



Law School Applicant Guide

2022-23



Brown University Pre-Professional Advising
PRE-LAW ADVISING

Brown University Pre-Law Advising

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Pre-Law Advising

Pre-Law Advising is a partnership between the College and the Center for Careers and Life After Brown (CareerLAB). We guide and support students and alumni interested in education and careers in law through individual advising, internet resources and events and programs designed to inform at all stages of exploration and preparation for law school application. In addition to offering individual advising and web resources, we arrange and publicize a range of events including individual law school presentations and multi-school panels and presentations by professionals who address various aspects of the application process, legal education, and practice.

This Guide is primarily intended for those who are preparing to enter the application process which begins each fall for matriculation in the following fall. However, it is a useful guide for all students and alumni even in the early stages of researching the pathways to law school and legal practice. As law requires substantial academic and professional commitment, we encourage students and alumni to explore their interest in the field broadly through their academic and co-curricular, volunteer and employment pursuits.

We encourage you to consult our website, brown.edu/go/pre-law, to guide you in your studies, co-curricular activities and applications.

Advising consultations with the Pre-Law advisors are available during the academic year [by appointment](#). Both current students and recent alumni are welcome to consult with us. When you speak with a Pre-Law advisor about your law school application, please provide your résumé and a draft of your personal statement if you wish to discuss them. Check our website for upcoming information sessions, with law school admission officers, or other events.

Self-Assessment

We encourage you to think about your academic and career plans in the broader context of your strengths, interests, and long-term objectives. This self-reflective practice should guide you to select courses, co-curricular activities, internships and service projects that develop your understanding of law and its intersections with society, policy, intellectual tradition, and practical applications to resolve problems—from those of your future clients, to those of society at large, domestically and internationally. Before embarking on the law school application process, consider carefully if this is the right choice for you at this time. Given the major commitment of time, effort, and resources it will take to get through law school, it is a question well worth asking yourself.

How do you know that you are ready? A good place to start might be the websites of the law schools that interest you. Are you excited about the course descriptions, clinical opportunities, and special academic programs? You might also ask yourself if there is an experience or opportunity that you would like to try before you begin law school and embark on a legal career.

Between 2012 and 2018 the number of law school applicants declined significantly due to the lower number of jobs for recent law school graduates. This trend has reversed since 2019 as employment prospects improved and students and alumni found the pursuit of a law degree in line with their civic commitments. There was a substantial increase in the number of applicants in fall 2020 during the first stage of the pandemic. The following applicant cycle saw a less pronounced increase in the number of applicants and it is likely that the fall 2022 application season would be similar. More than three quarters of Brown's applicants take one or more years after earning their Bachelor degree to consider their professional plans before applying. This is common nationally too. 70% or more of applicants nationally take some time between college graduation and law school. We encourage you to explore our website and this guide in detail, consult with professionals and mentors, and reflect on your career goals before you commit to applying. Brown applicants enjoy excellent success in part because they take the time to become as well prepared as they can be and are reflective about their career goals. You will find multi-year national and Brown-specific data on our website under [Admission Statistics](#).

Law School Application Timeline

Summer	Fall	Fall/Winter/Spring	Summer-Fall
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * LSAT * Register with the Credential Assembly Service (CAS) * Research potential schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * LSAT (best no later than October) * Write essay * Gather Letters of Recommendation * Determine where to apply * Complete admission applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Complete financial aid applications * Schools make decisions * When admitted, pay seat deposit * Attend accepted students open houses at law schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Matriculate to law school

Application Systems and Components

To apply to law school, you have to navigate several related systems and submit a number of documents to support your candidacy. We recommend you familiarize yourself with these application systems and components early so that you can arrange for the completion and submission of all required documents in a timely fashion. The Law Careers advisors arrange and publicize a number of information sessions throughout the academic year that help you better understand the various aspects of the law school application and to connect with admission representatives. The basic elements of the application are described below. Detailed instructions are provided on our website.

Law School Admission Council (LSAC)

LSAC is the central hub for all application information. Start your research on their website: www.lsac.org. LSAC is a non-profit organization that coordinates the application process for law schools in the United States and Canada. LSAC is responsible for developing and administering the LSAT and runs the Law School Credential Assembly Service (CAS). In addition, LSAC provides information and data related to law school admission and legal careers.

