An education in law provides students with many avenues for their professional careers. Whether you plan to work as a practicing attorney, in the non-profit sector, in corporate America, or currently don’t know where your professional career will go, a legal education provides a foundation of skills ranging from communication and organization, to collaboration and research that can be useful in many career paths.

A strong foundation in the following skills is important for the rigors of law school education and the legal profession. Think about your strengths in the below skills when considering if law school is the right educational path:

- Analytical reasoning and problem solving
- Critical reading
- Writing and editing
- Oral communication and listening
- Research
- Organization and management
- Public service and promotion of justice
- Relationship-building and collaboration
- Background knowledge
- Exposure to the field of law

Is law school the right path for you?

Law touches every area of public life, which makes it a good career option to work in areas as varied as social justice and human rights, business, and intellectual property. As you reflect on your strengths in the section above, take time to consider these questions:

What parts of law do you find interesting?

How do you want to help others?

Will the skill areas above be particularly helpful in the career areas you have been interested in?

Do the career paths that you’re interested in require a JD or a different educational path?
Find a Major:
Pre-Law is not a major, but rather an advising category for students preparing to enter law school. Pre-Law students can choose any major to go along with their Pre-Law designation. See a full list of UNL majors at catalog.unl.edu.

Meet with an Advisor:
Pre-Law advisors in the Explore Center can help you plan your academic and extracurricular experiences as you prepare for law school. The Explore Center offers one-on-one advising, workshops, and communication targeted toward Pre-Law students. Schedule a meeting with an advisor via MyPLAN (my.unl.edu) to talk more about your plan.

Steps to Success

Create a 4-Year Plan

Freshman Year
- Explore majors
- Consider skill-based coursework (see p. 5)
- Get involved in campus or community activities
- Learn about the legal profession
- Declare a major

Sophomore Year
- Declare a major (if you haven’t already declared)
- Begin researching law schools
- Continue to learn about the legal profession
- Take a practice LSAT
- Consider skill-based coursework (see p. 5)
- Create an LSAC.org account

Junior Year
- Study for the LSAT (take several practice LSATs)
- Attend law school forums
- Visit potential law schools
- Research funding options for law school
- Register for and take the LSAT
- Begin writing your personal statement

Senior Year
- Submit your law school application in the fall
- Attend admitted student days or weekends at law schools
- Submit your FAFSA
- Evaluate the cost of law school
- Accept an offer by deadline (typically April)
- Pay law school deposit

Gaining experience outside the classroom is a great way to prepare for a career in law and build your resume. Types of involvement include, but are not limited to:

Student organizations:
- Pre-Law Club
- Speech & Debate
- More ideas at unl.campuslabs.com/engage

Research:
- UCARE (ucare.unl.edu)

Work experience:
- Law firm runner
- Nebraska legislative page
- Other law- or non-law related work

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Reflecting on Your Experiences

Law schools expect Pre-Law students to be active in gaining experiences that form a strong foundation for your time in law school and beyond. The chart below is provided to help organize the experiences you have in each area and plan for ways to continue developing each competency. For each category, reflect on how you have grown in that area through your coursework, experiences, or personal life. Next, consider one or two ways you might want to continue to develop in that skill set.

As you complete the exercise, you may find that some areas are well developed, while you have fewer experiences or plans in others. That’s okay! The goal of this activity isn’t to overwhelm your schedule or add more activities for the sake of your application, but rather to help you think holistically about your experiences in light of these desired skill sets for law school. If you need further assistance brainstorming activities for this chart, meet with a Pre-Law advisor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Area</th>
<th>Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication:</strong> Writing, Reading, Editing, Verbal Communication</td>
<td>Speech and debate teams, contribute writing to a student publication, Mock Trial club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research, Organization, and Management</strong></td>
<td>Complete research in a department, clinic, or lab, complete a thesis paper or project, run for leadership in a club or organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Service and Promotion of Justice</strong></td>
<td>Join an organization that advocates for a cause you are interested in, join student government, assist with citizenship classes in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship Building and Collaboration</strong></td>
<td>Mentor peers or younger students, apply to be a teaching assistant, chair a committee for a club or organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background Knowledge and Exposure to Law</strong></td>
<td>Serve as a page for the Legislature, join the Pre-Law Club, participate in a college or local chapter of a political party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXAMPLE:**

**Competency area:** Public Service and Promotion of Justice

**Experiences that have helped me develop in this area:**
- Served on Hall Government (freshman year)
- Working on Public Policy Certificate

**Ways I plan to grow in this area:**
Look for an internship for the summer: Nebraska Appleseed, ACLU, or other legal aid organization
Researching Law Schools

Step 1: Do Your Research

Cost: Calculate the cost of tuition, fees, living expenses, books, and supplies. Find average student debt and the availability of scholarships and/or grants.

