

Four-Year Checklist to Prepare for Law School

Freshman Year

- Begin taking core courses to improve skills in writing, reading comprehension, and critical analysis.
- Begin maintaining a strong GPA. To apply to law school you will need at least a 3.0, but higher is better.

Sophomore Year

- Decide on your major.
- Explore possibilities for an internship during your junior year to gain first-hand knowledge of the type of work involved in the legal profession. Summer work in a legal or social justice capacity would be helpful.

Junior Year

- Set up an internship, preferably one familiarizing you with the legal field.
- Investigate law schools that are a good match for you using the ABA's *Official Guide to Approved Law Schools* and by visiting the websites of law schools you are considering. Law schools publish their criteria for admission (GPA, LSAT scores) and their areas of specialization. The ABA's list of approved law schools is available through their website: https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/aba_approved_law_schools/
- Consider Cottey's Law Scholar Program at Indiana University Maurer School of Law. To be considered, be admitted to Maurer School of Law (accepted students' average undergraduate GPA has been 3.80 and LSAT scores have ranged from 146 to 173). If accepted, Maurer provides a mentor and a minimum scholarship of 50% of tuition (valued at approx. \$45,000 over 3 years for in-state residents and \$75,000 over 3 years for out-of-state residents).
- Register for the LSAT by the end of your junior year. To do this, **you must create an account with the Law School Admission Council (LSAC):** <https://www.lsac.org/>. The LSAT is administered several times a year. Specific test dates are listed on the LSAC website. You must register to take the LSAT in advance. It is advisable to take the test in June (after your junior year) so you can apply early in the fall, when there are fewer applications for more spaces. This allows you to take advantage of most law schools' rolling admissions. If you score poorly you can take the test again in the fall. If you wait until December to take the LSAT, it may be too late to be accepted to law school the following fall term. Most schools will have already admitted the next year's class. The fee for taking the LSAT is \$200. You may take the LSAT no more than three times in one year (June 1- May 31), no more than five times in the current and past five testing years, and no more than seven times over a lifetime. It is not advisable to take the LSAT as if it were a practice test. Take it after you have studied and practiced. The LSAC website provides free tools for studying and taking practice tests. Your LSAT scores are reported both individually and as an average to law schools.

Senior Year

- If you did not take the LSAT in June, or scored poorly on it, take it in the fall. To do so requires registering for the test in advance, before returning to Cottey for your senior year.
- Upon receipt of your LSAT score, review your selection of law schools. Begin obtaining letters of recommendation from faculty who know you well (a supervisor, too, perhaps). Properly complete all forms. If your GPA is below a 3.0 and you did poorly on the LSAT, consider alternatives to law school.
- Using your LSAC account, register and submit your law school application and supporting materials to LSAC's Credential Assembly Service (CAS). All ABA-approved law schools require the use of the CAS; the fee for using it is \$195. Through the CAS you will complete an electronic application to law school and submit your transcript, letters of reference, the all-important personal statement (for guidance with this see Dr. Chaney), and other materials. After submitting your complete application, the CAS sends it to the law schools to which you apply. For more information on the CAS and additional fees go to <https://www.lsac.org/jd/applying-to-law-school/cas>.
- Expect to hear law school admissions decisions beginning in late fall and through the spring. Be patient. And be honest. Failure to supply complete and truthful information will prevent you from admission to law schools in the US and can result in disbarment if discovered subsequently. Save all important forms and correspondences between you and law schools. If accepted, look into financial aid and housing as soon as possible. Do not miss financial aid deadlines. Most available aid comes from law schools, and usually is awarded on a first come, first served basis.