Law School Credential Assembly Service (CAS)

CAS is the centralized application service for all law schools administered by LSAC. In order to apply to law school, you must register with CAS. You will then submit all of your undergraduate transcripts to CAS, along with other information about yourself. Letters of recommendation are also submitted through CAS. CAS then distributes all of this information, including your LSAT scores, to the law schools to which you apply. Subscribe to CAS in the summer before you apply or early in the fall. For more information, visit the [CAS website](#).

The LSAC and Individual School Applications

Since 2013 LSAC has streamlined its CAS system to combine elements of a common application with individualized, law school-specific components. You register with LSAC to complete this application and to submit materials through CAS. This application was previously referred to as Flex App. It is an integrated approach to the application process and consolidates all materials you need to provide to law schools. Much of the general information you enter in your application will transfer to the individual school's application components. LSAC's website contains the [application instructions and portal](#). *You are responsible for reading all application instructions and understanding the admission policies and procedures for the individual schools to which you are applying.*

Law School Admission Test (LSAT) and Graduate Record Exam (GRE)

The standardized test specifically designed for law school is the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), which contains several sections and is scored on a scale from 120 to 180 points. The test has undergone several modifications since 2019. First, it transitioned from pencil-and-paper to computer-based administration at a testing center. Since the beginning of the pandemic in spring 2020, the test has been administered in an online, live remotely-proctored format that was shortened. In 2020 and 2021 this version of the LSAT was called LSAT-Flex. While this name is no longer used, the test format and administration method continue to be online, live and remotely-proctored during the 2022-2023 testing year. There are test dates every month except December and March. The current LSAT consists of five components administered in two parts.

The first part, the **Multiple-Choice LSAT**, consists of 4 multiple-question sections (35 minutes each). There is a 10-minute break between sections 2 and 3. The Multiple-Choice LSAT includes:

- One **reading comprehension** section, which measures the ability to read, with understanding and insight, lengthy and complex materials similar to those commonly encountered in law school.
- One **analytical reasoning** section, which measures the ability to understand a structure of rule-based relationships and to draw logical conclusions about that structure.
- One **logical reasoning** section, which measures the ability to analyze and critically evaluate arguments as they occur in ordinary language.
- One **unscored** section (commonly referred to as the **variable** section) that is used to evaluate new test questions and ensure they are free from any form of bias.

The second part, **LSAT Writing**, is a 35-minute written essay based on a prompt. It can be completed as early as 8 days before the multiple-choice LSAT, giving test-takers flexibility. You need to complete this part of the test before you and the schools to which you will apply can view your LSAT scores. It is best to complete the LSAT Writing part before or shortly after the Multiple-Choice LSAT. If you are repeating the LSAT and already have completed the LSAT writing part before you do not have to do so again. Beginning in May 2022 LSAT Writing will be administered through the [LSAC LawHub](#) - LSAC's official online test preparation platform - which contains tutorials and official LSAT practice tests, including a Writing practice prompt.

The latest exam date we recommend for every application cycle is in October. Your scores are sent to law schools as part of your CAS report. LSAT registration information, as well as detailed descriptions of the test, and preparation materials can be found [on LSAC's website](#). Be aware of test registration regulations, including test administration, cancellation dates, and reporting policies. Plan to take the LSAT exam in time to submit your application reasonably early and when you are best prepared for the exam itself. All LSAT scores are reported to CAS and become part of your record. Law schools consider multiple LSAT scores differently; some average multiple scores, others regard the higher or the most recent score exclusively. It is best to take the exam once after comprehensive preparation and practice. Brown offers eligible students EGap funding through UFunds to support LSAT study materials and prep courses.

