represents the ultimate sales pitch. It is your opportunity to let schools know why you would make a great addition to their institution. Many schools do not conduct interviews. Therefore, it is important that your application is organized in a fashion that makes you most appealing to schools.

How do I get started?

First, obtain application materials from each of the schools to which you want to apply. The appendix of this guide contains two actual applications. You will see that applications can vary in their format. You can obtain applications by calling or writing the law school office of admissions. Application materials may be available for download from the school website. Also, many schools are now having applicants fill out online applications to alleviate paperwork. For example, the University of Dayton School of Law rewards those who apply online by waiving the application fee. A good idea would be to make a folder for each school to which you are applying. This way, you will be able to keep all of your information organized.

Next, determine the application deadline and application fee for each law school. Since many schools start making admissions decisions a few months before the deadline, it is important to get your application in as soon as possible. Also, it is important to note that schools will often not consider your application until they receive all materials from LSDAS, including your letters of recommendation and transcripts. Remember this when you are completing your applications and asking for letters of recommendation. You don’t want to send in your application two days before the deadline only to find that you are disqualified from consideration because your LSDAS report did not arrive before the deadline.

Before you complete the applications, make photocopies of each and fill in information on the copy. That way, when you complete the actual application, you will be less likely to make mistakes.

The application should be typed and free of errors. Do not leave questions blank. If a question does not apply to you, type “not applicable” for the question. Admissions officers will appreciate this attention to detail (Kaplan LSAT 1999-2000 282). Have someone proofread your application for errors. Often, such mistakes can go unnoticed by the applicant.

When should I apply?

You should submit your application to the law school as early as possible. However, this does not mean that you should be sending in applications the summer before the application deadline. November or December is usually a good time to start working on applications. For example, I started working on my applications early in December and then mailed them to the schools in early January.
Most schools practice rolling admissions where they make admissions decisions as applications arrive. Therefore, the later you send in your application, the more difficult it could be to gain acceptance at a school since many of the available seats may already be taken.

Make a note of the date you sent your applications. You will usually receive notification from the schools within two weeks that they have received your application.

**How much does it cost?**

I found that the average application fee was between $30-$35. This fee can be more expensive at some of the big-name schools (i.e., Ivy League). When I mailed out my applications, I found that the average postage cost was $.77. So, if you apply to five schools like I did, you could expect to pay an average of about $180 to apply to law schools or more, if you apply to some of the big-name schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Application fee</th>
<th>$30-$35</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average postage cost</td>
<td>$.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What are schools looking for in my application?**

Law School Admissions committees look at a few things when assessing applicants. Law schools consider GPA and LSAT to be the most important indicators of law school success, therefore schools look at these numbers carefully. Schools also look at letters of recommendation, the personal statement, and employment and activities during college.

**GPA and LSAT Score**

Most law schools start with the index score, which is a combination of the applicant's grade point average and LSAT score when looking at applications. Each school uses a different formula to compute the index score. Some applicants have very high index scores and are admitted automatically. Very few applicants are accepted in this way, however. Most schools look at other factors when making admissions decisions. For example, according to admissions information contained in Indiana University School of Law’s *Bulletin 1998-2000*, “Most admissions decisions are based on a combination of factors, including the applicant’s undergraduate program, worthwhile community and extracurricular activities, employment during and after college, graduate work, and letters of recommendation” (4).
Each school varies in its admission standards. The table below contains a sampling of data regarding admission statistics for the 1999 entering classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law School</th>
<th>GPA 25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-75&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; percentile</th>
<th>LSAT 25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-75&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; percentile</th>
<th>Acceptance Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yale University</td>
<td>3.80-3.95</td>
<td>167-174</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td>3.44-3.76</td>
<td>161-169</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern University</td>
<td>3.25-3.71</td>
<td>164-168</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana University-Bloomington</td>
<td>3.07-3.65</td>
<td>153-161</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio State University</td>
<td>3.27-3.75</td>
<td>153-160</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana University - Indianapolis</td>
<td>3.01-3.58</td>
<td>151-157</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Louisville</td>
<td>2.88-3.74</td>
<td>151-159</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valparaiso University</td>
<td>2.80-3.50</td>
<td>148-156</td>
<td>74.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Dayton</td>
<td>2.80-3.38</td>
<td>147-154</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio Northern University</td>
<td>2.60-3.32</td>
<td>145-154</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Cooley Law School</td>
<td>2.68-3.14</td>
<td>139-146</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**The Personal Statement**

