Law School Application Checklist

Freshman Year

1. **Grades**: Your undergraduate GPA is one of the two most important criteria considered by law school admissions committees so be prepared to do your best from day one. This means you should:

   - **Go to class**. You are now responsible for getting yourself there. Do it. Do not let yourself down.
   
   - **Learn how to use Canvas**. Many faculty will use it as the primary or sole communication tool for assignments, grades, and making announcements. Expectations differ from one professor to another and you are expected to know and follow each one’s individual preferences. Develop the habit of checking Canvas for every class on a regular (even daily) basis.
   
   - **Do all of the assigned work**. You are responsible for knowing what your assignments are, what format should be used (e.g., online or paper submission) and when they are due. Do them all and in a timely manner.
   
   - **Start developing relationships with your professors**. Go to office hours. Ask for help when you are confused about the content of the course or an assignment. You will have to ask faculty to write letters of recommendation when you apply to law school and a personal relationship will enable them to write far better letters on your behalf.

2. **Involvement**: Find campus or community activities or organizations that interest you. Getting involved is important, but most importantly, you should identify activities in which you are genuinely interested. Auburn has more than 500 student organizations. Use this link to explore: [https://auburn.campuslabs.com/engage/](https://auburn.campuslabs.com/engage/)

3. **Advisors**: Meet with your college and major advisors on a regular basis to seek the best guidance on course selection. Auburn has a Pre-law Advisor who offers guidance to students in every major. Contact Debra-Armstrong-Wright at dza0011@auburn.edu.

4. **Majors**: Choose a major that you enjoy. There are no prerequisites for law school. If you find the topic interesting, you are more likely to attend class, do the assignments, and do well in the class.

5. **On-Campus Presentations, Seminars, Workshops and Panel Discussions**: Attend events sponsored by the Pre-Law Programs Office that will help you understand and prepare for the law school application process. Events include presentations by recruiters and admissions representatives from law schools, workshops by the Pre-Law Advisor and panel discussions featuring students who have been through the application process.

6. **Pre-Law Scholars and Pre-Law Listserv**: Join the Pre-Law Scholars Program and the Pre-Law listserv so that you will receive notice of the opportunities to network with other pre-law students.
Sophomore Year

1. **Grades**: Still number one on your list!

2. **Involvement**. Continue your involvement with activities and begin seeking leadership roles.

3. **Courses**. Once you have completed the core courses, begin taking courses that will enhance your critical reasoning and communication skills. Select courses that challenge your reading comprehension. Learning to deconstruct and reconstruct the written word is an essential skill for succeeding in law school and in the profession.

4. **Major**. If you believe you made a mistake in the initial selection of your major, do not be afraid to change. Use the resources on campus to explore other options. Seek personal guidance through the AU Career Center at [http://career.auburn.edu/students](http://career.auburn.edu/students). See, [http://career.auburn.edu/students/your-major-workshops](http://career.auburn.edu/students/your-major-workshops).

5. **Internships**. Begin looking for internship opportunities for the following summer. Many pre-law students intern with U.S. Representatives or Senators in their offices in Washington D.C. (See, Auburn on the Hill Program at [http://career.auburn.edu/students/auburn-on-the-hill](http://career.auburn.edu/students/auburn-on-the-hill), and [http://career.auburn.edu/students/auihi](http://career.auburn.edu/students/auihi) for assistance in securing housing in D.C.) Additionally, several colleges provide internship assistance to their students. For example, students in the College of Liberal Arts may access assistance through CLA Career Initiatives at [http://www.cla.auburn.edu/cla/student-services/internships/](http://www.cla.auburn.edu/cla/student-services/internships/).

6. **LSAT**. Begin to familiarize yourself with the Law School Admissions Test.

