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 law specialization, some of which include business, taxation, intellectual property, criminal, environmental, human rights, family, labour and litigation 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 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. Each applicant is considered and compared with others in the same category. It is prudent to verify all information about admissions requirements and processes directly with each faculty.

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 also 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.

Tip: Check with each law school regarding deadlines by which the LSAT must be written and consider writing at an earlier sitting to provide flexibility should you choose to take the test again.

APPLYING TO ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES

There are 17 law schools in Canada with 7 in Ontario. Within Ontario, it is common to receive 2,500+ applications for 160-290 spots. Given the degree of competition, students are advised to consider and prepare for a variety of career options rather than having a narrow and exclusive focus on 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 2017-2018 year, the cost of tuition ranged between $18,578.10 (University of Windsor) to $36,440.36 (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, 2018.
- 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 $100.00 for each 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).
FACULTIES IN OTHER PROVINCES AND ABROAD

- Those considering law schools outside of Ontario or Canada should enquire about application processes for each faculty of law in those provinces / countries.
- Qualifying to practice in Canada with an international law degree requires a number of accreditation steps before articling / Law Practice Placement and the bar exams. For full details consult: http://www.flsc.ca/en/national-committee-on-accreditation/

PRACTICING LAW IN ONTARIO

To practice Law in Ontario, the Law Society of Upper Canada requires successful completion of:

- An accredited three-year Juris Doctor (J.D) program
- 10 months of Articling – supervised work (usually paid) with a law firm or a Law Practice Placement (consisting of a 4 month training program and a 4 month placement) http://www.lsp.ryerson.ca/
- A self-study course on Professional Responsibility and Practice (approx. 30 hours to complete)
- Two full-day multiple choice Bar Exams

Ontario Law Schools:

- University of Toronto www.law.utoronto.ca
- University of Ottawa http://llmphd.uottawa.ca/
- Queen’s University http://law.queensu.ca/
- University of Western Ontario http://www.law.wo.ca/
- University of Windsor Ontario http://www.uwindsor.ca/law/
- York University - Osgoode Hall www.osgoode.yorku.ca
- Lakehead University http://www.law.lakeheadu.ca/

Tip: Detailed information about admission requirements and application procedures should be obtained from the individual Faculties of Law. For an overview summarizing law school requirements, application categories and specialty programs refer to: https://www.ouac.on.ca/guide/olsas-program-requirements/ and/or https://www.lsac.org/id/choosing-a-law-school/canadian

CAREER CENTRE RESOURCES

Graduate and Professional Schools Fair: (Typically held in the 2nd or 3rd week of September annually, 10:00am – 2:00pm at the RAWC) Speak with admission representatives from Faculty of Law programs in Ontario. Check our website under the Events Calendar for a list of faculties attending the fair.

Law Schools Admissions: The Inside Scoop: A detailed panel discussion with representatives from law programs in Ontario. Usually held the same day as the Graduate and Professional Schools Fair

Law School Information Session: If you are thinking of a career in law, attend this information session for information on preparing your application for admission to faculties of law in Ontario. One or two sessions are held in each of the fall and winter terms (see Events Calendar)

Extern / Job Shadowing Program: A unique career exploration program to investigate career interests in the workplace over a 1 to 5-day voluntary placement in February, June and November. https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/jsp-students

****see the CLN Events Calendar for all the above****

Career Centre Print and On-line Resources

- “Cracking the LSAT” (Princeton Review) – Techniques and Strategies for scoring higher.
- “Get Into Law School: A Strategic Approach” (a Kaplan publication) – Advice regarding the admissions process and tips for preparing to apply to law school.
- “Mastering the Personal Statement” – Understand the process of writing a personal statement. Also, try our e module found on our website under Further Education, Resources and Links http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/events-services
- Master the LSAT by Jeff Kolb – part of our e-book collection for download (find under section: “Do I have what I need to get into Grad School?”): http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/career-exploration/career-resource-library
- Law and Legal Careers Binders – Career information related to law
- Individual Appointments – Get advice and information to plan your law career, explore alternatives, gain relevant experience and critique your personal statement. Call (905) 828-5451 or drop by the Career Centre at DV 3094

Contact law schools’ admissions offices to clarify specific questions not covered on their websites.

Information is subject to change. Consult the original sources for the most up to date information. (Updated May 2018)