

Thinking about law school? (FAQ)

Do I have to major in political science with a pre-law concentration to go to law school?

No. You can major in any area. Law schools want students with strong analytical, critical thinking, and communication skills. A degree in political science with a pre-law concentration is one of many areas that will give you those skills and help prepare you for law school. Plus it will give you a much better understanding of politics and the legal system and help you decide if this is indeed your area of interest. Political science majors rank higher than most majors on the LSAT.

Where can I get advice at MTSU about going to law school?

- If you are a political science/pre-law major, your academic advisor can help.
- MTSU has a certified **LSAC advisor** with whom you should consult. It is imperative that you talk to someone who has been there, done that, and has a t-shirt. Talk to someone about it. Do not rely on television and movies to learn about being a lawyer or attending law school.

Where can I get information about law schools?

- The Law School Admission Council (LSAC) website www.lsac.org contains information on law schools, the application process, and much more. If you decide to apply to law school, you will do so through the LSAC (see below).
- FindLaw.com provides information on law schools, faculty, courses, outlines and exams, law student resources, cases/codes, law review journals, practice management, jobs & careers, legal news, the bar, etc.

What do Law Schools look for?

- GPA- this needs to be as high as possible ¹
- LSAT score – this weighs more than your GPA.
- Besides GPA and test scores, law schools also look at how *well-rounded* a student is with a view to the student's overall goals in terms of practicing law as part of the larger community (being in mock trial is not exactly what is meant by being well-rounded).

Which school should I attend?

¹ Students should be advised that letting a course lapse into a “F” thinking that it can be replaced with a better grade when repeated is not a good strategy. While repeating with an “A” may improve a zero GPA at MTSU to a 4.0, it will only equal a 2.0 for law school entrance GPA requirement because both events are considered. So, complete the course or drop it and then repeat it.

- Most students begin and end their careers in or near the city where they attended law school. So, one important criterion is most likely to be “where do you want to live and raise a family?”
- ***What school might I attend given my anticipated GPA and LSAT Score?***
https://officialguide.lsac.org/release/OfficialGuide_Default.aspx allows you to plug these figures in to see what your chances are of admission to any law school. This information may help you make decisions as where to apply.

Is the Nashville School of Law a good option?

The Nashville School of Law is not ABA approved. This merely means that graduates can only practice law in the state of Tennessee. The Nashville School of Law has a unique and extremely useful role to play in legal education and career opportunities for many MTSU students.

How do I apply for law school?

Step 1: Register with LSAC (Law School Admission Council). LSAC is a centralized service that handles and facilitates the entire admissions process. Once you register with LSAC, you will sign up for and take the LSAT through LSAC and submit materials like your personal statements and letters of recommendations to them. They, in turn, send your score and the application materials to the law schools to which you are applying. In 2011, LSAC charged \$124 for the Credential Assembly Service (CAS) and the LSAT cost \$139. However, you can apply for fee waivers.
Become familiar with LSAC and the process!

Step 2: Take the LSAT (see below for information about the test itself).

Step 3: Complete and Submit Applications

When you log on to your LSAC account, you select the law schools you are interested in from their list of law schools. After doing so, you can get to the on-line applications by clicking on the law school and then on application. There is almost always an application fee, which you can either mail directly to the school or pay through LSAC. Don't forget to see if you have any fee waivers!

Step 4: Request Letters of Recommendation

When you fill out the recommendation form on the LSAC.ORG website you will also print out a sheet to provide to those providing the recommendations. After you sign it and give it to them, they will then send that form directly to LSAC with your recommendation. Remember don't forget to sign it!

These are very important! For recommendations you should choose people who know you very well and for a long time. If they are professors, make sure you had a really good grade in the class and they remember you! Most law schools require three recommendations; others one. It really depends on the law school. Moreover, most law schools express a preference for recommenders to be faculty members that have had students in their classes.

Extra letters

These usually address a low GPA or any issues/ explanations you need to tell the law school. These need to be uploaded with your personal statement on your online application.

Step 5: Submit a Personal statement

Your personal statement should be positive. Only good things! If you have to answer why you checked a certain box on your application or a low GPA this should all be done in a separate letter. You can upload your personal statement at the end of your online application on the LSAC website. Have your personal statements reviewed by your advisor or someone worthy of the task.

Step 6: Request Transcripts. Upon request, MTSU will send your transcripts to the LSAC. Remember you must tell your school to do this as well as any other colleges you have attended besides MTSU.

When should I sign up for LSAC, take the LSAT and apply for law school?

The LSAT is administered four times a year; June, October, December, and February. The most popular time to take the LSAT is in October for enrollment in the following fall semester. Applications to the law schools should be submitted by December. This gives you plenty of time to be considered, as well as well as considered early, and it coincides with meeting law school personnel at a law school forum.

What is the LSAT?

The LSAT is the Law School Admissions Test. It is a standardized test consisting of 5 sections. Two sections are logic reasoning, one section is reading comprehension, one section is logic games, and the last is a wild card. Meaning the test makers will pick the section to be logic reasoning, reading comprehension, or logic games. The sections are in no particular order.

Logic reasoning: These questions assess the ability to analyze, critically evaluate, and complete arguments as they occur in ordinary language. Each Logical Reasoning question requires the test taker to read and comprehend a short passage, then answer a question about it. The questions are designed to assess a wide range of skills involved in thinking critically, with an emphasis on skills that are central to legal reasoning. These skills include drawing well-supported conclusions, reasoning by analogy, determining how additional evidence affects an argument, applying principles or rules, and identifying argument flaws.

Reading Comprehension: These questions measure the ability to read, with understanding and insight, examples of lengthy and complex materials similar to those commonly encountered in law school. The Reading Comprehension section contains four sets of reading questions, each consisting of a selection of reading material, followed by five to eight questions that test reading and reasoning abilities.

Games: These questions measure the ability to understand a structure of relationships and to draw logical conclusions about that structure. You are asked to reason deductively from a set of statements and rules or principles that describe relationships among persons, things, or events. Analytical Reasoning questions reflect the kinds of complex analyses that a law student performs in the course of legal problem solving.

Where can I find study materials for the LSAT?

You can only take the test 3 times within a 2 year period so studying is highly recommended. There are lots of study materials available to you. Most big book stores have sections available to purchase study materials and books to help you prepare. There are also classes offered by Kaplan that cater to the LSAT. You can go to Kaptest.com to find out the nearest Kaplan class near you as well as prices. Another great resource is LSAC.ORG. They offer great testing preparation as well as old LSAT tests to look at or take, free of cost.

Are there other sources of information and advice?

An important aspect of gaining admission at law schools is meeting and getting to know people from the school of the student's interest. Since the cost and time required of travel is so great, student should be encouraged to attend the most convenient ***Law School Requirement Forum Cities*** where law school personnel from a wide range of schools from a broad geographic area to meet prospective students. Our nearest is Atlanta, which is usually held in September or October of each year. These are listed on the LSAC web page. It should be mentioned that we have a few local law school representatives on campus each autumn during career day.

(Material provided by Catherine Treadwell and Dr. Clyde Willis)

These suggestions should in no way be considered a substitute for a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the material contained in the Law School Admission Council's web site: www.lsac.org or consulting with your advisor.