7. **On-Campus Presentations, Seminars, Workshops and Panel Discussions**: Continue to participate in events sponsored by the Pre-Law Programs Office.
Junior Year

1. **Grades**: Again, your number one objective for this year is to maintain your GPA. Most importantly, keep in mind that the GPA you have at the end of spring semester of your junior year may be the GPA that you will submit with your application. It is possible to wait until after your fall semester grades are in to apply, but generally speaking, the earlier you apply the better.

2. **Courses**: Take one or more of the many law-related courses that are offered across campus. Even if they are not required in your major, seriously consider taking one of these courses as an elective. They will introduce you to the vocabulary you will use in law school, and you will start learning how to "think like a lawyer". Cases in political science in particular will require you to reason your way through court opinions; many of the cases assigned will be read again in law school. See, [http://www.cla.auburn.edu/pre-law/pre-law-elective-courses/](http://www.cla.auburn.edu/pre-law/pre-law-elective-courses/) for a list of offerings.

3. **On-Campus Presentations, Seminars, Workshops and Panel Discussions**: Attend events sponsored by the Pre-Law Programs Office geared to help you prepare for the law school application process.

4. **LSAT**: Begin actual preparations for the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT). The Pre-Law Program at Auburn University does not endorse any particular LSAT prep course and does not advocate commercial courses over self-directed preparation by students.

- **Prep Materials.** LSAT preparation manuals are available in local bookstores, on amazon.com, through commercial prep course websites, and through the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC). See, [https://www.lsac.org/jd/lsat/preparing-for-the-lsat](https://www.lsac.org/jd/lsat/preparing-for-the-lsat). Prep programs offered in the Auburn area include TestMasters, ETS, Kaplan, and Varsity Tutors. Others are available in Atlanta, Montgomery, and Birmingham.

- **Khan Academy.** LSAC entered into an agreement with Khan Academy to develop an online LSAT prep program. The program is free and can be found at [https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/lsat/lsat-lessons](https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/lsat/lsat-lessons).

- Pamphlets containing information about commercial LSAT prep courses are available in the pre-law office (Haley 7002). Students are encouraged to contact representatives of any commercial LSAT prep courses in which they are interested to compare the benefits and costs of these courses.

- **Practice tests.** LSATs are given only once and then retired and made available to the public for purchasing. They can be purchased from LSAC.org or on amazon.com. The Pre-Law Programs Office offers free practice tests to members of Pi Lambda Sigma. Notices of practice tests will be sent to members.
• Free practice tests may be taken on-line on several test prep program websites. Simply open a browser and search for "free practice LSAT" and numerous options will be available. In order to get the closest experience to the LSAT, be certain that you are taking an actual LSAT tests rather than tests that are written by another company. Also be certain that you are timing yourself exactly as you will be timed on the actual test.

5. **LSAC Account:** Create an account on LSAC.org. You must have an account in order to register for the LSAT. Moreover, law school applications will be submitted through the LSAC account. See, [https://www.lsac.org/jd/applying-to-law-school/lsat-cas-fees](https://www.lsac.org/jd/applying-to-law-school/lsat-cas-fees) for list of fees. For questions, call 215.968.100.

• **Fees.** Most law schools require applicants to use LSAC’s Credential Assembly Service (CAS). See, [https://www.lsac.org/jd/applying-to-law-school/cas](https://www.lsac.org/jd/applying-to-law-school/cas). You will be required to pay a fee for this service; however, it makes the application process much easier on your part. You will send transcripts, letters of recommendation (LORs) and other credentialing documents to LSAC one time and, as part of the CAS service, LSAC will forward those documents electronically to each school to which you apply.

6. **Register for the LSAT:** Take the LSAT during the summer after your junior year or early fall of your senior year. This will give you the time between the end of spring semester and the test date to do more focused preparation. It is difficult to prepare while you are also studying for classes. The best time may be June, July or September, depending upon your summer schedule. Plan so that you can continue your preparation up to the time you take the test.

7. **Research law schools:** Begin researching the GPA and LSAT score medians, scholarship possibilities, and application requirements at the schools of your choice. They can differ greatly from school to school so make careful notes about what you discover. You will appreciate having this information readily available when it comes time to submit your applications.

