

## myEssay.com Law School eBook

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|--|----|
| <b>Law School Application Guide</b> .....      | 2  |
| Application Overview .....                     | 2  |
| A word on ABA accreditation .....              | 2  |
| What is the LSDAS? .....                       | 2  |
| The LSAT .....                                 | 4  |
| Strategy .....                                 | 5  |
| Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS) ..... | 6  |
| What is the LSDAS? .....                       | 6  |
| How Do You Register? .....                     | 7  |
| The Basics .....                               | 7  |
| Other LSAC Services .....                      | 7  |
| Online vs. Traditional Applications .....      | 7  |
| Pros and Cons of Electronic Applications ..... | 8  |
| Additional Features of LSACD .....             | 8  |
| Additional Features of Multi-App .....         | 8  |
| The Basics .....                               | 9  |
| Application Time Line .....                    | 9  |
| Applying from College .....                    | 9  |
| Applying as a College Graduate .....           | 12 |
| Guide to Recommendations .....                 | 12 |
| What You Need .....                            | 12 |
| Elements of an Effective Recommendation .....  | 13 |
| Things to Consider .....                       | 13 |
| Recommendation Check List .....                | 14 |
| Choosing Your Recommenders .....               | 14 |
| Educate Your Recommenders .....                | 15 |
| Do the Grunt Work .....                        | 16 |
| <b>Law School Essay Guide</b> .....            | 17 |
| Essay Overview .....                           | 17 |
| Things to Consider .....                       | 17 |
| Strategy .....                                 | 17 |
| Writing the Essays .....                       | 19 |
| More on Choosing a Topic .....                 | 20 |
| Guide to Addenda .....                         | 21 |
| Guide to Introductions .....                   | 22 |
| 10 Introduction Techniques .....               | 22 |
| Guide to Conclusions .....                     | 24 |
| Finishing the Essay .....                      | 24 |
| Final Touches Checklist .....                  | 25 |
| Sample Essays .....                            | 27 |
| Five Essays with Comments .....                | 27 |
| Grammar Supplement .....                       | 36 |
| Parts of Speech .....                          | 36 |
| The Basic Sentence .....                       | 38 |
| Problem Sentences .....                        | 39 |
| General Concerns .....                         | 42 |
| Punctuation .....                              | 44 |
| Legal .....                                    | 45 |
| Disclaimer .....                               | 45 |
| Copyright .....                                | 45 |
| Trademarks .....                               | 45 |

## Law School Application Guide

### Application Overview

While law school committees vary from school to school, the bottom line remains that each is seeking to create a law class of dynamic, diverse students who will be able to handle a high-pressure academic environment and still bring energy and perspective to the classroom. It is your job to convince the committee that you are just such a student.

Undoubtedly, you have heard the rumors about the law school admissions process being “all about the numbers”; while numbers are certainly an important factor, they should not preclude any student from applying to law school. A significant portion of the application is still within your control, even if you do have scores and grades that are below average. Every applicant must take great care in preparing the application and personal statement. Keep in mind, there are over 175 ABA accredited law schools—there is a place for every aspiring lawyer.

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### A WORD ON ABA ACCREDITATION

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The American Bar Association is a national professional organization that is charged with, among other things, approving law schools. For your purposes, it is helpful to know that for admission to the bar in practically every state, a diploma from an ABA accredited law school is mandatory. Therefore, unless there exists a truly compelling reason not to, all would-be-lawyers should attend ABA “approved” institutions.

Choosing the right law school is a personal decision. Extreme care should be taken in choosing the right program; an ill-chosen law school may lead to three years of misery. Personality, goals, and obligations are among the many considerations taken into account when deciding which school to attend. Ideally, you will find a law school at which you will thrive. In choosing a law school, you should consider your social, academic, and professional aspirations and then select programs that will help you achieve these goals.

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### WHAT IS THE LSDAS?

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Admission to law schools is heavily number-oriented. But applicants should not underestimate the humanity of the reader. The fact that real people are reviewing your materials adds an element of chance to the whole endeavor. Depending on school policy, anywhere from one person to a large committee of school administrators and faculty members will review your application materials, a decision is then reached based on both the objective facts (LSAT, GPA, etc.) and application information (essays, recommendations, etc.).

There are five components of a law school application:

#### Academic Record

Law schools are extraordinarily concerned with your academic record. Admissions officers will consider your GPA and scrutinize your transcript. These two items—GPA and transcript—are understood to be the best indicators of how you will perform in law school. Though some might argue that practicing law is not always an intellectual endeavor, the same cannot be said of law

school. Law schools demand analytical acuity and writing acumen. Law schools want to know that you can make the grade.

## LSAT

In addition to your academic record, law schools turn to the LSAT to gauge your intellect. Whether or not you think this fair or accurate is beside the point—all law schools give considerable weight to the LSAT score.

## Biographic Forms

In some instances law schools will have you submit a résumé. All law schools will cull information about you from the forms that make up the application. You have very little latitude in how you fill in these forms. Nonetheless, you can exercise some discretion. For example, your résumé may seem a set document, with little opportunity for influence. While there are limits to what you can do with a résumé, the fact remains that the presentation of your accomplishments and experience is up to you. Make sure to give the application forms the attention they deserve. Remember, detail matters—especially to lawyers.

## Recommendation Letters

Most schools require at least one recommendation. You can usually submit as many as three, but that's the limit. Some applicants mistakenly think that the recommendations are a no-brainer. Don't be fooled: while it's true that you don't write them, you do have the ability to enhance the impact of your recommendations. Who you choose makes all the difference. Admissions officers value recommendations for a number of reasons. There are two primary values of recommendations. First, they provide more information about you—what you're like, if you're funny or a hard worker, etc. Second, recommendations corroborate (or dispute) the other information provided in the application. For more information about recommendations, see the myEssay.com Guide to Recommendations included in this guide.

## Personal Statement

The personal statement is your greatest opportunity in the application process. It may also be the hardest part of your application. Make sure you give yourself time to put the work in that a good essay requires—expect to do at least three drafts. The personal statement is the clearest chance you have to distinguish your application from the thousands of others. The biggest obstacle to overcome when applying to law school is anonymity. In the essay you can show the admissions committee your spark—whatever it is that makes you unique and qualified. No subject is off limits in the personal statement. You may want to address why you are pursuing a law degree, but this is not required. Admissions committees want to learn about you. Make sure that the PERSONAL is in your statement. Perhaps the biggest mistake applicants make is the creation of a “narrative résumé.” These dull essays don't do you any good. Tell a story. Make an argument. Don't blather on about things that the admissions committee can learn from other parts of your application. Another common misuse of the essay is the “excuse essay.” There may be aspects of your application that you feel the need to explain—poor grades, low scores, etc. Don't waste your essay on something you *have* to tell the committee. If you need to explain certain weaknesses in your application, create an addendum that addresses the problem. Save your personal statement for something that you really want the admissions committee to know about you. For a thorough look at the personal statement and addenda, see the myEssay.com Law School Essay Guide.

Each law school will require applicants to submit some combination of the above materials. Within these parameters, the applicant is expected to create an argument in support of their admission. With some thought and hard work, you can craft a convincing argument even within the narrow strictures on a law school application.

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