

How to Apply to Law School



MIT Careers Office

<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/prelaw.html>

12-170, 253-4733



Workshop Goals

1. When is the right time to apply?
2. Review the time frame useful for preparing for and applying to law school.
3. Outline the application elements.
4. Provide information for researching and selecting schools to apply to.
5. Review prelaw resources available at MIT.



Is Law School for Me?

- What are my interests?
- What do I like to do?
- What am I willing to spend?
- What are my personality traits?
- Why do I want to go to law school?
- What is my motivation?
- Would I be happy pursuing another graduate program?



When is the right time to apply?

- Complete self-assessment.
- Engage in open discussion with prelaw advisor, Preprofessional staff, alumni.
- Explore all of your interests.
- Average age of law school applicant in 2001 – age 26
- Apply when your application is strongest.



Ways to Begin to Prepare

- Explore the legal field – conduct informational interviews, volunteer/intern in legal settings. Utilize Alumni ICAN
<http://web.mit.edu/alum/career/ican/>
- Build rapport with your professors and supervisors for future letters of recommendation.
- Participate in extracurricular activities and community service

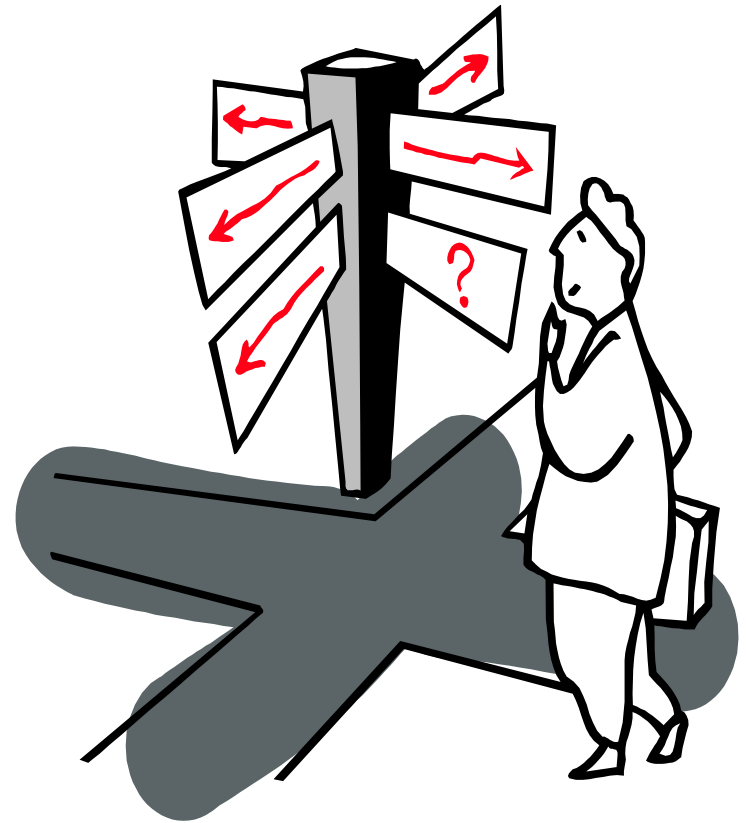


Trends in Law School Applications

- Significant increase in applications
 - Over past 5 years law school applications up more than 30%.
- MIT reflects that national trend
 - Number of MIT applicants to law school virtually doubled over past two years.

Timeline for the Application Process

- Freshman Year
- Sophomore Year
- Junior Year
- Senior Year





Freshman Year

- Speak with your academic advisor about your career interests in the legal profession.

- Look through the Prelaw Website

<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/prelaw.html>



Sophomore Year

- Select a major that interests you – **THERE ARE NO PRELAW REQUIRED COURSES OR MAJORS**
- Continue to explore the legal field and build rapport with professors and supervisors
- Summer internships through ICAN or other networking opportunities
- Meet with a Prelaw Advisor

<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/pladvisor.html>



Junior Year

- Prepare for the LSAT.
- Learn about current legal issues.
- Continue to explore the field through internships and informational interviews.
- Research and visit law schools.
- Select 2-3 people to write you letters of recommendation.
- Review the *Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools* Book.
- Attend Law School Admissions Presentations on campus.



Summer before and Senior Year

- Take the LSAT in June.
- Explore early decision options to law school.
- Obtain school applications.
- Start to write your personal statement/essay.
- Have your essay critiqued and completed.
- Attend Law School Admissions Presentations on campus.
- Research financial aid options.



Summer before and Senior Year

- Register with the Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS).
- Have recommendation letters sent to LSDAS.
- Obtain a Dean's Letter/Certificate from the Registrar's Office, 5-119.
- Attend the Annual Law School Forum in November.
- Send in applications mid-late fall.
- Spring semester make decisions regarding your acceptances or alternative options.



