



**UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA**
Pre-Law Program

ADVISING GUIDE

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IS LAW SCHOOL RIGHT FOR YOU?

The Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree is excellent preparation for work in many professional fields, including business, publishing, education, and public policy; some law schools are offering Master's degrees in legal studies that would also be good preparation for that kind of work. However, most students enter law school to become a lawyer, be admitted to the Bar, and practice law. Before you commit to that path, you may want to find out what it is really like to be a lawyer by talking with practicing attorneys and visiting their offices and courtrooms. This will help you understand what it will mean to practice law on a daily basis. Our office will try to help you find these contacts if you need help.

Successful attorneys generally are persuasive speakers with strong writing skills, good memories, quick analytical and logical reasoning skills, and good organizational abilities. If you are weak in any of these areas, take some courses now that will help you improve them. Again, our office can help you identify such courses. Attorneys who enjoy practicing law generally thrive on being busy, on debating, on being in control of situations, on working with people, and on being challenged by complicated problems. Does this describe you?

Gather as much information as possible and think intentionally about your goals, your strengths and your weaknesses. Our office will help you as you make decisions about your path and about applying to law school.

PRE-LAW ADVISING PROGRAM

You are a pre-law student if you intend to go to law school. The Pre-Law Advising office is here to help you explore what it means to be a lawyer, select the most appropriate schools for you, move through the application process, and prepare you for law school and the legal profession. The services of the office are available to all University of Georgia students and alumni, of all academic majors, who are considering law school. Some of our services are:

Individual Advising Appointments

Individual advising appointments may be made with the Pre-Law advisor throughout the year. The advisor will assist you throughout the process of applying to law school. To schedule an appointment, either fill out the [online form](#) or call the office at (706) 542-5836. We are anxious to meet with you and help you achieve your goals!

Pre-Law Orientations

Pre-Law Orientations, held three times in the fall and three times in the spring, offer you valuable information about the legal profession, popular majors and suggested courses for Pre-Law students, the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), Law School Credential Assembly Service (LSCAS), letters of recommendation,

applying to law school, and membership in Phi Alpha Delta, the Pre-Law fraternity, and the Undergraduate Mock Trial Program. Dates and locations for the Orientations are on the Events page of the Pre-Law website.

Pre-Law Workshops

We also offer group workshops on topics requested by Pre-Law students. Traditionally these include how to select the right law school for you, how to pay for law school, and how to write a compelling personal statement for your law school application. Dates and locations are on the Events page of the Pre-Law website.

Personal Statement / Application Essay Critiques

The Pre-Law advisor is here to give you guidance on writing your personal statement or application essay and to provide feedback on this important component of a law school application. Schedule an appointment early in the application cycle to discuss this.

Pre-Law Listserv

The Pre-Law listserv is an important means of communication between the office and Pre-Law students and alumni. Joining the listserv is a great way to receive notices of events on and off campus, application tips, and information on a variety of programs of interest to Pre-Law students.

To subscribe:

- Go to <https://listserv.uga.edu/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=PreLaw-l&A=1>
- Enter your full name and UGA email address
- Select “Subscribe”
- Check your email for a confirmation message

To unsubscribe:

- Go to the website: <https://listserv.uga.edu/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=PreLaw-l&A=1>
- Enter your full name and the email you used to subscribe to the list-serv.
- Select “Unsubscribe”
- Check your email for a confirmation message

Resource Library

The Pre-Law Advising office has lots of resources for you to use to help select and apply to law school. These include the Official ABA-Approved Law School Guide and catalogues from various law schools—and many more resources. Come in and browse, but don't remove any items!

Law School Fair / On-campus law school visits

A Law School Fair is held on campus in the fall. In addition, admissions representatives from various law schools visit the UGA campus throughout the year to speak to pre-law students. Dates and locations are posted on the Pre-Law listserv and the Events page of the Pre-Law website.

Dean's Letter of Certification

Some law schools will ask you for a Dean's Letter of Certification before admitting you. Hand-deliver or mail the completed and signed [Dean's Certification Authorization & Routing Slip](#), along with the Dean's Certification portion of your application (if applicable), to the Office of the Registrar in 105 Holmes/Hunter Academic Building, Athens, GA 30602. The form can also be submitted via fax to (706) 583-8162. Click on Dean's Certification at conduct.uga.edu for more information.

