



# Pre-Law Advising Sheet

Admission to law school is highly competitive. Law school prepares students to understand and work with legal systems by developing their abilities to write and speak persuasively, anticipate consequences, and use creative and analytical problem solving skills. Most law school graduates practice law; but a legal education is very flexible, providing training for any number of professions.

The Juris Doctor, or JD, is the most common degree conferred by law schools. All American Bar Association approved law schools usually require 3 years of full-time study to earn a JD. Some law schools also offer part-time programs that generally take 4 to 5 years to complete. In addition, many schools offer joint degrees. A JD/MBA or JD/MA may take 4-5 years to complete, but generally takes less time to complete than completing the two degrees separately.

## Choosing an Undergraduate Major

“Pre-law” is **not** a major at universities. Applicants for admission to most law schools are expected to have a B.A. or B.S. degree and to have taken the Law School Admission Test. You should give careful consideration to your choice of major and select an area of study that interests you. Law schools do not require or prefer any particular major; they look for an undergraduate educational background that sharpens analytical reasoning and writing skills. However, students should select an appropriate major that could lead to an alternative career, if necessary.

Students with good skills before entering law school will be better prepared to manage the demands of their law school courses. Therefore, take challenging courses that require extensive writing, reading, research, and critical analysis, regardless of whether these courses are in your field of study. Participating in extracurricular activities or research projects can also develop your

## Law School Selection Criteria

- **GPA** in terms of overall college grades is a major factor in the selection process. You should be cautious of which courses you take on a Pass/No Pass basis as a No Pass is calculated as a “F” grade by the Credential Assembly Service. Repeated courses are also counted into the GPA. You can find a detailed description of the GPA calculation on the [LSAC website](#).
- All American Bar Association approved law schools require the **Law School Admission Test (LSAT)**. The LSAT is a standardized test that assesses your reading comprehension, analytical reasoning, logical reasoning, and your writing through a writing sample. This is a major factor in the selection process.
- **Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS)** report standardizes your grades and sends them as a part of a report to the law schools you want to attend. Almost all American Bar Association approved law schools require applicants to use the LSDAS. Your LSDAS subscription is good for 12 months.
- **Letters of recommendation** from professors, people who know you well, or employers who can attest to your analytical and logical reasoning skills.
- The **personal statement** is a sample of your ability to write clearly and consciously. It is also an opportunity for you to tell the admissions committee about yourself. Most schools do not conduct interviews; therefore, the statement represents an opportunity for you to present yourself as more than just a GPA and an LSAT score.

## Recommended Websites

Law School Admissions Council	<a href="http://www.lsac.org">www.lsac.org</a>
American Bar Association	<a href="http://www.abanet.org">www.abanet.org</a>
California Law School	<a href="http://california.findlaw.com">http://california.findlaw.com</a>
Official Guide to ABA Approved Law Schools	<a href="http://officialguide.lsac.org">http://officialguide.lsac.org</a>
UC Berkeley Career Center	<a href="http://career.berkeley.edu/Law/Law.stm">http://career.berkeley.edu/Law/Law.stm</a>

## Select Law School Websites

Loyola Law School	<a href="http://www.lls.edu/">http://www.lls.edu/</a>
Pepperdine University	<a href="http://law.pepperdine.edu/">http://law.pepperdine.edu/</a>
Southwestern Law School	<a href="http://www.swlaw.edu/">http://www.swlaw.edu/</a>
University of California, Berkeley	<a href="http://www.law.berkeley.edu/">http://www.law.berkeley.edu/</a>
University of California, Los Angeles	<a href="http://www.law.ucla.edu/home/">http://www.law.ucla.edu/home/</a>
University of Southern California	<a href="http://lawweb.usc.edu/">http://lawweb.usc.edu/</a>

**Note:** Information is subject to change without notice. Check with the individual campus for the most up to date information.

## **Salary Information**

The median wage in 2014 for Lawyers in California was \$150,062 annually ([www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov](http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov)). The median is the point at which half of the workers earn more and half earn less.

## **Sample Specializations within Law**

**Business/Corporate:** Business law deals with any aspect of the law having to do with industry and commerce--from taxes and liability to licensing and trade marking. Small-business law often focuses on the kind of legal counsel needed during the early years of a business, such as tax classifications, hiring employees, and the proper zoning and licensing needed to start a business. Corporate law is more likely to deal with the financial and structural status of an established company, as well as the provision of daily legal advice.

**Criminal Law:** Prosecution or defense of cases involving offenses against society or government.

**Environmental Law:** Environmental law mostly stems from a group of federal enactments that forced agencies and businesses to take into account the effect of their practices on the environment, as well as setting into effect laws and standards that would protect the environment from public and private actions.

**Family Law:** Annulment, separation, dissolution of marriage, adoption, child custody, estate planning, living trusts, settling an estate, guardianships, and inheritance tax laws.

**Healthcare Law:** Healthcare law practice can also cover medical malpractice, licensure, patient rights, and bio-ethical policy. Human Rights: Women's interests, employment discrimination, welfare rights, legal aid for low income groups, representation of ethnic minorities.

**Immigration Law:** Matters related to persons from other countries that wish to come to the U.S. and those who want to become naturalized citizens.

**Intellectual Property Law:** Intellectual property (IP) law is a general category of law that deals with the acquisition and enforcement of patents, trademarks, and copyrights, and one that has seen tremendous growth in the past decade. Intellectual property encompasses the exclusive rights to a registered idea, product, or name, and includes anything from words and symbols to internet domain names. Intellectual property law not only deals with unauthorized use of property and plagiarism, but also with the protection of image and personality through use of registered property.

**International Law:** International law consists of rules and principles which govern the relations and dealings of nations with each other.

**Labor Law:** The goal of labor laws is to equalize the bargaining power between employers and employees. The laws primarily deal with the relationship between employers and unions. Labor laws grant employees the right to unionize and allow employers and employees to engage in certain activities (e.g. strikes, picketing, seeking injunctions, and lockouts) so as to have their demands fulfilled.