Beginning in 2017 a number of the 199 ABA-approved law schools announced they would allow applicants to take the GRE instead of the LSAT. Columbia, Georgetown, Harvard, Yale, NYU, Cornell, Duke, UPenn, University of Chicago, Northwestern, University of Arizona are some of the approximately [80 of these schools as of mid-2022](#). The schools considered this step at the time in the context of continually declining applications nationally and with the aspiration to attract applicants from a wider range of backgrounds. In November 2021, following several years of deliberations, The American Bar Association approved the GRE as an appropriate standardized test that law schools may consider in lieu of the LSAT. The main consideration in the deliberations over the years has been the predictive validity of the GRE, not only for performance in the law school curriculum but also on state bar exams. The recent decision means that schools can choose to accept applicants with the LSAT or the GRE exam. While the LSAT is still the main standardized test for law school applications, if you are considering applying with the GRE, it is important to review the standardized test details for each school to which you plan to apply. Schools have latitude to decide how many applicants with the GRE they may admit in a given applicant cycle or how they weigh its importance in admission decisions. If you have taken both exams, the LSAT will be visible to all schools to which you apply. The administrators of the GRE, ETS, have provided a [GRE/LSAT Comparison Tool](#) to help applicants consider test scores in relation to each other. We recommend you use this only as a rough guide as schools are unlikely to follow a formula uniformly.

Transcripts

You will need to order transcripts from the Office of the Registrar at Brown and from the registrar at any other postsecondary educational institution where you have taken courses or earned either an undergraduate or graduate degree. Brown's [Office of the Registrar website](#) provides all necessary information and access so you can request your transcript. Please note that if you have taken courses at RISD, you must submit a RISD transcript. You must use LSAC's Transcript Request Forms when you request a transcript be sent to LSAC. Brown's Office of the Registrar transmits transcripts electronically so you would only need to provide the appropriate account information from your LSAC application but won't need to provide a print-out of the LSAC Transcript Request Form. More information about transcript requirements is available on the [LSAC website](#).

Study Abroad or Foreign Transcripts

Explore the details on the [LSAC page for International Transcripts](#).

A brief summary:

The great majority of applicants would not need to send such transcripts even if they studied abroad. Transcripts for course work abroad are required if:

- you are applying to a law school that requires the authentication and evaluation feature of the Credential Assembly Service (CAS)

and

- you received your bachelor's degree from an institution outside of the United States, its territories, or Canada;

or

- you were directly enrolled at such an institution outside the US, its territories, or Canada, and the total amount of work you completed at all of these institutions combined is the equivalent of more than one year of undergraduate study in the United States, its territories, or Canada.

Copies of all international educational records must be submitted in the original language securely by the original institution. If the transcript or other required documents are not in English, a translation must be included. Individual law schools may have specific requirements. Make

certain you are aware of those as you explore law schools to which you will apply.

Academic Record (GPA)

Since there is no particular concentration law schools prefer, they are interested in the breadth and depth of your academic record as the context to your GPA. As you explore your academic and career interests during your Brown studies, take advantage of the Open Curriculum to develop broad-based competencies in the areas that interest you the most. Brown's Office of the Registrar reports our grading standards each year to LSAC, including the fact that letter grades at Brown do not bear numerical equivalents. LSAC nonetheless will calculate a GPA for law school applicants based on the transcript. Brown does not validate LSAC's computation of the GPA; however, experience has shown that LSAC uses the following rubric in assigning quality points: A=4.0, B=3.0, and C=2.0. "S" grades are not included in GPA calculations. Taking one or two courses S/NC judiciously should not hamper the competitiveness of your academic record. Mandatory S/NC courses taken as part of your concentration requirements should not cause any problems. Grades in courses taken at other U.S. universities or colleges will be calculated into the overall Grade Point Average by LSAC. If you have taken courses at RISD and select the S/NC option at Brown, the letter grades assigned at RISD will appear on the RISD transcript. These grades will be calculated into your GPA.

Résumé

You will need to have a polished and up-to-date résumé to submit with your law school applications. The Law Careers advisors can discuss your résumé with you but for longitudinal help preparing your résumé, meet with a career counselor at CareerLAB. Consult [CareerLAB's website](#) for valuable tips.