Phi Alpha Delta, Pre-Law Fraternity

Phi Alpha Delta is the international Pre-Law fraternity whose mission is to advance "integrity, compassion and courage through service to the student, the school, the profession and the community." Their [website](#) has lots of resources that will help you explore law school and the legal profession—check it out! You may also want to consider joining the UGA chapter. The Pre-Law advisor can give you more information on this.

UGA Undergraduate Mock Trial Program

The [UGA Undergraduate Mock Trial Program](#) is a student organization formed to field a UGA mock trial team for intercollegiate competition and to develop student trial advocacy skills.

HOW TO MAJOR IN PRE-LAW AT UGA, NOT

Pre-Law is a declaration of intent to attend law school. There is no Pre-Law major at UGA, nor a Pre-Law degree, nor is there any major that will increase your chances of being accepted to law school. Rather law schools look at the whole student—your program of study, your academic credentials, your extra-curricular activities, your skills, and your reason for wanting to study law. There is no approved pathway into law school, but what you can and should do is tell your academic advisor that you plan to attend law school so you and your advisor can plan your program of study to include courses that may be helpful preparation for law school (see Course Recommendations below).

What general skills should you have or seek to develop as a pre-law student?

The American Bar Association (ABA) has a short document about preparing for a legal education on its website that says: "The core skills and values that are essential for competent lawyering include analytic and problem-solving skills, critical reading abilities, writing skills, oral communication and listening abilities, general research skills, task organization and management skills, and the values of serving faithfully the interests of others while also promoting justice" (see [Preparation for Legal Education](#)). You may develop these skills through many different majors and life experiences; there is no one-size fits all.

So, what major should you choose?

This is probably the most asked question of incoming students who wish to go to law school. Well, as with most issues dealing with the law, it is at the same time very simple and complicated. In almost all cases, no specific major is required to enter a legal specialty. (The exceptions are certain, very technical areas of patent law.) For example, you do not have to get a business degree if you want to be a corporate lawyer or a major in criminal justice to be a criminal defense attorney. However, your interest in a particular area of law may mean you have a natural interest in majors which are similar. Law schools select students who demonstrate they have developed the ability to think and write clearly. These analytical and communication skills can be developed in many different academic disciplines. So, choose a major that you like and one in which you will be able to realize your full academic potential. In short, the best major is the one that is best for you.

SOME COURSE RECOMMENDATIONS

Certain courses are particularly useful in developing the skills you will need to do well on the LSAT, in law school, and in the practice of law. Consider including some of the following courses in your degree program. For more information on the courses listed below, visit the UGA [Course Bulletin](#).

English Composition and Literature

Any composition or literature course may be helpful. Look especially for smaller classes which are described as “[Writing Intensive](#).” There are majors and minors available in English, classics, and comparative literature, all of which emphasize critical thinking and help develop your writing skills.

Foreign Language

The study of any foreign language can develop a better understanding of the structure of language and the tools of communication. Certain types of public service law or international law may be enhanced by proficiency in an appropriate modern language. Ancient Greek and Latin classes also help improve your vocabulary and reading comprehension. Many degrees at UGA do not require foreign language, and you should talk with your academic advisor about choices for your limited elective hours.

Philosophy

Philosophy courses may be especially helpful and may be used to fulfill core requirements in various degrees. You may earn a major or a minor in philosophy.

Strongly recommended classes include:

- PHIL 2010 - Introduction to Philosophy
- PHIL 2020 - Logic and Critical Thinking
- PHIL 2030 - Introduction to Ethics

- PHIL 2500 - Symbolic Logic

More advanced selections include:

- PHIL 3200 - Ethical Theory
- PHIL 4210 - Social and Political Philosophy
- PHIL 4220 - Environmental Ethics
- PHIL 4240 - Philosophy of Law

Educational Psychology

The department of Educational Psychology offers a course called EPSY 2130: Exploring Teaching and Learning (formerly EPSY 2020) that may interest you as this course discusses basic issues and concepts related to how people are motivated, how they learn, and how common developmental factors affect learning and motivation with a broad range of settings such as client advising and “education” in law.

