

Preparation for Law School and the Recommended Path for Applying

General Prep for Law School

1. Familiarize yourself with the **Legal Profession** and **Law School Experiences** (see Resources)
2. Take advantage of **USF's Law School**
 - Sit in on classes
 - Talk to students
3. Many law schools look favorably upon students who have interned with various law-related organizations. **Internships** offer the opportunity for related experience as well as course credit.

Internships are a valuable resource not only for determining whether law school is for you, but they also offer excellent work experience. Law schools want some assurance that, after acceptance, students will not only finish the program but actually stay in the legal profession. Having work experience in the field is a great way of assuring schools that you are aware of the work and the commitment that it takes to be in law school and succeed in the profession.

At least three internship courses that can provide a legal experience are offered at USF: Politics 396, Public Administration Internship provides placements in government agencies, such as the District Attorney's Office. Politics 397, Fieldwork in Public Interest Organizations and Sociology 395, Fieldwork in Sociology both provide opportunities in non-profit, non-governmental organizations. All of these courses also satisfy the internship course requirement for both the Legal Studies and the Criminal Justice Studies minors, as well as the USF service learning requirement. These courses place students in various legal positions offering first-hand experience. These are to be unpaid positions; paid internships are frowned upon for these courses, although such internships may be pursued independently.

4. While it is not important for students to major in a specific discipline to apply to law school, it is important to take courses that will improve your analytical, writing, and critical thinking skills. Take demanding courses – law school admissions officers review applicants' transcripts for courses taken. They are interested not just in your GPA, but in how demanding your courses were during your undergraduate career.

Recommended Path for Applying to Law School

This plan is directed towards those students who plan to attend law school directly out of their undergraduate studies. But please note that some students are opting to take time off between their undergraduate studies and law school. This is certainly not necessary, but some students benefit from a “break” and from giving themselves some perspective on whether they want to pursue law school. It can also be a time for students to pursue a meaningful activity before going back to school, such as an additional internship or work experience. Otherwise, here’s a recommended path:

Freshman Year and Beyond

- Consider career options
- Volunteer / Work in professional law settings
- Meet, talk with, and shadow working legal professionals
- Explore other areas of interest
- Develop your study skills
- Hone your problem solving abilities
- Identify your strengths and weaknesses
- Discover who you are as an individual

Sophomore Year

- Investigate law schools
- Request information from schools
- Study published materials
- Start familiarizing yourself with the LSAT

Junior Year

Fall Semester:

- Begin to request recommendation letters from faculty, employers, and supervisors
- Attend Law School Forum (usually in November in Oakland or SF)
- Begin studying for the LSAT

Spring Semester:

- Register for the LSAT
 - Check deadlines for Test registration
- Look into various preparation courses and materials

Summer Before Senior Year

- Study for the LSAT
- Register with LSDAS
- Request undergraduate transcripts be sent to LSDAS
- Request application materials from law schools
- Begin writing personal statement
- Take practice LSATs
- **If possible, taking the June LSAT exam is recommended so students avoid having to take the LSAT during the semester**
- Further investigate law school choices
- Write a draft resume, emphasizing law-related experience

Senior Year

- Take the LSAT – While there is a test date offered in December, we recommend that you take the October exam. For many schools, December is too late!
- Write Personal Statement
- Finalize resume
- Request Letters of Recommendation
- Compile list of law schools to apply to
- Meet with a Pre-law Advisor to discuss your personal statement and choice of schools
- Research financial aid options