Letters of Recommendation

Most law schools require two letters of recommendation but many also accept a third. Each law school has its own requirements, so it is important that you take the time to learn about the guidelines for the schools to which you will apply. Many schools require letters from two faculty members, though they will often accept recommendations from work supervisors, as well, especially if the applicant has worked for several years following their undergraduate studies. You can have your letters sent directly to LSAC's

Letter of Recommendation Service (LOR), which is part of CAS. Through the LOR, you can designate specific letters of recommendation for specific schools. If you are planning to take a few years off before applying to law school it may be best to maintain contact with the individuals you think you would ask for letters of recommendation. Continuing to develop the relationship can strengthen your recommenders' knowledge of your work and the qualities you would bring to the process. If you wish to ask for letters of recommendation some time before you apply, you may have them stored in the LSAC LOR system. Alternatively, you could have the letters stored in credential systems such as Interfolio.com. Note, however, that each letter stored in a system other than the LSAC LOR would need to be accompanied by a copy of the LSAC LOR form, which can complicate the process for you and may require payment. The full details about collecting and transmitting letters of recommendation are posted on the [LSAC website](#).

Letters of recommendation provide admission committees with important qualitative information not available in other parts of your application. This is why it is important for your letter writers to focus on the quality of your work as well as your developed intellectual and interpersonal skills necessary for success in the legal profession (e.g., analytical reasoning, written and oral communication, research, work habits, commitment, leadership, and collaboration abilities, etc.).

Personal Statement

Law schools require you to submit a “personal statement” as part of your application. It is typically best to develop one comprehensive version of your personal statement and to modify it appropriately based on the somewhat different law school prompts and formatting expectations. We don't recommend that you start with a completely different version of the personal statement for each school as this can be hard to manage and most likely won't be helpful to you. Ensure that what you customize for individual schools fits harmoniously within your general narrative. The personal statement instructions are generally quite broad: for example, “Write a statement about yourself,” or “Tell us something about yourself and your interest in law.” Though the vagueness of the prompt can be daunting, the personal statement offers an opportunity for you to introduce yourself to admission committees on a more personal level, allowing them to learn

about you beyond the information presented in other parts of your application. An effective personal statement offers a clear and memorable portrait of you - your interests, experiences, personality, skills, and motivations to pursue education and a career in law. Because personal statements are personal, there is no one format or approach that will work well for everyone. It is best that you develop your personal statement through multiple revisions and that you work longitudinally with The Writing Center on these while you are enrolled at Brown. The Writing Center works with both students and alumni during the academic year but may have a variable schedule during the summer. For full and timely information consult [The Writing Center's website](#).

Tips for Personal Statement Writing

- ***Be original***

The best personal statement is authentic and about you as a person. It does not (unless the prompt asks for it) have to be about “why law” or “why law school.” It *can be* – but doesn’t have to be. Instead it should be an illumination of character. Admissions deans are putting together their class, and want to get a sense of who you are and who you’ll be as part of the law school community. Are you an artist who has turned to law? Are you an activist who will bring political spark? Are you a humorist, a musician, are you characterized by your community orientation or by your creativity and love of puzzles? Are you an empath, a logician, an outsider with fresh perspectives? There is a place for you in law school. Let them know who you are.

- ***Have a clear theme***

You should have a very clear sense of the theme of your essay and it should be communicated fairly clearly, if not directly, early on in your essay. Legal writing is characterized by clear headlining and topic sentences. If you can’t summarize your theme in a sentence or two, you aren’t ready to submit your essay. Often a few sessions of reflective writing – just exploring ideas that are important to you – will help you identify a theme that you like. Try that before sitting down to write the formal essay.

- ***Avoid corny or flashy tricks***

Your essay communicates on multiple levels. it communicates overtly through your choice of subject matter and anecdote; it communicates implicitly through your written style, the words and images you use. Let

your style emerge organically. This is a professional school essay, so the gimmicky “jump in at the middle” and other rhetorical tricks that are common in undergraduate essays are out of place here. Some candidates will try to be clever in order to make their application stand out, but we recommend that you avoid this strategy. Do not write an epic poem about your quest to enter law school, draw a picture as your personal statement, write in stream-of-consciousness style, write your obituary in which you look back on a career as Chief Justice, or write a short story in which you are on trial and the admission committee is the jury.

