

**10 Things College Students Should Do if Interested in Law School**

- 1. Consider a major that you are very interested in and a minor that will enhance your writing**
  - a. Law schools, like top colleges, want to admit students who have been able to excel in challenging courses and difficult subjects, and pre-law is not considered a difficult major.
  - b. Similar majors like legal studies and criminal justice are typical “law-related” majors, but are not seen as academically rigorous.
  - c. Law schools strive to admit students from a variety of backgrounds and majors. Academic diversity is important! Believe it or not, science majors tend to have extremely high admission rates to law school.
  - d. Law schools would rather you take challenging courses that will help improve your analytical skills and reading comprehension.
  
- 2. Visit as many law schools as you can.**
  - a. In-State
  - b. Out-of-State
    - i. Would you consider moving and practicing law in a different state?
  - c. Visit a first year law school class
  
- 3. Develop a list of criteria that are important to you when selecting a law school.**
  - a. Is the school ABA accredited?
  - b. What is the quality of the faculty (i.e. expertise, scholarship, awards, etc.)?
  - c. What kind of resources does the school provide i.e. academic support program, alumni mentors, early bar preparation, first week/orientation program, student mentors, etc.?
  - d. Are there any notable alumni that inspire you to attend the specific law school?
  - e. What kind of clinics, concentrations, emphasis areas, dual degrees and/or special programs are offered?
  - f. What do you envision doing with your law degree (i.e. some schools may be more geared to a particular field of law than others)?

**4. Consider the financial consequences.**

- a. Before going to law school, consider what your finances will look like when you graduate from law school.
- b. Consider your current finances (car payment, credit card debt, etc.) and see if you can pay off or reduce your debt before entering law school. This will help you reduce how much you have to borrow.
- c. Honestly assess the tuition, fees and living costs at the schools you are considering; how you will cover those expenses while in school; how much financial aid you will need; the probable sources of that aid, and how much debt you will incur. Some law schools offer calculators to help.
- d. Check scholarship opportunities; have a calendar or planner for deadlines.
- e. After receiving financial aid offers from various schools, plug the numbers into a calculator to see what you would have to earn to live comfortably with the amount of debt you would incur and with the repayment plan you are considering. (And yes, you must seriously consider repayment plans.) Then look at employment outcomes for each school.
- f. Repayment Estimator: [studentloans.gov](http://studentloans.gov)
- g. Loan Calculator: [finaid.org](http://finaid.org)

**5. Develop relationships with your professors (Letters of Recommendation)**

- a. Find a mentor.
- b. Get to know faculty members. Law schools typically require two academic recommendations. For students at larger universities, teaching assistants may be the most appropriate individual(s) to write an academic recommendation.
- c. Follow-up with professors or teaching assistants that have agreed to write a letter
  - i. Provide your recommender(s) with your resume and draft of your personal statement or a short letter articulating the reasons why you are applying to law school and why you could be an excellent candidate.
- d. Write a thank you letter after recommendation has been sent.

**6. Identify a mentor**

- a. Reach out to career services to find alumni working in your desired legal profession.
- b. Use LinkedIn to connect with Alumni within your network.
- c. Attend panels that have current law students or alumni discussing their experiences.

**7. Save Money**

- a. The law school application process can be very financially straining, so save money for all the unexpected fees and costs related to the application process
- b. \$ is needed for: -LSAT, LSAT Prep, Application Fees, Transcript Fees, and other books.

**8. LSAT prep...Khan Academy...**

- a. Prepare for the LSAT in advance
  - i. Take a mock LSAT to gauge areas to improve upon.
  - ii. Look into LSAT Prep companies.
    - 1. Testmasters
    - 2. Blueprint LSAT Prep
    - 3. KAPLAN
    - 4. Khan Academy – Free (<https://www.khanacademy.org/prep/lSAT>)
    - 5. Manhattan Test Prep
    - 6. Princeton Review
- b. Consider taking the LSAT more than once
  - i. Were you sick on test day?
  - ii. Did you answer most of the questions in the time allotted?
  - iii. Other circumstances that prevented you from doing the best you can?

**9. Gain life experience**

- a. Before coming to law school consider taking a “Gap Year” so that you may get some life experience to make you a more dynamic and unique applicant.
- b. Some suggestions for ways to spend your time off:
  - i. Work in an area you are interested in
  - ii. Work to pay off debt
  - iii. Law related internships and externships
  - iv. Study abroad
  - v. Volunteer – Peace Corps and AmeriCorps (earn money for school!)

**10. Your reputation is important and your behaviors and choices could have significant impact on your future career.**

- a. Some of these include:
  - i. Academic Dishonesty
  - ii. DUI – Driving Under the Influence
  - iii. DWI – Driving While Impaired
  - iv. BUI – Biking Under the Influence
  - v. Arrest History
  - vi. Suspensions
  - vii. Ex-offender
- b. It is important to note that character and fitness issues are not necessarily a bar to being admitted to law school or the practice of law. For more information visit the California State Bar ([www.calbar.ca.gov](http://www.calbar.ca.gov)) and review the moral character requirements and factors ([www.calbar.ca.gov/Admissions/Moral-Character](http://www.calbar.ca.gov/Admissions/Moral-Character)).
- c. Law school applicants have an on-going duty to disclose any character and fitness issues throughout the application process and through the end of their law school career.
  - i. Most often it is not the character and fitness issue that bars a student from being admitted to law school or to the practice of law, but the fact that the student failed to disclose the matter.