

How to Make Your Law School Application a Winner
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I. Take the LSAT

- a. The test is offered four times a year – early Feb, Jun, Oct, & Dec
- b. Be aware of the last best date to take it for the schools to which you are applying
- c. Don't take an official test as a practice – be as prepared as possible

II. Letters of Recommendation

- a. Line up your recommenders early
- b. Choose people who will take time to write about you very specifically, especially about your writing, research, analytical & logical reasoning skills
- c. Find out school policies about submitting the letters directly or through LSDAS
- d. Follow up with schools or LSDAS to be sure the letters have arrived

III. The LSDAS Report

- a. Once you apply to a school, the school will automatically request your report
- b. Updates will be sent to schools any time you add information to your report
- c. Your report will not be issued until all transcripts for all college-credit level work have been received and you have at least 1 LSAT score
- d. Be sure you monitor your subscription status with LSAC (www.lsac.org) to avoid problems – the most common problem: people who apply to more schools than they pay for reports – LSAC won't release the report until you settle your account
- e. Letters of recommendation are optional through the LSDAS report, so LSAC won't hold your report up because they aren't there

IV. Application Options

- a. The paper application
- b. Downloadable forms
- c. The LSACD
- d. The Multi-App
- e. LSAC Online Submission (still must submit signature page and app fee directly to the school)

V. Elements of a Complete Application File

- a. Application
- b. Application Fee
 - i. Application fee waivers are usually awarded if you include a copy of your current year's financial award, showing that you are receiving at least 80% of all tuition and associated costs in the

form of financial aid. If you are granted a waiver from LSAC for your LSDAS subscription, a copy of that letter will often suffice for a waiver of the application fee.

- c. Personal Statement
 - i. Be honest and be yourself – speak about what makes you interesting and unique
 - ii. If you use books or websites for help, use them as examples only, not templates
 - iii. Use the space you’re given – an essay that is only a couple of paragraphs in length looks like you aren’t all that interested in getting accepted
- d. Resume or List of Extra Curricular Activities
 - i. Unless you participated in particularly unique activities or were awarded something very prestigious, you don’t need to go back to your high school history
 - ii. The piece of the application is meant to tell more about your experiences, your community involvement and your overall well-roundedness, but don’t exaggerate your involvement
- e. LSDAS Report
- f. Letters of Recommendation
- g. Supplemental Information
 - i. Sometimes, applicants have background information that is not asked for specifically, but that would be helpful to the admission committee. If you feel you want to explain something (e.g. poor grades due to an illness or family crisis, an LSAT score you feel doesn’t represent your real abilities because of certain testing conditions or a history of difficulty with standardized tests, etc.) you should submit that information on a supplemental statement of a paragraph or two. Do not include this type of information in your personal statement.

VI. Scholarship Applications

- a. Every school awards scholarships differently – some give merit scholarships without an applicant applying for them, some only award scholarships if you’ve filled out an application. Be sure you familiarize yourself with each school’s process
- b. Deadlines are usually earlier than the application deadline
- c. Include the top page of your most recent tax returns – additional pages and schedules are not necessary
- d. Don’t wait to get accepted to fill out your FAFSA or other financial aid documents. It takes up to 6 weeks to get information back and you want to be able to make an informed decision when the time comes to commit a tuition deposit. Law schools will rarely extend a tuition deposit deadline and especially not if your problem was avoidable.

VII. Final Tips

- a. Regardless of the application type that you use, be sure to check for unanswered questions on your application before you submit it

- b. Some questions require supplemental statements if answered in a particular way, be sure you follow the instructions in those instances
- c. Take the time to read the instructions and get things right the first time. If a school has to track you down because you forgot something, it delays your application
- d. Allow about 10-14 days for a school to process your application once you mail it and then call to double check that it was received. It is always your ultimate responsibility to make sure a school has received everything it needs to complete your file.
- e. If you include an e-mail address, be sure it's one where you check the messages on a regular basis. Email is the easiest way for a school to get in touch with you if they need anything so you may very well hear from them that way
- f. Do your homework about schools before you apply. In this way, you should be able to narrow your list down to about 5-6 schools. Applying to 15+ schools is expensive, time-consuming and adds a lot of stress to an already stressful process and you'll still have to narrow down where to go anyway.
- g. There's a law school for everyone. Setting your sights too strongly on one particular school and being willing to give up the entire idea of going to law school if you don't get accepted there is not in your best interest. It doesn't hurt to have a top choice school and to tell that school that they are your number one choice, but if you don't get accepted, you shouldn't give up 30 or 40 years of legal practice because of where you might have to spend 3 years getting your degree.