GPA and LSAT score medians: You will be most competitive at schools where your GPA and LSAT scores fall within or above the school’s 50th/75th percentile ranges.

Employment: Law schools report employment rates, types, and geographic locations of students who graduate from their institution. Also check the availability of career planning services at the school.

Bar passage rates: How successful are graduates at passing bar exams the first time they take them?

Geographic location: Are you comfortable living in that geographic area? Will you have the support system you need? What is the campus like? What is the community like? Would you consider employment in this area after law school?

Curriculum and classes: How large are classes? What opportunities will you have to take elective hours or to have a concentration in areas you are interested in for your future career?

Degree options and specializations: Law schools often have strengths in particular areas of law or offer dual degree programs (JD/MPH, JD/MBA, etc.). If a specific area interests you, be sure to research these opportunities.

Step 2: Get Out There

Once you’ve gathered information, visit schools and ask more questions. See what it’s really like to attend class and be a student there. Talk to current students about the opportunities they have for clerkships, law clinics, extracurricular activities, and interaction with professors, faculty, and law professionals.

- Meet with law school representatives
- Visit law schools
- Attend law school fairs and forums

Step 3: Narrow Your Choices

Prepare a list of 5-10 schools you want to apply to. Try to include a few schools from each of the following categories:

1. Target schools: Your LSAT & GPA are near the middle 50th percentile of LSAT and GPA for applicants accepted to these schools.
2. Reach schools: Your LSAT & GPA are between the 25th and 50th percentile for applicants accepted to these schools.
3. Safety schools: Your LSAT & GPA are between the 50th and 75th percentile of LSAT and GPA score for applicants accepted to these schools.
Coursework Recommendations

Law schools don’t require that applicants complete a specific list of courses before applying to law school. However, law schools look for applicants with skills in the areas listed below. If you feel you need additional practice in one or more of these skills, you can take courses to help you strengthen these areas. Some suggestions are listed below. Check with your major advisor to see how these courses may/may not fit into your degree plan.

Analytical Reasoning and Problem-Solving
- MATH 104: Applied Calculus
- MATH 106: Calculus I
- MATH 203: Contemporary Mathematics
- PHIL 110: Introduction to Logic and Critical Thinking
- PHIL 211: Introduction to Modern Logic
- STAT 218: Introduction to Statistics

Research
- COMM 201: Introduction to Research Methods in Communication Studies
- CRIM 251: Research Methods
- PSYC 350: Research Methods and Data Analysis
- SOCI 205: Introduction to Social Research I
- Any Independent Research, Undergraduate Research, Thesis, or Honors Research project/course
- ACE 10 courses

Critical Reading
- ENGL 270: Literary/Critical Theory
- Any 200, 300, or 400 level English, History, Classics and Religious Studies, Philosophy, Political Science, or other liberal arts course

Oral Communication/Listening
- COMM 209: Public Speaking
- COMM 210: Communicating in Small Groups
- COMM 220: Public Advocacy & Civil Discourse
- COMM 283: Interpersonal Communication
- COMM 286: Business and Professional Communication
- COMM 311: Intercultural Communication
- COMM 371: Communication in Negotiation and Conflict Resolution
- COMM 375: Theories of Persuasion

Writing and Editing
- ENGL 150: Writing and Inquiry
- ENGL 151: Writing and Argument
- ENGL 254: Writing and Communities
- Any 200, 300, or 400 level ENGL course

Law Content
- ACEN 357: Natural Resource and Environmental Law
- BLAW 300: Business, Government & Society
- BLAW 371: Legal Environment
- BLAW 375: The Legal System, Lawyers, & Common Law
- BLAW 376: Civil and Criminal Litigation
- BLAW 377: Introduction to Corporate Compliance
- BLAW 378: Legislation and Regulation
- CASC 140: Introduction to Law and the Legal Profession
- CRIM 101: Survey of Criminal Justice
- CRIM 211: The Criminal Court System
- CRIM 351: Criminal Procedure
- CRIM 478: White Collar Crime
- GER 450: Legal Aspects of Aging
- HIST 341: American Constitutional History I
- JOMC 486: Mass Media Law
- MNGT 466: The Regulatory Environment for Employment and Labor
- PHIL 107: Ethics of Emerging Media Arts
- PHIL 208: Business Ethics
- PHIL 213: Medical Ethics
- PHIL 225: Environmental Ethics
- PHIL 230: Philosophy of Law
- POLS 100: Power and Politics in America
- POLS 261: Conflict and Conflict Resolution
- POLS 347: Myths and Realities of the Justice System
- POLS 441: Constitutional Law
- POLS 443: Civil Liberties: Issues of Fairness and Equality
- POLS 469: International Law
- PSYC 401: Psychology and Law
- SOCI 209: Sociology of Crime
- SOCI 311: Sociology of Juvenile Delinquency