- ***Keep it personal***

The essay is called a “personal” statement for a reason. It’s an introduction to you as a person; it’s more “who you are” than “what you’ve done.” Some applicants try to impress admission officers with essays on philosophy, Russian politics, or the need for prison reform. Avoid this tactic. A well-written essay on current events or an academic subject might win awards, but it is not the best way to show an admission committee what you will contribute to their program. Center your essay on something about your background, interests, commitments, and life plan. If these are linked to specific knowledge areas and expertise, it is certainly fine to draw connections to those specific areas, as long as you do not make them the main focus of your narrative.

- ***Do not recycle your résumé***

Some applicants make the mistake of devoting their personal statement to summarizing their accomplishments. Your personal statement can certainly concern something impressive you have done, but should not just recycle your résumé. Think of your personal statement as an opportunity to add something new to your application portfolio. Again, “show, don’t tell” is the best strategy.

- ***Contribute to the law school community***

Law school admission officers are looking for interesting students who will help make their school a vibrant learning community. They are looking for diversity in interests, background, experience, and outlook. Think about your personal statement as a chance to step outside of the GPA/LSAT numbers in your application and illustrate why admitting someone with your background, experiences, and aspirations will make their school - and the profession - a better place.

- ***Make it easy to read***

Write clearly. While elevated prose may be engaging and may show your sophistication, it may sometimes appear distant and inauthentic. Use declarative sentences in the active voice wherever possible. Organize each paragraph around a topic, theme, or idea as you would in a closely-argued paper. Do not try to distinguish your essay just through its lexical or physical features—use a regular font (e.g., Times New Roman, or Calibri), ordinary margins, white background, etc. Do follow schools’ guidelines about these. Admission committees care about typos, grammar, topic sentences, and transitions. Proofread your essays very carefully. Elegant writing is rewarded while sloppiness invites negative attention.

- ***Some helpful questions to consider as you begin your draft:***

What have you learned from your co-curricular or work experiences, and how have those experiences contributed to your growth?

When does time pass quickly for you?

Have you had to overcome any unusual obstacles or hardships (economic, physical, familial, etc.) in your life? What were these obstacles and how did you face them?

What might be unique, special, or distinctive about your life story or experiences?

Addenda and Diversity Statements

Each law school-specific portion of the application enables you to submit brief addenda about anything you wish to add that may not be the best fit for your personal statement. You may choose to complete an addendum that contextualizes an element of your application or background. Be factual and brief. For example, if you navigated difficulties during part of your studies, which affected your grades, providing some context about this is fitting for an addendum. Different parts of the application may include space for additional comments such as Diversity statements. We suggest you think about diversity broadly in terms of the unique characteristics that provide informative context about you as an applicant who will contribute to making the law school’s incoming class more dynamic and broad-based. Diversity is not determined solely culturally or socioeconomically; it can also encompass competencies developed through activities, systemic or acute challenges, and education.

Institutional Action and Dean Certifications

Law school applicants are required to report and explain any infractions against their college's or university's institutional codes. **You must report relevant institutional action even if it does not appear on your academic transcript, did not result in separation from the University, and/or if you believe the offenses to be minor.** This includes infractions of the Academic Code of Conduct and the Disciplinary Code higher than Reprimand, as well as academic standing notation of Suspension or Dismissal. Reprimands will continue to be part of your Brown internal record only.

The Academic standing status of Academic Warning (being one course behind) and Serious Warning (being two courses behind) do not appear on Brown official transcripts. These designations are intended as a measure to encourage students to focus on successful strategies to proceed toward the completion of their Brown degrees. While they are not considered to be cases of institutional action, admission committees would scrutinize semesters during which you didn't complete a full course load. It would be good for you to provide context in your application or in an addendum. Applicants should report Suspension or Dismissal. They appear on official Brown transcripts and law schools will consider them as institutional action.

In addition to asking you to report institutional action, some schools and programs will require you to have a dean at Brown either certify that you have not been the subject of disciplinary action or state in writing the facts of any procedure and/or sanction against you. In most cases, reporting disciplinary action will not jeopardize your chances of admission if the infraction is not particularly serious, and you have taken full responsibility for your actions, and demonstrated self-reflection and personal growth.