Since many law schools do not conduct interviews, the personal statement is your opportunity to tell the admissions committee why you would make a great addition to their law school. This is where you include any relevant information that you have not already included elsewhere in your application. Often, if your LSAT score and GPA are very good, the personal statement may not get more than a glance from admission officers. However, if your numbers place you on the borderline at a school, a good personal statement may be the difference between acceptance and rejection (*Kaplan LSAT 1999-2000* 286).

Most schools give applicants free reign over what their personal statement will contain. Overall, the essay should be an honest illustration of your personality and character. Most schools will suggest either a word or page limit when writing a personal statement. Two pages is the average length limit set by most law schools. An essay of 1 ½ pages is usually a safe bet for most schools.

One of the most important things remember about the personal statement is that is should not be written completely in one sitting. You should write your statement, let it sit for awhile and then read it again and make corrections. Also, let someone you regard as a good proofreader critique your personal statement. This will help you find errors that you might not have noticed while writing your essay.

According to *Kaplan LSAT 1999-2000*, there are several things you should not do when you write your personal statement. These include:
The following items are suggested when writing your personal statement:

- **Tell stories**
  - A story or anecdote is much easier to read than an abstract list of your qualities. It will also be more likely be remembered by admissions officers when they are making their decision.

- **Be unique**
  - Admissions officers want to know what characteristics or attributes you could bring to the law school class. Think about experiences you have had that would make you a unique addition to the law school.

- **Start strongly**
  - The beginning of the essay is what is going to catch the reader’s eye and keep their interest. Make sure that the start of your personal statement is something that will grab their attention and make them want to read more.

- **Don’t turn your personal statement into a resume**
  - An essay filled with a narrative of your life from birth on can come across as boring and is often repetitive from information already found in other parts of your application.

- **Avoid the “why I want to go to law school essay”**
  - This can be part of your essay, but it should not be the entire focus. Admissions officers have probably read thousands of essays like this.

- **Don’t discuss your flaws**
  - The personal statement should highlight your strengths. Again, you are trying to market yourself as a positive addition to the law school.

- **Don’t try and impress with your preexisting legal knowledge**
  - Law schools figure that they will teach you what you need to know about the law once you get to school.

Source: *Kaplan LSAT 1999-2000* pp. 287-286

**Letters of Recommendation**

A good letter of recommendation can help set you apart from other law school applicants. Therefore, it important to have your letters written by individuals who know you well. According to *Kaplan's LSAT 1999-2000*, such people will highlight your strengths but also acknowledge your weaknesses. This adds credibility to the letter, indicating that the letter writer is honest and straightforward (290). Most schools prefer that faculty members write such letters. However, if you have been out of school for awhile or you have employment experiences that you feel have enhanced your life in a way that would be appealing to law schools, then letters from employers may be appropriate.
LSAC offers an optional letter of recommendation service that is included with your LSDAS subscription. The recommender can write one letter and it can then be copied and sent to all the schools to which the individual is applying. This relieves the recommender from having to write numerous letters for one person.

To use this service, the applicant should instruct the letter writer to sign the letter, attach the completed Letter of Recommendation Form, and insert it into his or her own envelope. The Letter of Recommendation Form can be found in the LSAT & LSDAS Registration and Information Book or downloaded from LSAC’s website. Up to three letters may be sent using this service. However, letters must be received by LSAC no later than two weeks before a school’s application deadline in order for them to be processed and mailed (LSAT & LSDAS Registration and Information Book 20).

Make sure you give your recommenders plenty of time to write your letter. Check with them periodically to see if they have any questions but, most importantly, to make sure they have written the letter and sent it.

It is important to check with individual schools before having letters sent through the Letter of Recommendation Service to determine the school’s requirements. Most schools will tell you how many recommendation letters they want and if such letters are to be school-specific or can be submitted through the recommendation service.