Note that this is not an exhaustive list; see your Pre-Law advisor for additional options. Remember that not every class is offered every semester at UNL and course numbers and titles are subject to change. Check prerequisites in the Undergraduate Catalog (catalog.unl.edu) to make sure you are qualified to take a course.
Preparing for the LSAT

What is the LSAT (Law School Admission Test)?

- Required by most law schools*
- 3-4 hours long
- 4 multiple choice sections and one writing sample
- Digital multiple choice exam comprised of sections designed to test specific skills needed in the field of law (see Exam Sections)

*Some law schools have opportunities for an LSAT waiver or will accept another entrance exam in lieu of the LSAT (e.g., the GRE). However, these are rare situations and require advanced research and planning.

Exam Sections

Reading Comprehension:
Consists of reading passages followed by questions based on what is stated or implied in the passage

Analytical Reasoning (Logic Games):
Consists of questions based on a set of conditions/rules, focused on relationships and the ability to draw logical conclusions

Logical Reasoning:
Questions based on reasoning in brief statements or passages

Writing Sample:
Unscored sample of your writing skills sent to law schools as a part of your application

Tips for Preparing

1. Start early and plan ahead:
Start preparing 4-6 months in advance and work with a Pre-Law advisor to build your individual application timeline

2. Practice is key:
Practice helps you to become familiar with the structure of LSAT problems/questions and improve your performance in specific areas

3. Take full-length practice exams:
Taking full-length exams helps you assess your strengths and weaknesses and gives you a foundation on which to improve

4. Know your learning style:
Understanding your own learning style helps to identify the best preparation strategies for you (i.e., practice books vs. online course)

5. Try different methods:
Use different methods of practice to maximize your preparation (full-length exams, individual questions, timed conditions, etc.)

Explore Center Resources

In-Person Practice LSATs:
The Explore Center offers free in-person Practice LSATs - Register at exploreregistration.unl.edu

Take-Home Practice LSATs:
Stop by the Explore Center front desk at 127 Love Library South to pick up a free take-home practice LSAT for more preparation

More Resources

Khan Academy
Kaplan
PowerScore Bibles
Princeton Review
7Sage
Mometrix

Some prep companies offer free or discounted courses to LSAC fee waiver participants!

See a full list of licensed LSAT prep resources at lsac.org/lsat/prep

Some law schools have opportunities for an LSAT waiver or will accept another entrance exam in lieu of the LSAT (e.g., the GRE). However, these are rare situations and require advanced research and planning.
Additional Resources

Pre-Law Advising
Meet with a Pre-Law advisor in the Explore Center each semester to develop your 4-year Pre-Law plan. This will include research, getting involved, LSAT prep, etc.

Schedule a meeting through MyPLAN at my.unl.edu

Pre-Law Workshops & Events
Events include Applying to Law Schools 101, Law School Essay Workshop, LSAT workshop, and more. No registration required.

See event details at explorecenter.unl.edu

Law School Visitors
Meet with a law school representative in person or virtually to learn about their program and ask them school-specific questions. Please sign up in advance.

Sign up at exploreregistration.unl.edu

Practice LSATs
The Explore Center offers free in-person practice LSATs to enable you to practice the test content under timed conditions. You may also pick up free paper-based exams at the Explore Center front desk (127 Love Library South) for additional practice on your own.

Register for a Practice LSAT at exploreregistration.unl.edu

Application Essay Review
Pre-Law advisors can help you brainstorm ideas and provide personal statement feedback in any stage of the writing process. Please plan to send your draft to the advisor one week in advance of your meeting so the advisor has sufficient time to provide thoughtful feedback.

Schedule a meeting through MyPLAN at my.unl.edu

LSAC
lsac.org/index
Law school application, LSAT, and law school fairs/forums

American Bar Association
americanbar.org/groups/legal_education
ABA-approved law schools, preparing for law school, and student loans

AccessLex Institute
accesslex.org
Comparing law schools to find your fit, researching financial considerations and financial aid for law school

Discover Law
discoverlaw.org
Learning about law school, different types of law, and the law school application process

National Jurist
nationaljurist.com/prelaw-home
News relevant to Pre-Law and current law school students, and law school profiles and rankings

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