Prelaw Preparation

Preparing for Law School

For admission to law school, an applicant must complete a bachelor’s degree and, most often, take the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). No particular course of undergraduate study is recommended; this comports with the views of the American Bar Association (http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/pre_law.html) (ABA). However, the program should be sufficiently rigorous to provide the skills of comprehension and analysis essential to the study of law.

To prepare for law school, students should take courses that challenge and interest them, but no specific courses are required or recommended. The ABA recommends the development of numerous skills (http://www.lsac.org/jd/thinking-about-law-school/lawyers-skills/) in preparation for a legal education—including analytical and problem solving skills; critical reading, writing, oral communication and listening skills; general research, task organization and management skills. Fulfilling or exceeding general education and major requirements satisfies many of these objectives. Consult a Pre-Law advisor about undergraduate courses beyond general education and major requirements.

Students should submit law school applications the fall semester one academic year before entering law school. For most students, this is fall of the senior year. Admission is competitive, and law schools examine a number of factors. The undergraduate grade-point average and score on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) are particularly important in this process. All grades on the transcript, including transfer work, are reported to the Law School Admission Council (LSAC) and used by them to calculate their version of the applicant’s cumulative grade point average. The LSAT tests skills in reading comprehension, logical reasoning, and analytical reasoning. It is offered 6 times during the academic year: June, July, September/October, November, January and March. Most applicants take the June, July or September/October test to submit applications early in the review process. The September/October test date sometimes coincides with midterm examinations, so, many students prefer to take the LSAT in the summer after their junior year. Students can register for the LSAT online through the Law School Admission Council (http://www.lsac.org/). Law schools also consider personal statements, letters of recommendation, extracurricular activities, and the rigor of the academic curriculum in determining admission.

Many academic policy options, such as the Credit/No Credit (http://www.policy.ku.edu/) option and the course-repeat policy (http://www.policy.ku.edu/), have different consequences for law school applicants. For example, LSAC doesn’t recognize the course repeat policy, and calculates both grades as part of your cumulative grade point average. And although NC isn’t factored into your KU gpa, LSAC treats it like an F and calculates that as part of your gpa. Therefore, it can be helpful to consult the Pre-Law advisor before electing such options.

If you have questions about the Legal Education Accelerated Degree (LEAD) Program, please visit their information page (https://law.ku.edu/lead/).

If you have questions about KU’s Law School, view the School of Law (http://catalog.ku.edu/law/) section of the online catalog.