



# Pre-Law Resource Center

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

## Preparing for Law School

**Kristi Denney, J.D.**

# My Background

- B.S. in Biology/Philosophy, Morningside College, Sioux City, Iowa
- M.S. in Environmental Studies, U of Montana, Missoula
- J.D. from University of Colorado, Boulder
- Work for the U.S. EPA, Sierra Club, Social Security Administration, and Texas Public Utilities Commission

# How to get to law school?

- 1) Grades
- 2) Excellent Score on Law School Admission Test (LSAT)
- 3) Work Experience, Leadership & Community Involvement
- 4) Writing a Compelling Personal Statement
- 5) Two Strong Letters of Recommendation

## Poll: What Year are You?

- 1) Freshman (< 30 credits)
- 2) Sophomore (30-59 credits)
- 3) Junior (60-89 credits)
- 4) Senior (90 + credits)

*Please tell me more about yourself in the chat function including major, why you are interested in law, law schools under consideration.*

# Selecting a Major for Law School

- No required major or pre-requisites for law school
- Choose a major that you enjoy
- Select challenging courses that build skills in:
  - Critical thinking skills
  - Writing
  - Verbal communication
- Build relationships with professors

# Your GPA is IMPORTANT!

## GPA for Incoming Class of 2017

Law School	25%	50%	75%
University of Washington	3.47	3.67	3.79
Seattle University	3.03	3.34	3.50
Gonzaga University	3.07	3.30	3.54
University of Idaho	2.95	3.29	3.60

### Do Your Own Research!

- ABA Standard 509 Info Reports: <http://abarequireddisclosures.org/>
- LSAC Guide to Law Schools:  
[https://officialguide.lsac.org/release/OfficialGuide\\_Default.aspx](https://officialguide.lsac.org/release/OfficialGuide_Default.aspx)

# What is the LSAT?

The Law School Admission Test (LSAT) is a half-day standardized exam designed to test aptitude for the practice of law.

- Administered 6 times per year by LSAC
- Required for admission at law schools
- Includes 5 multiple-choice sections lasting 35 minutes each and one 35-minute essay section
- Sections: Reading Comprehension, Analytical Reasoning, Logical Reasoning x 2, Essay
- Costs \$180

**More Information:** Law School Admissions Council (<https://lsac.org/>)

# LSAT Scoring

- Scoring based on the number of CORRECT answers to the multiple-choice question
  - All questions weighted equally
- Raw scores converted to a scaled score of 120-180
  - LSAC uses a statistical procedure known as equating to adjust for minor differences in difficulty between tests
- The essay is not scored, but will be shared with law schools to which you apply



# Scoring: LSAT Distribution & Median Scores

**LSAT Percentile Table**  
(June 2014- Feb 2017)

Scaled Score	Percentile
180	99.90%
175	99.60%
170	97.50%
165	91.70%
160	80.10%
155	63.40%
150	44.70%
145	26.80%
140	13.60%
135	5.70%
130	2.00%

Incoming Class of 2017 - LSAT Scores

Law School	25%	50%	75%
UW	157	163	165
Seattle U	150	154	157
Gonzaga	151	153	156
UI	149	153	155

Do Your Own Research!

- ABA Standard 509 Info Reports:  
<http://abarequireddisclosures.org/>
- LSAC Guide to Law Schools:  
[https://officialguide.lisac.org/release/OfficialGuide\\_Default.aspx](https://officialguide.lisac.org/release/OfficialGuide_Default.aspx)

## Test Dates

- June 11, 2018
- July 23, 2018
- September 8, 2018
- November 17, 2018
- January 26, 2019
- March 30, 2019
- June 3, 2019

Students going directly to law school should take the LSAT in **June or July after your junior year.**

## Make an LSAT Study Plan

**Beginning 3-6 months before your planned LSAT Test date:**

- Step 1. Review LSAT study question types and some basic approaches
- Step 2. Find your baseline score by taking a full-length practice exam under actual, timed conditions
- Step 3. Be familiar with the median LSAT scores at the law schools where you plan to apply
- Step 4. Make a concrete study plan for improving your score and **STICK TO IT!**

# Study Approaches

- Self-study with books
- In-person class
- Online classes:
  - Princeton Review, 7Sage, Blueprint, PowerScore
- One-on-one tutoring

TIP: Study 2 hrs/day for 3 months  
Scholarship \$ and future salary depend on it!

# As a global campus student, what concerns you the most about applying to law school?

- 1) My online degree might be viewed as inferior to a traditional degree by law schools.
- 2) Adjusting to an on-campus learning environment.
- 3) Is the cost of law school worth it?
- 4) Finding resources and support during the application process.
- 5) Relocating for law school.