**Employment/Activities**

The LSAT score and GPA are important, but they are not the only item of importance in the law school admission process. Law schools appreciate well-rounded applicants. Employment during and after college and extracurricular activities are also considered during the application process. Most applications ask you to detail your work history and list extracurricular activities and volunteer duties undertaken during college.
The Waiting Game

Now that you have mailed out your applications, there is nothing left to do but wait for responses from the schools. If you want to check your LSAC file online, you can access it at www.lsac.org. This service is very useful in that you can see if your file is complete and on what dates schools request your file from LSAC. This can be very helpful in judging how long it will be before you receive any response from law schools. Most schools will send you a letter soon after they receive your file from LSAC. Then, the amount of time it takes for schools to give you a decision can vary. I received my first acceptance letter about a month after I mailed in my applications. However, some schools take a lot longer. Do not be shocked if it is April and you have not heard from certain schools. Unless you receive a rejection letter from a school, you can assume that you are still under consideration for admission.
What Current Law Students Have to Say

Students currently in law school are often the best source for information regarding the law school admission process. They have been through it all before and know how difficult it is. I asked a couple of law students who recently graduated from Ball State to tell about their feelings regarding the law school application process and their experiences thus far with law school. As you will see, everyone’s experience with the admissions process is different.

Jasna Brblic, Ball State University Class of 1998
Second-year law student: Indiana University School of Law-Bloomington

I wanted to go to a law school that was not terribly expensive but would still have a good reputation on the national level. Since I had an opportunity to meet numerous attorneys who actually went to IU, I learned a great deal about law school as well as Bloomington from them and gradually fell in love with all of it. I knew that I had a good chance of getting in-state tuition at IU, which most certainly tipped the balance. I really did not apply to many other law schools.

I had a great experience with IU admissions at law school. I was notified within two or three weeks of submitting my application. They were very responsive to any questions that I had and provided me with any kind of information that I needed, such as housing information, for example.

I believe that my undergraduate career prepared me well for law school. I studied economics and, as many students who intend to attend law school don’t realize, a law school education without any economics education may be quite difficult. I was in much better shape than some of my friends because I had background in it. I took numerous writing and highly analytical classes in college, which helped me since these skills are so crucial in law school.

As far as the LSAT goes, I think it is important to realize that your college education should be sufficient to get you through the exam. Studying for the LSAT through the use of practice exams should help you become familiar with the testing situation and the types of questions on the exam.

Law school truly is a wonderful experience in many ways. You will be surrounded by students who have very similar as well as different interests than yours and most of whom will be terribly bright. Being a law student, especially a first-year law student, is a very exhausting experience but very rewarding on a personal as well as on a social level.

Anthony Pierson, Ball State University Class of 1999
First-year law student: Ohio State University

My experience with the law school admissions process was very frustrating. In law school, everything takes so long. It is frustrating, but you get used to it. It starts with the LSAT score. It takes four weeks to receive a score that, at that time, is from the most important test of your life. Then, admission takes forever.
To prepare for the LSAT, I bought a bunch of practice tests from LSAC and other books that were available. I studied rigorously every day, spending about an hour taking a section of one of the practice tests. I would then grade it and see where I went wrong. For the four weekends preceding the test, I took a whole four-hour practice test, without a break, with the telephone unplugged and no other distractions. I tried my best to duplicate the testing situation. Teaching your body to sit down and concentrate for four hours is something that you must practice.

My advice to Ball State students considering law school is to understand that you are still going to school. You could be a lot of other places making real money, but if you go to law school you are going to be a student who is most likely broke and brain-fried. Law school is very hard, but it is “doable.” You must be willing to devote the time to it. I study a whole lot more than I did in undergraduate, but I expected to.
A Final Checklist

Well, you have reached the end of this guide. Are you ready to start the application process? As you have seen, applying to law school is a very complex process. I have learned that the most important thing is to keep organized. By following the general checklist below, you should be on the right track to a successful law school application process.