Political Science

Political science is a popular and useful study for Pre-Law students.

The following courses are considered extremely helpful for any Pre-Law student:

- POLS 4700 - Constitutional Law: Powers
- POLS 4710 - Constitutional Law: Rights and Liberties
- POLS 4740 - Judicial Process and Behavior

Other useful courses include:

- INTL 4210 - International Law
- POLS 4750 - Gender, Law, and Politics
- POLS 4720 - Criminal Procedure
- POLS 4730 - Criminal Law

Communication Studies

Speech courses are strongly recommended and are helpful for any Pre-Law student.

Some basic choices include:

- COMM 1100- Introduction to Public Speaking
- COMM 1500 - Introduction to Interpersonal Communication

More advanced courses include:

- COMM 4220 - Theories of Argumentation
- COMM 4330 - Communication Strategies in the Courtroom

Criminal Justice

Criminal justice is a multi-disciplinary major or minor that may be useful if you are interested in criminal law. Courses are primarily taken from political science, sociology, psychology, philosophy, and history; the major includes an internship as

well. If interested in this major, you must submit an application for acceptance to this major at the end of your sophomore year.

Sociology

Sociology gives insight into the wider social and political contexts in which decisions in society are made.

Courses which specifically address legal and criminal issues include:

- SOCI 3070 - Juvenile Delinquency
- SOCI 3140 - Social Control of Crime
- SOCI 3150 - Criminal Punishment and Society
- SOCI 3810 - Criminology
- SOCI 3830 - Violence and Society
- SOCI 4830 - Sociology of Law

History

A good background in American history is important, and you may feel that you need the benefit of both HIST 2111 (American History to 1865) and HIST 2112 (American History since 1865), although only one is required to satisfy the Regents' requirement for American history. History is a popular major or minor for Pre-Law students. Courses that emphasize critical thinking, research, and writing will be valuable.

A course directly concerning law is:

- HIST 4060 - American Legal History

Courses in Science and Technology

If you wish to pursue such fields as health, environmental, intellectual property or patent law, you may benefit from a background in the chemical, biological, and physical sciences, as well as courses in genetics, computer science, environmental health science and ecology. You may choose to earn a Bachelor of Science in the College of Arts and Sciences, a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural and Environmental Science, a Bachelor of Science in Forest Resources, or various other degrees, or you may ask your advisor how to use specific classes in your Bachelor of Arts degree.

If you are earning an A.B. you may also consider non-prerequisite courses with an environmental emphasis such as:

- ECOL 1000-1000L - Ecological Basis of Environmental Issues
- GEOG 1125-1125D - Resources, Society, and the Environment
- GEOL 1121 - Earth Processes and Environments

Possibly followed by:

- GEOL 3150 - Coastal Processes and Conservation

- GEOL 3250 - Earth Resources and the Environment

A couple of courses dealing with environmental law:

- AAEC(ECOL) 4770H- The Business of Environmental Law (Honors)
- FANR 4810/6810 - ECOL 4810/6810- Natural Resources Law

The First-Year Odyssey Seminars (fyo.uga.edu), offer freshmen a wonderful opportunity for a serious, in-depth academic experience in a small class with some of the most esteemed members of the University faculty. Seminars are offered on a variety of topics, and the list of offerings each semester is available online or from your advisor.

Business Courses

You may want to consider the Bachelor of Business Administration degree which requires admission to the Terry College of Business. If you want to obtain some basic business concepts and vocabulary, consider taking some of the courses listed below in your core or electives.

A class in economics is generally recommended for all Pre-Law students. ECON 2106 is Microeconomics; ECON 2105 is Macroeconomics. Additional upper-level classes may also be useful. Economics classes are also considered Arts and Sciences classes and may count in the social science area in many degrees. Economics is available as an A.B. degree through Arts and Sciences, and is a good option for a business-oriented student who desires a liberal arts degree. Although an A.B. degree, the level of math required for the Economics major is: MATH 2200, Analytic Geometry and Calculus.

Courses in legal studies are offered through the Terry College of Business Administration. Students may wish to consider the introductory course, LEGL 2700 - Legal and Regulatory Environment of Business, or any of the more advanced courses in Legal Studies.