# Application Process: References, Essays, Resume

- Applications submitted fall of senior year
  - ❖ Application deadlines vary, but earlier is always better
- Requires 2 letters of recommendation
  - ❖ At least 1 from a professor
- Personal statement
  - ❖ Why law school? Why this law school? Highlight your life experience
- Resume
  - ❖ Include all jobs, demonstrate your hard work in balancing school with other activities



*PLRC Directors available to review essays & resumes and advise on law school selection*

# Law School

- Takes 3 years to earn a Juris Doctor (JD)
- Similar curriculum at all law schools
- Expensive
  - Over \$100k debt per avg. law grad
  - 87% of law grads have student loans to repay

Law School	In-State Tuition	Out-of-State Tuition
UW	\$34,311	\$44,979
Seattle U	\$45,054	\$45,054
Gonzaga	\$38,715	\$38,715
UI	\$19,748	\$36,072

# Be a Smart Consumer of Law School

- Apply to reach and safe schools
- Compare law school costs, employment, and bar passage rates
  - ABA Admissions Statistics: <http://abarequireddisclosures.org/>
  - ABA Employment Summary by School: <http://employmentsummary.abaquestionnaire.org/>



## Advise against attending:

A law school that is “unranked” by U.S. News & World Reports:  
<https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-law-schools/law-rankings>

Or one of the schools with the highest unemployment rates:  
<https://abovethelaw.com/2017/05/the-law-schools-with-the-most-unemployed-graduates-2016/>



## POLL: What was the median starting salary for 2016 law school graduates?

- 1) \$49,000
- 2) \$65,000
- 3) \$84,000
- 4) \$98,000
- 5) \$112,000

# Starting Salary – Class of 2015

- U.S. News & World Reports:
  - Median private sector - \$68,300
  - Median public sector - \$52,000
- National Association for Law Placement (NALP):
  - Overall median - \$64,800
  - Median law firm - \$100,000

Sources:

U.S. News & World Reports: <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-graduate-schools/top-law-schools/articles/2017-03-15/us-news-data-law-school-costs-salary-prospects>

NALP: Employment for the Class of 2015 – Selected Findings

# Salary & Unemployment for Attorneys

	<b>Avg. Salary</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
<b>All Attorneys (2016)</b>	\$118,160	< 1%
<b>2015 Law Grads – Starting Salary</b>	\$64,800	8.8%

## Areas of Practice

- Administrative Law
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Antitrust Litigation
- Appellate
- Aviation and Aerospace
- Banking
- Bankruptcy
- Business/Corporate
- Civil Litigation
- Civil Rights
- Class Action/Mass Torts
- Communications
- Construction Litigation
- Consumer Law
- Eminent Domain
- Employment & Labor
- Energy & Natural Resources
- Entertainment & Sports
- Environmental
- Estates & Trusts
- Family Law
- Food and Drugs
- Franchise/Dealership
- Gaming
- Government Relations
- Health Care
- Immigration
- Insurance Coverage
- Intellectual Property
- International
- Land Use/Zoning
- Legal Aid/Pro Bono
- Legislative & Governmental Affairs
- Lobbying
- Media and Advertising
- Mergers & Acquisitions
- Military/Veterans Law
- Native American Law
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Personal Injury
- Professional Liability
- Real Estate
- Schools & Education
- Securities & Corporate Finance
- Securities Litigation
- Social Security Disability
- State, Local & Municipal
- Tax
- Technology Transactions
- Transportation/Maritime
- Utilities
- Workers' Compensation

## Where are Attorneys Employed?

Type of Position	% of Total Grads	% of All Attorneys
Law Firm	44%	75%
Business & Industry	14%	8%
Government	12%	8%
Judiciary	9%	3%
Public Interest	4%	1%
Education	2%	1%
Retired/Inactive	-	4%

- Source: ABA Section of Legal Education

# Resources

- LSAC: <https://www.lsac.org/> - register for LSAT, apply to law schools
- ABA Law School Admissions Statistics: <http://abarequireddisclosures.org/>
- Employment Summaries: <http://employmentsummary.abaquestionnaire.org/>
- Law School Information
  - <https://www.lawschooltransparency.com/> - objective law school info
  - <https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-law-schools> - law school info & rankings
  - <https://law-schools.startclass.com/> - compare law schools, find specialties
  - <https://abovethelaw.com/law-schools/> - law school and legal news
- Diversity & Inclusion
  - <https://www.discoverlaw.org/> - promoting diversity in the law
  - [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/diversity/diversity\\_pipeline.html](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/diversity/diversity_pipeline.html)
- Financing Law School: <https://www.accesslex.org/financial-education-resources-for-students>

# Questions

## Contact Pre-Law Resource Center:

Email: [prelaw@wsu.edu](mailto:prelaw@wsu.edu)

Phone: (509) 335-2325

Web: <https://prelaw.wsu.edu>

## CONTACT ME:

Email: [kristi.denney@wsu.edu](mailto:kristi.denney@wsu.edu)

Phone: (509) 335-4025