8. **Consider Attending an LSAC Law School Forum:** The Law School Admissions Council holds law school forums at various locations across the country every year. There is one in Atlanta in October. See, [https://www.lsac.org/lawschoolforums/](https://www.lsac.org/lawschoolforums/) to learn more about the forums and to register.

9. **Attend Auburn University’s Law School Fair:** Early in the spring semester, Auburn will hold a law school fair in the Student Center. Admissions representatives from approximately 80 schools will attend. This is an excellent opportunity to ask questions about the law schools in which you are interested.

• Students who know the state or city where they hope to practice law and/or the particular practice area they hope to enter are encouraged to interview law school admissions officers about their law schools' records for placement of graduates in these jobs.
10. **Application Components**: To apply for law school, you will need to submit an application, an updated resume, a personal statement, transcripts from every institution of high education you have attended (even under a dual enrollment program), and letters of recommendation.

- Your application will not be processed until all components have been received so it is a good idea to begin working on these during the summer between your junior and senior years.
Senior Year

1. **Pre-Law Advisor:** Schedule an appointment with the pre-law advisor to discuss your application plans if you did not do so in the summer or late spring semester.

2. **LSAT:** If you have not taken the LSAT already or plan to take it again, you should take it at the earliest date possible in the fall.
   - If you are dissatisfied with your LSAT score, you may consider retaking the LSAT in November/December.
   - Some law schools will consider your highest LSAT score and some will average your scores. Be mindful and strategic in your planning.
   - If in doubt as to whether to retake the LSAT, discuss this option with the admissions officers of the schools to which you are applying.

3. **LSAC Credential Assembly Service:** If you have not already done so, pay the CAS service fee so that your credentialing materials can be submitted online. Most every law school requires that your credentials be submitted online via lsac.org. A few will accept paper applications, but still require a CAS Report from LSAC. Application components required by most law schools include:
   - LSAT score
   - Undergraduate and graduate transcripts
   - Personal statement
   - Letters of recommendation
   - Resume
   - Completed application form

4. **Application Fees:** Each law school requires an application fee with the application; however, many schools will waive the fee. This fee is paid to the law school and is separate and in addition to the CAS fee paid to LSAC.
   - For information on gaining fee waivers for LSAC services, including fees for CAS reports sent to each law school, see [https://www.lsac.org/jd/applying-to-law-school/cas-fee-waivers](https://www.lsac.org/jd/applying-to-law-school/cas-fee-waivers).
5. **Rolling Admissions.** Law schools use a rolling admissions system to process applications. They consider and decide on applications as they are received rather than after the application deadline. As a result, those who apply early have an advantage in that they are being compared to fewer applicants. Many law schools also award scholarships as they make admission decisions so early applicants have an advantage there as well.

6. **Letters of Recommendation (LOR):** Determine whether the law schools to which you are applying require letters of recommendation and, if so, how many. The number required and the number allowed varies from school to school and can range from one to unlimited.

   - **Professors.** Most law schools prefer that at least one (and often two) letters come from your professors. Be sure to ask professors who know you well and can write a personalized statement about your intellect, academic performance, drive and self-discipline. The authors can upload letters directly to your LSAC account and they will be forwarded directly to the schools to which you apply.

   - When requesting that a professor, employer, or other individual write a letter of recommendation for you, be sure to give that person a resume setting forth your qualifications for law school admission and your personal accomplishments, both academic and extra-curricular.

   - Ask the Pre-Law Advisor for specific suggestions on how to secure your LOR.

7. **Transcripts:** Transcripts from every institution of higher education must be submitted, even if the hours were not applied to satisfy course requirements for your undergraduate (or graduate) degree.

   - **LSAC.** Transcripts must be sent directly to LSAC from the institution and not from you. Transcripts sent by you will not be processed. For instructions, see, [https://www.lsac.org/jd/applying-to-law-school/cas/requesting-transcripts](https://www.lsac.org/jd/applying-to-law-school/cas/requesting-transcripts).