As with the Legal Studies classes, ACCT 2101 and ACCT 2102, Principles of Accounting I and II, are available to all students not only those enrolled in the College of Business Administration. A more general introduction is available through ACCT 1160 - Survey of Accounting, which is for the non-major and takes a non-technical approach.

Journalism Courses

Students often go to law school after earning the Bachelor of Arts in Journalism. The Henry W. Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication offers elective classes or a minor to students who do not wish to pursue an A.B.J. degree. A particular course you may be interested in is JRLC 5040 - Law of Mass Communication. If you are not a student in the College of Journalism you may seek

Permission of School (POS) for this course if it is officially recommended by your advisor. This course has the prerequisite of at least one basic JRL course.

ENHANCING YOUR ACADEMIC RECORDS

You should make good use of every opportunity that you have as a UGA student to enhance your readiness for law school. Expanding your general knowledge and enhancing your analytical, writing, and research skills are possible in any course in your curriculum, and the course suggestions found in this guide are in no way intended to exhaust the options of valuable courses for the Pre-Law student. Fine arts, religion, anthropology, psychology—truly every course you take has the potential to develop your academic skills. Admissions committees look closely at your transcript to see evidence of a curious mind, a critical thinker, and an enthusiastic learner. It is not all about the “A.” Rather it’s about who you are, what interests you, and how you engage with issues. Use your course selection to develop and enhance the person you are and the lawyer you are seeking to become.

Become engaged on campus. Find a **student activity or student organization that interests you.** Take full advantage of the Experiential Learning requirement. These activities reflect that you are a “well-rounded” person who is concerned about your community.

Also consider earning an academic certificate to enhance your major. UGA has many **certificate programs** that are designed to provide a multi-disciplinary approach to a variety of issues, subjects, or areas of academic inquiry. Often representing newer fields of research, many certificate programs feature classes which strongly emphasize critical analysis.

Information about certificate programs is available from advisors, academic departments, or online. For a full list of programs, go to http://bulletin.uga.edu/HTMLFiles/cert_listing.html.

Programs to consider

Environmental ethics is a certificate program in which students benefit by viewing environmental issues from an interdisciplinary perspective, including courses from the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences as Arts and Sciences, and is available to students in any college. For students in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, the Certificate in International Agriculture focuses on the special problems of international agriculture and trade relationships.

Global Studies is a program that offers a certificate or a major through [Interdisciplinary Studies](#). Classes draw from many disciplines, and students include a concentration in a geographic area, and earn additional hours in a foreign language.

The Certificate in Leadership and Service is designed to enhance the leadership skills and orientation to service of students through an interdisciplinary approach to the study and practice of leadership. Students will gain experience in leadership in personal, team, organizational and community contexts. Courses to complete the certificate will provide students with the opportunity to work in groups, develop skills in communication and critical thinking, practice skills in decision making and problem solving, and serve in leadership roles in their college, campus organizations or community.

The Institute for African American Studies provides a central focus to the study of the impact of African American contributions upon human culture.

African studies, Latin American studies, German studies, French studies, and medieval studies are available for students who have specific geographic, language or historical areas of interest.

The Women's Studies Program offers students an interdisciplinary perspective on women. Like the women's studies minor and major (through Interdisciplinary Studies), the certificate in women's studies exposes students to the new scholarship on women emerging in different fields. WMST 4250 is a Special Topics course in Women's Studies. Recent offerings have included such topics as: WMST 4250 - Power, Privilege, and Law.

International Relations and Marine Science are two more among several **Interdisciplinary Studies majors** available to the qualified student that may be of special interest to the Pre-Law student.

Studies Abroad and National Student Exchange programs are excellent opportunities to study in a different location, broadening your academic and cultural experiences.

Earning a double major, a minor, or a certificate in addition to your primary major can show an admissions committee that additional forethought and commitment have been applied in your undergraduate career. A second area of study will include more major-level classes, which often require more serious study, analysis and writing.

A full list of majors, minors and certificate programs are available at bulletin.uga.edu.

