PREPARING FOR LAW SCHOOL

Law is the profession of interpreting laws, applying them to client situations and providing legal advice. It involves informing clients of their legal rights and responsibilities and providing representation in situations such as negotiations, courts and tribunals. The legal profession also involves a significant amount of research and preparation of legal documentation and contracts. There are many areas of specialization, some of which include business law, tax law, intellectual property law, criminal law, environmental law, human rights, family law and labour law.

WHAT UNIVERSITY BACKGROUND IS REQUIRED?

Gaining admission to law school is competitive. Candidates are accepted from all concentrations of study and must have at least 2 years of undergraduate study, although the majority of faculties prefer 3 or more years of study. While the requirements vary for each law school, basic requirements usually include a combination of a candidate’s GPA (minimum of B+/A average) and LSAT score (minimum of 75-85th percentile). Additionally, admission committees also consider a candidate’s extracurricular activities and work experience when evaluating prospective students.

Most schools maintain separate access admission categories for applicants who are mature in age, aboriginal, as well as for applicants with disabilities. These access categories may have slightly different admission requirements (verify with each faculty). Each applicant is considered and compared with others in the same category.

WHAT IS THE LSAT?

The Law School Admission Test (LSAT) is a half-day standardized test issued by the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) to measure skills considered essential for success in law school. The test consists of five 35-minute sections of multiple-choice questions with four of the five sections contributing to the test-taker’s score. The sections include one reading comprehension, one analytical reasoning, two logical reasoning sections, and a fifth section used to pretest new test items and pre-equate new test forms. A 35-minute writing sample is administered at the end of the test. The LSAT is offered four times a year in June, October, December and February.

Tip: Review an LSAT guide such as those published by Kaplan, PowerScore, and/or Princeton Review for sample questions and solutions to help you understand the skills assessed in the LSAT. Once you are ready to study for the LSAT, begin to practice from actual and previously administered LSATs. Official LSAT PrepTests can be purchased at: http://www.lsac.org/. (Some individuals in financial need may also want to inquire about free LSAT preparation offered through the U of T Law School Access Program, which runs from May to August. Further details can be found via: https://www.law.utoronto.ca/admissions/youth-outreach/lsap)

How to register for the LSAT

Applicants can register online by visiting the LSAC website: www.lsac.org. Check the LSAC website for test dates, locations and deadlines.

Applying to Ontario Universities

There are 17 law schools in Canada with 7 in Ontario. Within Ontario it is not uncommon to receive 2,500+ applications for 160-290 spots. Given the degree of competition, students are advised to treat their undergraduate studies and extracurricular experiences as ends in themselves rather than as a means to gain entrance to a law school. Once admitted, the cost of law school in Canada ranges greatly and is dependent on each educational institution. For the 2016-2017 year, the cost of tuition ranged between $17,706.90 (University of Ottawa) to $34,980 (University of Toronto).

The application process is handled centrally by the Ontario Law School Application Service (OLSAS) http://www.ouac.on.ca/olsas.

- Once you begin your online application, you can exit and re-enter at a later time provided you do not “submit” your application.
- In addition to the online application, refer to each university’s admission requirements for supplementary information that might be required.
- First year applications are due at the OUAC through the OLSAS system by November 1, 2017.
- It is recommended that applicants allow between 5-25 hours for preparation of their application and if a personal statement is required, allow plenty of time for editing and refining.
- Non-refundable OLSAS application fee is $200.00 Canadian, plus $90.00 for each law school applied to.
- Refer to the OLSAS website for a listing of upcoming Law School Information events/sessions in the fall: www.ouac.on.ca/events-olsas/

Tip: Preview the online OLSAS application (http://www.ouac.on.ca/olsas/) at least one year prior to applying to law school by creating a “dummy” account. This will give you an idea of what is required and will help you understand the process of applying in following year(s).
Please note that this information is subject to change. It is best to refer to the original sources for the most up to date information. (Updated July 2017)