Law School Checklist

☐ Register for LSAT & LSDAS
☐ Receive LSAT Ticket and LSDAS confirmation in mail
☐ Make request for letters of recommendation
☐ Request applications from schools
☐ Take LSAT
☐ Start working on personal statement
☐ Check with recommenders to make sure letters have been sent
☐ Receive LSAT score
☐ Complete applications and mail
☐ Wait for admissions decisions
Useful Information

- Law Services/Law School Admissions Council (LSAC)
  661 Penn Street
  Newtown, PA 18940
  (215) 968-1001
  www.lsac.org

- Dr. Ralph Baker
  Ball State University Pre-Law Advisor
  NQ 259
  285-8786

- Ball State Career Services
  LU 220

- Career Resource Room
  LU 235
Works Cited

Amazon.com. 26 April 2000 http://www.amazon.com


School of Law Page. Indiana University. 26 April 2000 http://www.law.indiana.edu/

Sample LSAT Questions

Logical Reasoning

A work of architecture, if it is to be both inviting and functional for public use, must be unobtrusive, taking second place to the total environment. Modern architects, plagued by egotism, have violated this percept. They have let their strong personalities take over their work, producing buildings that are not functional for public use.

Which one of these statements below follows logically from the statements in the passage?

(a) Unobtrusive architecture is both inviting and functional
(b) Modern architects who let their strong personalities take over their work produce buildings that are not unobtrusive.
(c) An architect with a strong personality cannot produce buildings that function well for the public.
(d) A work of architecture that takes second place to the environment functions well for public use.
(e) A work of architecture cannot simultaneously express its architect’s personality and be functional for public use.

Correct answer: b

Analytical Reasoning

There are exactly seven houses on a street. Each house is occupied by exactly one of seven families: the Kahns, Lowes, Muirs, Newmans, Owens, Piatts, Rutans. All the houses are on the same side of the street, which runs from west to east.

The Rutans do not live in the first or the last house on the street.
The Kahns live in the fourth house from the west end of the street.
The Muirs live next to the Kahns.
The Piatts live east of both the Kahns and the Muirs but west of the Lowes.

Which of the following families CANNOT live next to the Kahns?

(a) the Lowes
(b) the Newmans
(c) the Owens
(d) the Piatts
(e) the Rutans

Correct answer: a

Source: LSAT: The Official TriplePrep, LSAC, 1999
Course catalog
Law-Related Courses

**Economics**
ECON 332 - Labor Relations and Law  (Prerequisite ECON 201 and 202)
ECON 346 - Analysis of Legal Issues  (Prerequisite ECON 201 and 202)

**Business Law**
BL 160 - Law of Personal Finance
BL 260 - Principles of Business Law
BL 362 - The Law of Business Associations  (Prerequisite BL 260)
BL 353 - Uniform Commercial Code Law (Prerequisite BL 260)
BL 367 - Estate Planning and Administration  (Prerequisite BL 360)

**Insurance**
INS 473 - Legal Aspects of Insurance  (Prerequisite BL 260 and INS 270)

**Real Estate**
RE 332 - Legal Aspects of Real Estate

**Journalism**
JOURN 325 - Journalism Law

**Philosophy**
PHIL 200 - Logic
PHIL 202 - Ethics
PHIL 308 - Philosophy of Law

**Criminal Justice (CJC) and Political Science (POLS)**
There are many courses in these departments that are law-related. Check Ball State’s course catalog for a complete listing.
APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

Juris Doctor Program, 2000–2001 academic year
Northwestern University School of Law
Post Office Box 11064
Chicago, Illinois 60611-0064
Phone: 312-503-8465
Fax: 312-503-0178
E-mail: nulawadm@nwu.edu

Please check the box that pertains to your application.
○ Applicant for JD program
○ Applicant for JD-PhD program

Graduate program of interest

Transfer applicant

Note for JD-MM applicants: Do NOT complete this application.
Instead, complete only a Kellogg School application and submit it to Kellogg’s Admissions Office.

Please type or print in ink.

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<th>Mr.</th>
<th>Ms.</th>
<th>Social Security number</th>
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Address (for decision)

Number and street

City State Zip code E-mail

Home phone area code

Fax area code

Work phone area code

May we contact you at work? ○ Yes ○ No

Permanent address

Number and street

City State Zip code Phone area code

Citizenship

○ Permanent U.S. resident but not a U.S. citizen ○ Nonresident alien (list visa type)

Optional Personal Data

Federal law requires institutions of higher education that receive federal assistance to report racial/ethnic enrollments. The information requested below will assist the Law School in meeting this requirement and will provide statistical data for the University. Furnishing or failing to furnish this optional information will not affect the admission decision.