   - **National Student Clearinghouse.** Auburn University participates in the National Student Clearinghouse and transcripts can be ordered and paid for online. Use this link: [http://www.auburn.edu/administration/registrar/student.html#transcript](http://www.auburn.edu/administration/registrar/student.html#transcript). However, other institutions (especially community colleges) may not participate in the Clearinghouse and requests can take a lot of extra time and effort. DO NOT delay this step.

8. **Personal Statements:** Personal statements are an important part of your application. They give you the opportunity to introduce yourself fully ... your personality, your character, your values, your goals... to the admissions committee and can be determinative. However, they also can be the most challenging part of the application simply because there are so few guidelines. Other than page or word length, font style or size, and margin restrictions, there are few rules constraining what you write. The content is up to you.
• Begin working on your personal statement early so that you can put sufficient thought and effort into it. One admissions representative at a law school to which many Auburn students apply recommends writing ten drafts, at least, before submitting.

• Be sure to check (twice) what each school allows or requires with regard to the personal statement. Each one is different.

9. **Supplemental Essays**: In addition to the personal statement, some law schools require applicants to write short essays responding to specific questions. Many also allow applicants to submit optional essays that address certain questions. (It is usually a good idea to treat even the optional ones as “recommended”.) These essays can offer you the chance to explain or provide supplemental information about matters that you want the admissions committee to consider when they are reviewing your application. They may include topics such as:

   - An explanation of why you are especially interested in that particular school.
   - If you took the LSAT multiple times, why one LSAT score is not indicative of your ability.
   - A significant trend (up or down) in your undergraduate grades.
   - How you will add to the diversity of the class.

10. **Law School Forum**: Consider attending an LSAC law school forum. LSAC holds law school forums at various locations across the country every year. There is one in Atlanta in October. See, [https://www.lsac.org/lawschoolforums/](https://www.lsac.org/lawschoolforums/) to learn more about the forums and to register.

11. **Law School Visits**: If you can, it is a good idea to visit the schools in which you are interested. In addition to being informative for you, all law schools note every contact as a measure of your genuine interest in their program.

   • When visiting, make sure it is an official visit so that the admissions personnel are aware you are on campus.

   • Ask to meet with admission representatives and be prepared with questions before the visit.

   • If given the opportunity, attend a class during your visit.

   • Be sure to engage with current students. If your guide is not a student, look for opportunities to interact with any students you happen to see during your visit. Ask questions.
12. **Attend Auburn University’s Law School Fair:** Even though you may have submitted your applications before the law school fair, you should attend to confer with the law schools to which you applied. Every contact you have with law school representatives is recorded by the schools and viewed as an indication of your interest.

13. **Apply Early.** Complete your law school applications in a timely manner. Deadlines extend even into the summer; however, most offers have been extended long before the absolute deadline. In fact, many law schools begin holding “admitted students weekends” as early as January and February.

- If possible, submit all applications by December 31.
- Many schools award scholarships to applicants during the fall or early January. Be sure to contact each law school for information about scholarships for which you may be eligible and, if necessary, to request financial aid application materials.
- You must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be eligible for federal financial aid.

14. **Acceptance.** When accepted by the law school of your choice, send in your matriculation deposit and complete the student loan application process, if necessary.

- **Deadlines.** Each school has a deadline for payment of a seat deposit, some as early as April 1. Some schools require two deposits.
- Be mindful of putting seat deposits at more than one school. Some schools have restrictions on this. Read the acceptance letter carefully to determine if a seat deposit requires you to forfeit enrollment and scholarship offers at other schools.
- On May 15, LSAC sends a report to law schools that provides the names and LSAC account numbers of all applicants who have made multiple seat deposits. See, [https://www.lsac.org/jd/applying-to-law-school/whom-to-admit/seat-deposits](https://www.lsac.org/jd/applying-to-law-school/whom-to-admit/seat-deposits).