However, you need not feel that you must have such an addition. You may find that you will benefit more from choosing good courses from many departments. Thoughtful choices of useful and complementary core and elective classes will be evident to an admissions committee, even if they do not carry an official recognition as a minor or a certificate. You may also want to point out such course selections in the personal statement you include with your application, particularly if organized around a general theme or interest of yours.

LAW SCHOOL APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process for law school involves providing reliable information to admissions committees which they use to help determine which students will be successful in their law school, positive additions to their student body, and good practitioners of the art of law. The process usually consists of completing an application, writing a personal statement, obtaining letters of recommendation, providing a Dean's Letter of Certification, sending your undergraduate transcripts to the Law School Credential Assembly Service (LSCAS), and taking the LSAT.

You should plan to apply to law school in the fall of your senior year or the fall before the year you wish to enter law school. While there are a very small number of law schools which begin in other semesters, almost all entering law school students begin during the fall semester. Virtually every law school makes available its “numbers,” which reflect the median grade point average (GPA) and the Law School Admission test (LSAT) score of the previous year’s incoming class. A “median” is the score that is in the center of all of the scores (i.e., half of the class scored above that number, and half of the class scored below). Many schools also make available the range of all students in the entering class from the previous year. Your “numbers” are not the only criteria considered by a law school, but they are usually very important.

The Law School Admission Test (LSAT), is considered by many schools to be the most important indicator of your ability to succeed in law school. You must rigorously prepare for this test, with the intention of taking it only once. Although there are exceptions, many law schools now accept the highest LSAT score rather than taking the average LSAT score. You should never take the LSAT unless you are prepared for it to be reported to law schools, for every score you earn on the LSAT remains valid and will be reported to law schools for five years. The test is given four times each year usually early in February, June, September or October, and December. There are many factors to consider in deciding when you wish to take the test. See the information on the Pre-Law website on the LSAT schedule.

The Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) provides complete and detailed information regarding the policies and procedures relating to the LSAT and the law school application process. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the information on the LSAC website at www.lsac.org. LSAC also provides materials that explain [LSAT test format](#) in detail, and you should read them thoroughly. It also provides sample questions and a [previously-administered test](#) that will help you prepare for the test. Their site also includes a registration form; you will want to register for the test well before the deadline, because your most convenient testing site may fill quickly.

You will also need to subscribe to LSCAS, the Law School Credential Assembly Service, for the year during which you will be applying to law school. This is a centralized service that is used by almost all law schools. You will register with LSCAS and supply it with all of your college transcripts. LSCAS uses this information

along with your LSAT score to prepare an academic file on you. When you apply to law schools, each school will contact LSCAS for your file. LSAC will not send your file to law schools until all required materials have been received so stay informed about what materials are still needed.

There are significant costs involved in applying to law school. See the [LSAC website](#) for detailed information on the current costs of applying for the LSAT, [Law School Credential Assembly Service](#) (LCAS), and to law schools. LSAC also offers [Fee Waivers](#) to those who qualify.

Also useful is LSAC's [Getting Started Guide](#) with [Checklist](#) for the application process.

Treat the entire application process seriously and respectfully. Type your applications or, better yet, apply online as it allows for faster processing. Put serious thought into preparing your personal statement—write a draft, get feedback, and then rewrite and polish it as often as needed until you are happy with the result. Admissions counselors suggest that you think of the personal statement as your best chance to emerge from the application as a real person. As you write your statement, imagine the law school admissions committee sitting around the table with your file and information lying on the table before them and asking you to come in for five minutes to tell them why you want to attend their law school. Does your statement do a good job of telling them who you are and why you are a good fit for their program?

You may include an addendum to your record if you wish. An addendum is a short memo written to explain a specific situation, such as one particular semester when there was an illness or family crisis. You do not want to use the personal statement to dwell on explaining “bad things” in your record, but you should address them quickly in your statement, or in an addendum, and then focus on presenting a positive image of yourself, an honest expression of your desire to pursue the study of law, and perhaps a summary of how your past experiences have brought you to this point. Different law schools will have different questions or prompts for your personal essay, and it is important that you answer the question you have been asked and not write a generic statement to submit to every school.

It should go without saying that, on questions concerning your academic or legal record, you must always tell the entire truth. If necessary, write an explanation on a separate sheet that briefly addresses the circumstances and the way they were handled, provide a positive and sincere expression of the effect it may have had, and what you have done since then.