United States citizens only:

○ Alaskan Native
○ Asian/Pacific Islander
○ Black/African-American (non-Hispanic)
○ Hispanic (not Chicano or Puerto Rican)
○ Mexican-American/Chicano
○ Native American (please indicate tribal affiliation)
○ Puerto Rican
○ White/Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
○ Other (please specify)
Have you ever served in the military?  ○ No  ○ Yes  If yes, were you honorably discharged?  ○ No  ○ Yes  (If no, explain on a separate sheet.)

Are you applying for financial aid?  ○ No  ○ Yes  If yes, you must file the FAFSA and institutional financial statements. See page 6.

**Educational Background**

Name of undergraduate degree-granting institution:  City  State  Graduation date:  

List the official names of all colleges, universities, and other postsecondary institutions attended, including those attended for summer or evening classes. Send only transcripts that are requested in the LSAT/LSDAS Registration and Information Book to Law Services. Mail other transcripts (not a part of LSDAS Law School Report) directly to Northwestern University School of Law.

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<th>Institution</th>
<th>Attendance dates</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Degree awarded</th>
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Have you applied previously to Northwestern University School of Law?  ○ No  ○ Yes (date)  What was the decision?

Have you taken the LSAT?  ○ No, will take on (date)  ○ Yes, on (date)  ○ Yes, will retake on (date)

Please list the name, relationship, and class year of any family members who hold degrees from Northwestern University School of Law.

Names of parents or guardian(s)

Occupations of parents or guardian(s)

Address of parents or guardian(s)

Are you or have you ever been enrolled in another law school?  ○ No  ○ Yes  (If yes, explain reasons for withdrawal on a separate sheet.)

Have you ever been suspended, expelled, placed on probation, or otherwise disciplined by any college or university for academic or other reasons?  ○ No  ○ Yes  (If yes, explain on a separate sheet.)

Have you ever been convicted of a crime?  ○ No  ○ Yes  (If yes, explain on a separate sheet. Minor traffic violations may be omitted.)

List academic honors and awards received in college.
List extracurricular collegiate/community activities and business/professional organizations (list from most to least significant).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity/organization</th>
<th>Dates (from/to)</th>
<th>Hours/week</th>
<th>Office(s) held, if any (E = elected, A = appointed)</th>
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Employment History

How much full-time work experience (excluding internships) will you have at entrance? __________ years/months

Full- or part-time work since graduation from college:

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<th>Employer</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Dates, hours per week</th>
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Summer employment while in college (indicate what you did if you were not employed):

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<th>Employer</th>
<th>Type of work</th>
<th>Dates, hours per week</th>
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Employment while in college:

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Please give the names of your recommenders:

1. 
2. 

What are your career interest(s) immediately after law school?

What are your long-term career goals?

**Personal Statement**

Include a typed, signed personal statement (recommended length: one to three pages, double-spaced). Please look upon this essay as an opportunity to introduce yourself to members of the Admissions Committee. In doing so, keep in mind that the committee evaluates applicants in many areas beyond test scores. We encourage you to discuss personal and professional goals that are important to you and to include information about your achievements. Feel free to comment further about your education, background, community involvement, and strengths and weaknesses in certain courses or activities. Please type your name and Social Security number on the top of each page.

**Optional Essays**

Although you are not required to, answering the following questions may provide you an opportunity to give the Admissions Committee relevant information that you were not able to include in your personal statement. If you wish to respond to one or both of these questions, please limit each response to one or two paragraphs.

1. The students at Northwestern University School of Law come from many different backgrounds. Please describe an aspect of your background that you feel would allow you to contribute uniquely to the school and/or your classmates.

2. Briefly discuss your specific interest in Northwestern University School of Law.

I certify that the information contained in this application is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. I will notify the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid promptly if any of this information changes. I understand that furnishing inaccurate or misleading information can result in denial of admission or dismissal from the Law School and will be reported to the Law School Admission Council's Committee on Misconduct and Irregularities.