Truthfulness is integral to being a successful attorney. It is therefore essential that you take seriously your responsibility to report institutional action. **Failure to report institutional action appropriately on your applications may be regarded by the law schools as a lapse in ethical judgment.** Moreover, you will be asked once again to report institutional action on applications to state bar associations after completing law school. Failure to report institutional action when applying to law school could later jeopardize your admission to the bar. If you have concerns about your disciplinary or academic standing, consult with the Pre-Law advisors and check your own record with the relevant campus offices before you begin your law school applications. If you were involved in a Disciplinary code violation, that would be the office of [Student Conduct & Community Standards](#). Academic code violations are reviewed by the [Academic Code committee](#). Your academic standing is part of your academic record and you can view it in [ASK](#).

- **Submitting Your Dean Certifications**

Before matriculating admitted applicants, most law schools require the applicant to have a dean at their undergraduate institution complete and submit a Dean's Certification. This is typically a one-page document inquiring about the applicant's standing at their college. Most law schools ask for such documents late in the spring and throughout the summer. When you receive such a certification, please first complete only your portion and then email the forms to Pre-Law Advising at prelaw@brown.edu. Detailed information can be found on our website's [Dean Certifications page](#). Please anticipate one to two weeks for your certifications to be sent to the schools requesting them. Provide us with your email and phone number, and any relevant details and contact information for the school where we should send the completed form. If you are reporting institutional action, make sure you also email us the statement about the incident you included in your law school application and contact us for an advising conversation.

Application Process

The application process requires you to manage the elements described in the previous sections in a thoughtful and timely manner. Ensure that you are well aware of the details and the timelines for the various application elements. Reflecting on your educational and career objectives, exploring school information, choosing where to apply and what type of programs are best suited to your background and professional aspirations requires careful thought and longitudinal preparation.

Deciding Where to Apply

Think of law school choices along four dimensions – optionality, geography, program and fit. Optionality – which schools do you apply to in order to give yourself the best shot at the career you want. It's obvious to think of the most selective schools as creating the most optionality, and for many careers they do. But there are also many careers for which a highly selective – and expensive – school is not necessary. And for the basic curriculum for law, there is that much variation in quality between the most selective schools and those in the next tier of ranking.

Next, think geographically. Where do you want to go to school and where do you want to work? Employers recruit from law schools in their regions, not just from the most selective schools. In New York, for example, the major firms recruit not just from the top tier of schools, but from the local schools such as Fordham, St. John's, Cardozo and others. Chicago firms will recruit not just from University of Chicago and Northwestern, but from Notre Dame, University of Minnesota, and Illinois-Kent, among others.

Programs make a difference too. Look at the law schools' websites. What specialized courses of study do they discuss? Do they have a climate law program that they tout? Is there a family law program? Is art and law a feature? Is there a religious liberty program that interests you? What are the clinical offerings?

Finally, the elusive issue of "fit" arises; elusive because it is so subjective. Schools have reputations but it's worth talking to people to test those reputations. Things that may affect your choice include the size of the school (how large is the entire incoming class and how are sections created) as well as setting (urban, rural, etc).

It's easy for Brown students to default to the top-ranked law schools, but remember that they are not the only choices. Create a list of schools that is realistic for you and that hits your boxes across the four dimensions outlined above. Be realistic based on your test scores and GPA (you can easily find the 25-75 percentile data on line. **But remember that the statistical part of your application is only that, a part. Your essays and letters have a big impact. And although the percentiles give you a rough sense of your chances, remember that 25% of the students in any law school incoming class HAD SCORES OR GPAS BELOW THAT 25th PERCENTILE NUMBER.** For purposes of a rough assessment of where you stand, there are a number of LSAT/GPA calculators on the Internet. We recommend that you explore the [LSAC Undergraduate GPA/LSAT search tool](#).

Learning About Individual Schools

Pre-Law Advising organizes and publicizes a number of events and information sessions with admission deans that expose you to information about law education and particular law schools. We encourage all students and alumni to make good use of such opportunities to connect with admission officers and law professionals. Since the beginning of the pandemic the events we have coordinated have been remote and easily available to students and alumni alike. While law school admission deans don't travel to college campuses as much as in the past, law schools have greatly expanded the information sessions available to potential applicants online. These events are mostly run in the fall and you can find a great number of them posted on our website and publicized through Brown's events information systems. Visit [our website's Events and Programs page](#) frequently, especially in the fall.