Your extracurricular activities including community service, can be a valuable addition to your application. You do not need to list an entire page of participation in every organization you can imagine, but show what you have gained from your participation in organizations or volunteer experiences that reflect your

commitments and values. It can be equally important to mention if your circumstances involved significant family or work obligations.

Letters of recommendation are usually required and often taken seriously. In other words, poor recommendations could be detrimental to your case. You want strong academic recommendations from professors who have personally graded your work, have engaged with you directly in class, and know you well. If you had a poor academic record early on, an enthusiastic, personal letter with specifics about your recent work and performance in a particular class can make an impression. Academic recommendations are more important than employers' recommendation, unless your experience has been in a closely related field and the writer can speak specifically to abilities applicable to success in law school. Recommendations from politicians or prestigious legal professionals are only beneficial if the writer knows you personally and can speak specifically to your abilities.

CHOOSING WHERE TO APPLY

It is wonderful to have lifelong dreams of attending a certain school, and you should work towards those dreams whole-heartedly. Admission to law school, however, is very competitive, and you need to be realistic to ensure your success. Take the time to investigate law schools! www.lsac.org is an excellent place to begin. There are several publications that give a review of schools. These are available from the Pre-Law advisor, the University library and career counseling services, through LSAC, or through commercial outlets. Read catalogues from several law schools. If at all possible, VISIT or (SIT IN on a class) at the schools you are considering. The University of Georgia School of Law offers prospective students the ability to watch sample videos of law classes [here](#). Law school is a challenging three years. Attending a law school that is not a “good fit” for you can turn “challenging” into “miserable”!

Factors to consider:

- Location.
- Class / School size and makeup. Some law schools are geared more towards “traditional” students, i.e., ones who have recently graduated from college and will attend law school full-time. Others are made up primarily of “non-traditional” students, i.e., those who have been out of college longer, who want to attend law school part-time, etc.
- Faculty. Accessibility and expertise are the factors to consider. Are they full-time and available to students after class, or are they simply teaching on a lunch break from their private practice? Are they known experts in the field in which they are teaching?
- Programs / Clinics. Does the law school offer a program or practical clinic experience in the fields and areas in which you believe you are interested?
- Employment placement assistance. How many staff are dedicated to helping law school students locate employment? How many employers come on

campus to interview? What externship opportunities are available while you are in school?

- Dual degree programs. JD/MBA; JD/MPA; JD/PhD; JD/MD

These are just some of the factors you will want to consider in selecting a school. Spend the same time researching and selecting a school as you do preparing for the LSAT. Remember, getting in is only the first part of the battle—you have to survive the next three years that follow!

Resources:

- LSAC Law School Forum—over 150 ABA law schools attend to provide information and answer questions of prospective law school students. A Southeastern Forum is held in the fall in Atlanta.
- UGA Law School Fair provides an opportunity for UGA Pre-Law students to speak with admissions officers from a number of law schools across the region and country. The Fair is held annually each fall.
- www.lsac.org
- Law school catalogues
- Law school alumni—they can tell you what the school is really like.
- Materials available from the Pre-Law advisor, the Career Center, bookstores, and the library.

In 1971, the American Bar Association approved standards for law schools. Law schools which meet its standards are called "ABA-Approved." (You may access the list of [ABA-Approved Law Schools](#) through the American Bar Association Web Site.) Most states will allow graduates of any ABA-approved law school to take the state bar examination and thereby become licensed to practice law in that state. A law degree from an unapproved law school may limit your ability to take the bar exam. Before enrolling in a law school not approved by the ABA, you should carefully check the state bar regulations where you plan to practice law.

You should consider the cost of attending the law schools that interest you. There is a great deal of financial aid, both public and private, available to law students, and most students require financial assistance. You will receive financial aid information, concerning scholarships, grants, and loans, from the schools where you are accepted. You will want to think carefully about how much debt you are willing to incur in order to earn your degree, because that may have an important impact on the type of employment opportunities that you can explore after graduation.

Resources are available to assist you in your selection of a law school. USE these resources to make sure you follow the adage to not only choose early but to also CHOOSE WISELY!