Signature

Date

Print name here

Be sure to mail with your application a check or money order for the $70 application fee, payable to Northwestern University ($80 if postmarked after December 31 or if applying for admission as a transfer student).
Indiana University–Bloomington
Application for Admission
To J.D. Program

Application for the Class Entering in Summer: _____ or Fall: _____

The application should be sent to the Admissions Office, School of Law–Bloomington, Indiana University, 211 S. Indiana Avenue, Bloomington, Indiana, 47405-1001. An application is not complete until this form and the following credentials have been received:

- Graduate and Professional Application Data Sheet. Required of every applicant for admission to Indiana University.
- Application fee. Please make check payable to Indiana University and submit with this application.
- Law School Admission Test score and transcript analysis from the Law School Data Assembly Service.
- Applicants who are accepted are required to submit two passport-size photographs before registration.

Name ______________________________ Social Security Number ________________

Last     First     Middle

Present Mailing Address
Street ______________________________
City ______________________________
State & Zip Code ____________________
Telephone: Area Code ______ No. ______

Permanent Home Address (Where to contact after May 1)
Street ______________________________
City ______________________________
State & Zip Code ____________________
Telephone: Area Code ______ No. ______

All colleges and universities attended:

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<th>Institution</th>
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<th>Major</th>
<th>Degree</th>
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When did you or will you take the LSAT? ____________________________ month/year

For Committee Use Only:

Received __________________________ Credit Average ___________________________

College Credit __________________________ Decision ___________________________

Received __________________________ Admit ___________________________

Received __________________________ Deny ___________________________
Do you seek admission as a college graduate? ______ or as a transfer from another law school? ______

Have you previously applied to our Law School? ______ If so, when? __________________

Are you applying to a joint degree? ______ If so, please indicate the degree program below.

Honorary organizations to which you belong(ed) and other honors received in college:

__________________________________________________________________________

If you participated in extracurricular activities while attending college, please list them below and note if you held an elected or appointed office.

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<th>Organization or activity</th>
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<th>Fresh</th>
<th>Soph</th>
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<th>Sr.</th>
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If you worked while enrolled in college or during the summer between academic years, please provide the information requested below.

Part-time and summer work while enrolled in college:

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<th>Employer</th>
<th>Duties</th>
<th>Approximate number of hours worked per week</th>
<th>Check one</th>
<th>Fresh</th>
<th>Soph</th>
<th>Jr.</th>
<th>Sr.</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Acad. Yr.</th>
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Percent of your college expenses which you provided through employment: __________________

If you have attended more than one college in working toward your bachelor's degree, give the reasons for each change. (Attach additional sheet if necessary) __________________________________

Was there an interval of more than three months between secondary school and college? ______ Between college and law school? ______ Give reasons for, and activities during the interval. __________________________________________
Permanent positions held: (Please list chronologically-most recent job first.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Position and duties</th>
<th>Date began month/year</th>
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Social, professional, or civic organizations to which you belong(ed):


If you have served in the military, Peace Corps, or other government unit, briefly describe your responsibilities and duties.


Have any members of your family attended Indiana University School of Law-Bloomington? If so, please complete the section below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Dates of Attendance</th>
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Because of the high ethical standards to which lawyers are held, applicants are reminded that the failure to disclose an act or event that pertains to character and honesty on this application form may result in revocation of admission or disciplinary action by the Law School or denial of permission to practice law by the state in which you seek admission.

A. Have you ever been suspended, expelled, placed on probation, (requested or advised to resign,) or otherwise disciplined by any college or university for academic, ethical, or other reasons? _____

B. Have you ever been charged with or convicted of any felony or misdemeanor (other than a minor traffic violation)? _____

If you give an affirmative answer to any of these questions, please explain the circumstances on a separate sheet.

If you have attended another law school as a J.D. candidate, you must provide a transcript of your work there and a statement regarding your standing from the dean of the law school.

The Admissions Committee finds it useful, in acting on applications, to have a statement regarding personal, international, cross-cultural and language experiences, background, talents, or any other matters which indicate why your application should be favorably considered. If you wish to submit such a statement, please do so on a separate sheet.

Letters of recommendation are not required; however, they are helpful to the Admissions Committee in assessing the qualifications of many applicants, particularly if the letters are from faculty members who are familiar with the applicant's academic strengths. If you wish to submit letters of recommendation, ordinarily three letters provide sufficient information for the Committee. Recommendations may be sent directly to the Law School, through the LSAC Letter of Recommendation Service or through your college recommendation service.

Date of application ______________ Signature of applicant ______________