There are excellent and reliable sources of information about different schools online, starting with LSAC and its recently-partnered Law School Transparency. These offer comprehensive searchable databases of law schools which you can search by keywords, geography, average LSAT, and other criteria. You can also construct your school list within these systems, easily managing your application with LSAC's CAS. For these and other useful resources to help with your school selection, visit [our website's Resources section](#).

Explore individual schools' websites in addition to the information you will find in these or other sources of information you trust. Most school websites offer extensive information about their programs, the faculty, the courses, and special programs or clinics.

Data is available about employment trends and statistics for individual schools from organizations such as the ABA and NALP. These are also listed [under Resources on our website](#). Make sure the sources you consult are official and credible. There are a few useful books and publications that you may find helpful too.

Number of Schools to Which to Apply

Some students and alumni apply to only two or three schools, especially if they are certain of the geographical area where they want to be, while others apply to 12 or more. We recommend that students apply to half a dozen to a dozen schools across a range of options, typically including one or two dream schools and a couple of good safety schools. Choose the bulk of the schools on your list by the fit of your credentials with their GPA/LSAT ranges. Then certainly look for a substantive fit between your backgrounds and aspirations, intersected by the schools' particulars. Admission review is holistic, and not only focused on grades and test scores, although these are important.

Early Decision and Early Action Programs

Most law schools have Early Decision Programs, Early Action Programs, or both. These are designed for applicants with particular interest in and suitable background for a specific law school. **Individual law school programs vary in their regulations and requirements, and it is your responsibility to be aware of all details for the specific programs of interest to you.** Law schools also have specific deadlines for these types of application processes. We recommend that you consider Early Decision Programs only if the strength of your application and your interests are a particularly good match for the school's admission requirements. In most cases, applicants are better off applying to a balanced list of schools than to a single one.

- **Early Action Programs are non-binding**, meaning that you can apply to other law schools and are not bound by an obligation to accept an admission offer. If you apply through an Early Action Program,

you will be informed about the admission decision earlier than regular applicants. You would also need to apply rather early and there are only a small number of such programs.

- **Early Decision Programs are binding.** These are much more common than Early Action Programs and they will require you not to apply to other law schools or to quickly withdraw any other applications if admitted. Most such programs would require that you sign a contract at the beginning of the application process to matriculate if admitted. There may be further limitations, such as limited or no consideration for certain kinds of financial aid (merit-based, for example), which is fairly limited among law schools in the first place. If you are not admitted, generally a school would place your application for review in their regular applicant pool and you could apply to other schools. If this happens late in the fall or in the winter, this may be quite late in the application process for you to add schools. Thoroughly review all details of the individual schools' programs if you are interested in such an arrangement.

Fees and Fee Waivers

The application process involves the payment of several fees. For a list of LSAT and CAS fees, including exam registration, postponement, relocation, and cancellation, [consult LSAC's website](#).

Individual Law schools have application fees as well. Applicants with a high level of financial need may qualify for application and LSAT fee waivers through LSAC and individual law schools. Information about the fee waiver program can be found [on LSAC's website](#). Schools' policies about application fee waivers vary. You should check the policy for each school to which you wish to apply.

Deferring Admission

Generally, deferrals are allowed for specific reasons such as fellowships, enriching work, academic opportunities, or compelling personal circumstances. Deferrals must be requested in writing shortly after you have been admitted and are decided on a case-by-case basis. **Criteria and rules for deferral vary from school to school.** Thus, before requesting a deferral from any law school, be sure you fully understand their deferral policy. We do not recommend applying to law school with the intention of asking for a deferral. If you believe you will need an additional year or two before attending law school, we strongly advise you to postpone your application

until you know that you are ready to start your law education. This can not only help you gain clarity about your decision to pursue education and a career in law, but can also strengthen your admission credentials. Consult with the Law Careers advisors if you have questions about timing your law school application or considering a deferral request once admitted.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Law School

The Law School Admission Council, individual law schools, professional and student organizations have committed to providing information and resources of interest to students from under-served and under-represented backgrounds in law school and in the profession. As you explore your interest in law, and when you begin your preparation to apply to law school, consult the plentiful resources to build community, prepare for the LSAT, and become familiar with various support programs and systems that LSAC, NALP and other professional organizations have provided. You will find such materials posted on our website under Resources, as well as on the LSAC website under [Diversity in Law School](#).