Targeting Schools

- Resources at the school
- Cost of education – financial aid resources
- Curriculum and grading system
- Special features of the program
- Campus Visit
- *ABA LSAC Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools, 2003*
- Joint Degree Programs



Joint Degree Programs

- Dual degree programs combine law with another degree such as medicine, business, social work, or public policy.
- LL.M. (Master of Laws) Programs – typically one year designed for students interested in legal scholarship.



Application Elements

- LSAT
- Dean's Letter/Certificate
- Letters of Recommendation
- Personal statement/essay
- Transcript



LSAT:

Law School Admission Test

- Given by the Law School Admission Council (LSAC)
- Comprised of Five 35 Minute sections of multiple choice questions. Includes:
 - Reading Comprehension
 - Analytical Reasoning
 - Logical Reasoning (2 sections)
 - One experimental section
- One 30 Minute Writing Sample
- Score Range: 120-180



LSAT

- LSAT administered in June, October, December, and February
- Many schools require that LSAT be taken by December for admission the following fall.
- Applicants are advised to take LSAT in June or October.
- Retesting – If you take the LSAT again your scores are averaged together.
- Prep Courses – some students choose to take LSAT prep classes if they want assistance structuring their study schedule.



Dean's Letter

- Dean's Letter/Certificate verifies your enrollment at MIT.
- Provides information about any academic or disciplinary action.
- Not all schools require a Dean's Letter but most do request one.
- Can be obtained from the Registrar's Office, 5-119.



Letters of Recommendation

- Select 2 recommenders, preferably both academic references.
- Register with the Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS). MIT Careers Office does not provide a credential service for law school applicants.
- Have recommendation letters sent to the LSDAS.



Letters of Recommendation

- Ask potential recommenders if they can write a “strong” letter of recommendation.
- Give recommender at least one month to write letter.
- Provide recommender:
 - Resume, personal statement if you have it, or a brief paragraph describing why you want to attend law school.
 - Letter of Recommendation Form/ waiver provided by the LSDAS.



Personal Statement

- Typically 1-2 page essay answering broad question about yourself.
- Should be personal, interesting, clear and well-written, and should convey your motivation to attend law school.
- Serves as an important sample of your writing ability.
- Have essay reviewed by your prelaw advisor and Preprofessional Advising staff.
- Attend an essay writing workshop.

<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/essay.pdf>



What Law Schools Look For:

- Course of study - difficulty and depth
DO NOT NEED PARTICULAR
DEGREE
- Quality of undergraduate courses
- Grade Point Average
- College attended



Schools Also Look At:

- College activities
- Post-college activities
- Ethnic background
- Uniqueness and Personality
- Motivation to study law
- Industry/professional work experience.



Resources for the Application Process

- Application Information

<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/plapplication.html>

- Resources for Writing Personal Statement/Essay

<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/essay.pdf>

http://writing.englishclub.com/ee/lo_law.html

- Preprofessional Workshops

<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/workshops.html#preprof>

2002 Data:

MIT Law School Applicants

YEAR OF GRADUATION	<u>2002</u>
Number of MIT Applicants	103
MIT Students Registered at a Law School	61 out of 103, 59.22%
Number Accepted to 1 or more schools	79 out of 103, 76.69%
Total MIT Applications Submitted	660
MIT Acceptances	203



2001 & 2002 Data: MIT Law School Applicants

YEAR OF GRADUATION	<u>2002</u>
Average number of applications per applicant	6.41
Average number of admissions	1.97
Senior applicants	25 out of 103, 24.27%
Non-senior applicants (grad students & alums)	78 out of 103, 75.72%
Average LSAT	162.2
Average GPA	3.26/4.0



2001 & 2002 Top 10 Most Popular Law Schools that MIT students applied to:

- Boston College
- Boston University
- Columbia
- Georgetown
- Harvard
- New York University
- Stanford
- U. C. Berkley
- University of Chicago
- Yale



MIT Resources and Staff

- Preprofessional Walk-ins Hours
 - Mondays 2:00 - 4:00 pm
 - Thursdays 12:00 - 2:00 pm
- Preprofessional Advising – Prelaw Website
<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/prelaw.html>
- Preprofessional advising staff available to discuss application process, review essays, practice interviewing by appointment.
- Preprofessional Workshops
- Prelaw advisors



Prelaw Advisors

- Advisors are members of the MIT community with diverse experiences in the legal field.
- Answer your questions about the profession and discuss your concerns and interests.
- Help you to explore your motivation.
- Assess your chances for a successful school application.
- List available online to contact independently.

<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/pladvisor.html>



Non-MIT Resources and Final Tips

- Law School Admission Council
<http://www.lsac.org>
- Association of American Law Schools
<http://www.aals.org/>
- Law School.com
<http://www.lawschool.com/>
- U.S. News and World Report
- Preprofessional Workshops and Walk-in Hours
- Meetings with Preprofessional Advising staff and prelaw advisors.