

Pre-Law information Frequently Asked Questions

Pre-Law is not a formal major, minor or certificate at Rice. The expression "pre-law" describes all training, studies, and experience which precede formal law study. It should not be viewed as underemphasizing the importance of undergraduate work, nor as implying that such work is a mere preparation for the study of law. The success and effectiveness of your legal training depend upon the breadth and depth of your cultural and intellectual background and experience; they must not be underemphasized. Students who plan to enter law school would be wise, therefore, to take traditional and demanding academic courses.

What are the requirements for admission to law school?

A bachelor's degree with any courses or major is required. No particular courses are specified nor is there a preferred major.

What do law schools ask of an applicant beyond the fact that they have a degree?

First, a high grade point average (GPA) and a strong score on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). Beyond that they look for a program of study that was designed to develop basic skills and insights in a comprehension and expression in words, the ability to think deductively, inductively, and by analogy, and creative power in thinking.

Schools also want "interesting" students who have demonstrated a passion in life that externally focused and beyond themselves. This is done in the personal statement.

Which courses should I take to develop these basic skills?

No specific courses are required; however, anyone entering the legal profession should have the ability to easily communicate both verbally and in writing. Courses with a strong writing component are, therefore, recommended. Generally, basic accounting courses are useful as well as the Economics and Philosophy of the Law courses offered at Rice. Legal courses in history, political science, or anthropology can provide a historical overview to law which is usually not given in law school.

As a pre-law student, what criteria should I use in selecting a major?

The best guide is your own interest, passion, and ability. Major in a field that interests you, you enjoy, and in which you can express your passion. You will make better grades in subjects you like. That is important. Also, if you get no fun or inspiration from your studies, you are probably in the wrong field. Look beyond your major, however, to your other course selections. You should also select distribution and elective courses that contribute to your vision of your curriculum.

How important are extracurricular activities?

They are important to the law schools if they are important to you. A résumé is required with a law school application, but do not make choices based on “what will look the best.” Make choices based on your own interests, motivations, and goals.

What resources are available to research law schools?

A good place to start researching law schools is the [Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools](#), where you will find valuable information on each school's programs, as well as statistics on grade-point averages and Law School Admission Test scores for its last entering class. Each school also provides a section on its financial aid resources, employment opportunities, bar passage rates, and a breakdown of its enrollment by ethnicity.

How should I prepare for the LSAT?

The [Law School Admission Council](#) (LSAC) provides previously disclosed tests and other test preparation materials. In addition, test prep companies offer a variety of courses and materials to aid in your preparation. Research these options thoroughly, being mindful of budget, time, and your best learning/studying environment. It is advisable to take the LSAT only when you are fully prepared. The LSAC sends ALL test scores to law schools, along with an average. In evaluating your application, some schools will use the average score, some will consider the highest score.

What is the Credential Assembly Service (CAS) and do I need to register for this?

ABA-approved law schools and many other law schools require the use of [CAS](#). The service helps to simplify the law school application process by allowing you to submit all of the necessary documentation one time. All required transcripts, letters of recommendation, and evaluations are submitted to CAS, which then sends them as part of the [Law School Report](#) to each law school to which you are applying.



When should I apply to law school?

You should be ready to apply by mid-fall, a year before you plan on entering law school. Here are some tips: In summer, a year before you plan to attend, you should browse websites for information on particular law schools, sign up for the CAS, begin preparing your personal statement and update your résumé. If you did not take the LSAT in June, register for the September/October LSAT. Some schools will accept the December and the February LSAT. Please check with the individual schools.

Should I request an interview or visit the law schools to which I am applying?

With a few exceptions, in general, law schools do not grant interviews. While they do encourage visits, these may or may not have an impact on admission. It is best to check a particular school's website to learn about its procedures. Visiting a law school is a great way to meet current law students and to get a general idea of the environment at the school. Most schools offer tours or informational sessions.

Where can I get more information and advice about pre-law studies and law schools?

The primary contact for Pre-Law advising is [Brad Blunt](#), Assistant Director of Academic Advising, x4060.

All advisors in the Office of Academic Advising are trained to serve as pre-law advisors. They are located in the Ley Student Center, Suite 132.