International Applicants

Law schools vary in their admission policies for international applicants. Check with each of the individual schools in which you are interested to learn about their policies. A J.D. from a U.S. Law school may not always prepare international students to practice law in their home country. If you are not a native speaker of English, you may be required to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). If you have more than a year's worth of coursework from a foreign university, you may be required to submit a transcript from that institution.

In addition, international applicants may be required to demonstrate the ability to pay for their law education. The pursuit of a J.D. in the United States is often financed through loans backed by the federal government. Applicants who are not U.S. citizens or residents are not eligible for such loans. Financial assistance may be available to F-1 visa holders in the form of scholarship grants, however these rarely cover the entire cost of law school. At most schools, 80% or more of students graduate with some amount of debt, often exceeding \$100,000. Applicants who are not U.S. citizens or residents are advised to consider carefully the utility of a J.D. from a U.S. law school for their career goals.

Here are a few factors that could help you evaluate this proposition: Do you envision working for a U.S. company in your country of residence, or in third countries; working for a foreign company in the U.S.; working for the government of your country of residence or international and supranational organizations where knowledge of U.S. law is useful? If you decide to apply, we urge you to do so as early as possible in the application process to ensure that visas and other documents are completed prior to matriculation to law school, if admitted.

Financing Your Law Education

The cost of attending law school (tuition, fees, books, living expenses, etc.) can be as much as \$80,000 per year. A small number of schools currently have annual attendance costs just above \$100,000. You may qualify for scholarships at individual schools based on need, merit, or other criteria. Some schools offer need but not merit-based aid, and vice-versa. However, financial aid comes mostly in the form of loans. Therefore, you should expect to borrow money to cover the majority of your costs. [According to Law School Transparency](#), 2020 graduates' average borrowing was \$93,131 for public school; and \$134,147 for private school. Notably, these data do not include the interest accruing on the loans during law school or during repayment. Furthermore, individual students' borrowed amounts vary widely, depending on their ability to pay, any scholarship amounts, and schools attended.

Financial assistance is offered by governmental sources (e.g., Federal Direct Loans, or Federal Perkins Loans), Work-Study programs and private sources, which may be based on your credit (e.g., Graduate PLUS loans). Income-based repayment plans, or loan forgiveness programs could also help with educational costs. Explore all options available to you. Ensuring that your credit history and practices are in order and learning about financial options and their costs are essential for making an informed decision to matriculate to a law school or whether/when to apply in the first place. Law schools also vary in their policies about determining applicants' independent status, so be sure you learn what information would be expected from your parents or legal guardians.

Financial aid and scholarship information, including useful resources and links to funding sources, is available [on the LSAC website](#). Consult individual law schools' financial offers and terms, particularly in regard to school-specific aid, repayment options and private lending.

Current Brown students who are seeking support for summer experiences in public interest law may consider the competitive [Liman Fellowship](#).

A Few Key Resources

Within Brown

Pre-Law Advising

Website: brown.edu/go/pre-law

Center for Careers and Life After Brown (CareerLAB)

Website: <http://brown.edu/campus-life/support/careerlab>

The Swearer Center for Public Service

Website: <http://swearercenter.brown.edu>

The Writing Center

Website: http://www.brown.edu/Student_Services/Writing_Center

Office of the Registrar

Website: <http://brown.edu/Administration/Registrar>

Division of Campus Life

Website: <https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/vp-campus-life>

Brown Alumni Association

Website: <http://alumni.brown.edu>

Outside Brown

Law School Admission Council (LSAC)

Website: <http://www.lsac.org>

E-mail: LSACinfo@LSAC.org

Phone: 215.968.1001

Address: Law School Admission Council, 662 Penn Street, Newtown, PA, 18940

LSAT Dates

Consult [LSAC's website](#) for all domestic and international dates, as well as for special dates for Sabbath observers.