

# HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND PRELAW CENTER

Indiana University Bloomington ■ University Division ■ Maxwell Hall 010 ■ Bloomington IN 47405  
812-855-1873 ■ Fax 812-856-2770 ■ [hplc@indiana.edu](mailto:hplc@indiana.edu) ■ [www.hplc.indiana.edu](http://www.hplc.indiana.edu)

## Waitlist Suggestions

### Introduction:

Students typically apply to and are accepted at more than one school. They must decline all acceptances but one. Normally, about 3 out of 4 admitted applicants will decline an offer of admission at any given school. Thus, Law Schools must admit a much higher number of students (typically two to three times as many) than they actually have places for. Based upon their past experience with such things, they have a pretty good idea as to what their actual “yield” of enrollees will be. To avoid getting too many students, however, they normally try to wind up short of their intended enrollment, with the idea of using the waitlist to fill up the few remaining open spots—to obtain precisely the number of new students they are equipped to handle. This is not necessarily an easy task, as many students put down seat deposit money at more than one school, and others do not bother to ask schools to remove their names from the waitlist after they have decided to enroll elsewhere. Thus law schools themselves often simply do not know how many applicants they will admit from the waitlist until very late in the summer.

When they do go to the waitlist, they are looking for students who they think will absolutely, positively enroll. Therefore, your job is to convey the sincere impression that there is no question that if they offered you admission, you would fill a seat for them. If the school is not your first choice, express a continuing interest in the school in the strongest terms possible. This is especially true if your # 1 school is ranked LOWER than the other school(s) to which you have been admitted (they have access to that information, and *may* assume you’d rather attend a higher ranked school).

Note that law schools cannot ask for non-refundable seat deposit money until April 1. Shortly after that date they have a much better idea as to their likely yield, and sometimes there is another mini-round of admissions at that point.

### Summary of things to do:

1. Write a “letter of continuing interest.” Start by thanking them for being put on the waitlist (it is in fact a positive sign). Keep it brief and upbeat. Do not beg! Remember, they assume that it would be great for you to attend their school—their concern is, what will *you* do for them. If you have any compelling reasons why you’d like to attend or would be a good fit, tell them, emphasizing any *academic* reasons. See what they promote on their website and in their literature for ideas.
2. Be thoroughly professional. Keep your file up-to-date. Send in your latest transcript, contact information, change of address, etc. Show them you are organized, businesslike, and on the ball.
3. Send in new supplemental information, transcripts, activities, letter(s) of recommendation, awards, etc.-- any NEW information about which they wanted to know in the original application. Just make sure it is relevant.
4. Meet with someone in the admissions office [don’t ask for an “interview” *per se*: these are rarely granted]. Note: some schools will not allow you to meet with people on the admissions committee; but most will. It is a potential risk if the meeting goes poorly, but a plus if it goes well.
5. Visit the school, even if you have done so already. Ask for a tour and/or to sit in on classes. You will distinguish yourself from those on the list who do not visit. Write thank you notes to follow-up. Mention any visits and the individuals seen by you in your continuing interest letter.

6. Contact any alumni you may know and ask if they can help. You can also call the admissions office and ask for contact information of IUB graduates who attend(ed) their school. They should have such information readily available. These folks may be able to give you useful perspectives and insights.

7. Call the admissions office OCCASIONALLY to express your continued interest and inquire as to future decision timelines--but do NOT overdue it, and be very polite at all times!! We are told that once every two weeks is acceptable, but be sensitive to how they respond. You don't want to be a "pest"! Most schools rank applicants on their waitlist (usually unofficially). It's unlikely they would tell you where you are on the list, but you might want to ask. You could, in the alternative, ask how many are on the waitlist and if they have any idea how far down the list they might go—but it would be rare for them to actually answer such a question in any meaningful way. However, such information becomes clearer to them after deposit deadlines pass. Never be rude to anyone on the other end of the line, no matter how frustrating it may become.

8. We hope it doesn't come to this, but if it is very late in the summer [2-3 weeks before classes start, or later!] they may be quite desperate for bodies. Most will not acknowledge this, but many law schools maintain a "super waitlist" comprised solely of applicants who are absolutely certain to enroll if admitted. If your application is still on hold at this point, and you'd be willing to drop everything and enroll at the very last minute, be sure to tell them this explicitly. This is especially important if you reside outside of the school's city, because at this late date many schools assume that only local applicants would be available.

This document has been prepared for Indiana University - Bloomington students by the Health Professions and Prelaw Center. Please note that specific requirements and policies can change at any time without notice. Students are responsible for obtaining the most current information directly from the application services, schools, and programs in which they have an interest.