

HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND PRELAW CENTER

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APPLICATION GUIDE FOR LAW SCHOOL

A. THE LAW SCHOOL ADMISSION TEST (LSAT SCORE)

The LSAT is a standardized exam designed to measure certain abilities. All law schools require the LSAT for admission. The LSAT tests neither legal nor non-legal **knowledge**; rather, it attempts to test **how you think**, specifically in the areas of reading and comprehending complex texts, managing and organizing information, and processing that information to reach conclusions.

You can and should prepare for the LSAT. There is no best way to prepare, but familiarity with the wording and structure of the different questions, the way of thinking of the exam writers, time-saving techniques, and exploring various solution methods will definitely improve your score. Taking and analyzing actual past exams (most of which are available at HPPLC free of charge) under timed conditions, is an inexpensive and effective way to prepare. Another excellent way to prepare is by using commercial preparation books. We do not recommend one particular book above others. A Prelaw Advisor can help you develop a plan of attack which suits your particular strengths and weaknesses. HPPLC offers a preparation workshop, as do private companies such as Kaplan or Princeton Review. Some review courses for the test start 2-3 months before the test date. If your skills at taking this type of test need development, an early start is highly recommended!

The LSAT is offered at test centers throughout the world in June, October (or late September), December, and February. Visit www.lsac.org for details.

Because law school applications are usually submitted in the fall one year before you want to begin law school, the June or October test dates offer the best opportunities for timely application. The December exam is acceptable (as long as you submit your application material by very early January). Waiting until February of your senior year to take the LSAT may preclude your chances for admission to many schools.

Test scores will be reported for five years; however, a few schools honor scores for only three. Be sure to check with each school if this may be an issue for you—and be aware that schools can make exceptions to their stated policies as well. If you take the exam more than once, the CAS sends the average score, as well as each individual score, to every school to which you apply. Law schools normally use only your highest score for admissions purposes, although a discrepancy in multiple scores should be explained through a letter of addendum (your Prelaw Advisor can help you with this statement). You may normally take the exam only three times in any two year period.

B. CREDENTIAL ASSEMBLY SERVICE REPORT

(“CAS”, formerly known as the “Law School Data Assembly Service” or “LSDAS”)

Every law school in this country requires you to register for and use the Credential Assembly Service. This service compiles in one report most of the information the law schools need: your LSAT score, the LSAT writing sample, a copy of your academic transcript(s), a summary that standardizes your undergraduate transcript so that it may be compared to applicants from other schools, and copies of your letters of recommendation. You **MUST** register and pay for this service (it is required of all applicants—no exceptions). You may register for the LSAT and CAS at the same time, but you need not. However, it is a good idea to have your file with the CAS completed at the latest about 6 weeks before you submit applications. You may apply electronically to all law schools through the LSAC website after you are registered and paid for the CAS.

Law Services may award fee waivers to students in financial need. You may request a waiver application from online from www.lsac.org. Be aware that students requesting a waiver face much earlier registration deadlines; if you plan to apply for a waiver, apply for everything at least **two months** before the test date—and even earlier is better.

Students may request special accommodations for disabilities; but, again, *much extra time is involved in applying for them*. Consult the above website for details, and/or see a HPPLC Prelaw Advisor. Be prepared for your request to be sent back for additional information at least once, with the final request from you still due at the original deadline. If you qualify for accommodations, you should not hesitate to request them.

After you have registered with the CAS, you will need to send a complete official transcript from **every** undergraduate institution you have attended, even if the grades transferred and appear on your IU transcript. All IU campuses fall under one central transcript. For overseas study, you need only obtain a transcript from the domestic sponsoring institution. You will need to access your CAS account, print out a "Transcript Request Form," and give it to all schools that you have attended. For IUB, the transcript should be sent by the Registrar in Franklin Hall 100. Note that your CAS GPA can be higher or lower than your IU GPA. The main differences between their formula and IUB's are that CAS counts an "A+" as 4.33, and for repeated courses they will count both grades.

CAS will send you an Activity Update each month, so you will know when law schools access your report.

C. LAW SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

The most convenient way to apply is through the LSAC website once you have a CAS account. This latter method is more convenient for most people. ***Be sure to make and keep copies of everything you send to each law school.***

Most law schools ask for a personal statement in addition to routine background information. The personal statement provides an opportunity for you to demonstrate your writing skills and to present information that the application itself did not highlight. It can be a crucial component of your application materials. Consult the prelaw section of the HPPLC website for tips on writing this important document. If desired, bring or email a draft of your statement to HPPLC for feedback from a Prelaw Advisor.

D. LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Most law schools require letters of recommendation from persons who can evaluate your potential. If they are optional it is still preferable to submit them. They will be submitted via the CAS.

HPPLC offers a ***Recommendation Service*** for Indiana University students. The service allows applicants to collect recommendations over several years from professors as they go through undergraduate courses and places the letters in their file. Then, at the applicant's request, the Center forwards the letters to the CAS. For more detailed information, see the LOR section of HPPLC's website. It is quite comprehensive.

E. FINAL WARNING!

You must independently verify that all of your application materials have been received and sent to the appropriate entities. You may miss a deadline or requirement and be denied admission through absolutely no fault of your own. ***YOU will be held responsible for the mistakes of others!*** Double-check everything.

****For a detailed CHECKLIST of what you need to do to set up and complete the application process, see "Application Timelines" for both "Juniors" and "Seniors" at:**

<http://hpplc.indiana.edu/law/law-tl.shtml>.