

Pre-Law



College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters

Frequently Answered Questions about the Pre-Law Program

Can I major in Pre-law at UM-Dearborn?

No. If you consider yourself pre-law, it simply means that you plan to ultimately apply to law school. There is no formal pre-law program or curriculum. If you plan to complete a degree at UM-Dearborn, you must, at some point, declare a major that is available in one of the four schools and colleges at UM-Dearborn.

What is the “best” major for pre-law students?

There is no “best” major for pre-law students. Lawyers exercise many skills and work in a wide variety of environments. When choosing your major consider the subjects you enjoy studying, as well as the skill areas you need to improve. As a lawyer you will need to be able to express yourself competently, both orally and in writing; you will need to have an understanding of human institutions and values; and, you will need to have the ability to analyze situations and solve problems.

How do I determine if I am well-suited for law?

Consider first that the field of law is a people business. As a lawyer you will generally be acting on someone else’s behalf as you work to protect someone’s interest, solve a problem, right a wrong, or negotiate a settlement. Ask yourself if you can empathize with many different kinds of people. Are you a good listener? Can you communicate effectively? Can you be objective? Do you like detail work?

What is the LSAT?

The LSAT (Law School Admission Test) is a half-day standardized test required for admission to all law schools approved by the American Bar Association. It is given four times during the year in February, June, October and December. It is generally recommended that you plan to take the test in June after your junior year. The test consists of five sections of multiple-choice questions and a writing sample. Scores on the LSAT range from 120 – 180. You may obtain more information about the LSAT from the Law School Admission Council (www.lsac.org). Information booklets are available in CASL Advising (1039 CB).

What criteria do law schools use in evaluating applicants?

The most important factors considered by law schools are your LSAT score and your GPA. Personal statements, letters of recommendation, extracurricular activities and work experience, will be considered, as well, however, they would carry significantly less weight. Use the Boston College On-Line Law School Locator to identify reasonable schools for you to target, based on your GPA and LSAT score.

PREPARING FOR LAW SCHOOL

Freshman Year

- Focus on distribution/general education requirements, taking advantage of opportunities to explore human nature, social values, and public policy.
- Start assessing your personal interests, aptitudes and skills.
- Start researching extra-curricular opportunities – Student Government; other clubs and organizations; internships; cooperative education; study abroad.

Sophomore Year

- Focus on writing, analytical and logic skills.
- Start developing relationships with faculty.
- Pursue appropriate extra-curricular activities and seek leadership positions.
- Research law-related careers.
- Review Law School Admission Test (LSAT) registration process and preparation options.

Junior Year

- Focus on requirements for major.
- Research law schools.
- Attend graduate/professional school fairs.
- Prepare for LSAT and take exam.

Senior Year

- Visit law schools.
- Register with the Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS).
- Prepare personal statement.
- File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Complete degree requirements.

Choosing a Law School

- Be realistic about options. Consider admission criteria.
- Geography – How far are you willing to go? Where do you want to work when you’re done?
- Expense – What can you afford? How much debt are you willing to incur?
- Apply to 5-10 schools. Include safety, high probability and reach schools.
- Consider national vs. regional reputations and special curricula or concentrations.
- Visit the schools you are seriously considering.
- Talk to law school representatives – Deans, Associate Deans, and/or Admissions counselors.
- Talk to current students and/or alumni.

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Application Process

- Apply early.
- Answer questions completely and accurately.
- Carefully proofread all documents.

Personal Statement

- Accentuate the positive.
- Reveal special qualities relative to your personality, motivation, skills and experiences.
- Make sure you have addressed any specific questions or topics required by the law school.
- Be sure to eliminate any spelling or grammatical errors.

For Information on Law Schools and Preparation

Law School Admission Council

www.lsac.org

American Bar Association

www.abanet.org

Boston College Law School Locator

www.bc.edu/offices/career/gradschool/law/lawlocator

Internet Legal Research Group

www.ilrg.com

Prelaw Insider

www.prelawinsider.com

The National Jurist

www.nationaljurist.com

Phi Alpha Delta

www.pad.org

Princeton Review

www.princetonreview.com

Get Prepped

www.getprepped.com

LSAT Prep Course

www.lsatprepcourse.com

Kaplan

www.kaplan.com

PowerScore

www.powerscore.com

Test Preparation Services

www.testpreparationservices.com

Testmasters

www.testmasters.com

UM-D Pre-Law Advisors

Lars Bjorn, 4069 CB, 313-593-5174

lbjorn@umd.umich.edu

Lawrence Radine, 4031 CB, 313-593-5114

radine@umich.edu

Marllis Shannon, 1039 CB, 313-593-5293

mshannon@umd.umich.edu

For More Information

For additional information about the sociology program, contact:

Department of Behavioral Sciences – 4012 CB

University of Michigan-Dearborn

4901 Evergreen Road

Dearborn, MI 48128-2406

313-593-5520

To request an application or obtain more information about admission to the University:

Office of Admissions and Orientation

University of Michigan-Dearborn

4901 Evergreen Road

Dearborn, MI 48128-2406

313-593-5100

admissions@umd.umich.edu

www.umd.umich.edu