



# Prelaw Orientation

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GECCDC

GLOBAL EDUCATION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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



## Questions to Consider...

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1. Why go to Law School?
2. What do Law Schools look for?
3. When is the right time to apply?
4. What is the application time frame?
5. How do I research and select schools to apply to?
6. What prelaw resources are available to me at MIT?



## Is Law School for Me?

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



## What Law Schools Look For

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- Course of study - difficulty and depth
  - No particular degree or courses required
  - Law-related courses encouraged!
- Quality of undergraduate courses
- Grade Point Average
- College attended
- The LSAT score



# What Law Schools Look For

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- College activities
- Post-college activities
- Uniqueness and personality
- Motivation to study the law
- Industry/professional work experience
- **Background** (including disadvantages due to ethnicity, socio-economic status, education, etc.)



# Core Skills & Values Desired

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- Analytic/Problem-solving skills
- Critical reading abilities
- Writing skills
- Oral communication and listening abilities
- General research skills
- Organization and time management skills
- Values of serving others and promoting justice
- Team-player



# Core Skills & Values Desired

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## General Knowledge

- Understanding of history, including factors (social, political, economic, and cultural) that have influenced the development of our society
- A fundamental understanding of political thought and of the contemporary American political system
- Understanding of human behavior and social interaction
- Understanding of diverse cultures within and beyond the United States
- Ability to be cognizant of ethics in your consideration of the problem at hand



# When is the right time to apply?

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- Conduct a self-assessment
- Engage in open discussion with prelaw advisors, Preprofessional staff, alumni
- Explore all of your interests



# Ways to Begin to Prepare

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- Explore the legal field
  - Conduct informational interviews
  - Volunteer/intern in legal settings
    - Utilize Alumni ICAN  
<http://alum.mit.edu/cs/ican/index.html>
    - MIT Externship Program  
<http://alum.mit.edu/ccg/students/externships/index.html>
- Build rapport with your professors and supervisors
- Get involved!



# Explore the Field: Prelaw Advisors

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- Advisors are
  - Members of the MIT community with diverse experiences in the legal field
  - Professionals who can answer your questions about the profession and discuss your concerns and interests
  - Advocates who can help you explore your motivation
- List available online to contact independently:  
<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/preprof/lawadvisors.html>



# Application Process Timeline: 3 years prior to application year

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- Speak with your academic advisor about your career interests in the legal profession
- Meet with a Career Counselor
- Review the Prelaw Website  
<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/preprof/prelaw.html>



# Application Process Timeline:

## 2 years prior to application year

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- Select a major that interests you
- Continue to explore the legal field and build rapport with professors and supervisors
- Explore Externships or summer internships through Alumni ICAN, CareerBridge or other networking opportunities
- Meet with a Prelaw Advisor

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



# Application Process Timeline:

## 1 year prior to application year

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



# Application Process Timeline: Summer before & Application year

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



# Application Process Timeline: Summer before & Application year

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- 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 September/October
- Send in applications EARLY (mid-late fall)
- Spring semester make decisions regarding your acceptances or alternative options



# Targeting Schools

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- Characteristics to consider:
  - Resources at the school
  - Cost of education – financial aid resources
  - Curriculum and grading system
  - Special features of the program
  - Campus visit
  - Joint Degree Programs
  - Location of school and where you want to practice



## Options Beyond the JD

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- Dual degree programs combine law with another degree such as medicine, business, social work or public policy.
- Master of Law Programs (LLM) can be earned in specific concentration areas including international law, intellectual property, information technology, etc. after completing a JD.



# Application Elements

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



# The Law School Admission Test (LSAT)

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- Administered 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



# The LSAT

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- The LSAT is administered in June, October, December, and February
  - Applicants are advised to take the LSAT in June or October for admission the following fall
- Retesting –some schools may average your scores
- Self-study vs. Prep Courses (Kaplan, Princeton, etc.) – Individual choice.



## Dean's Letter

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- Dean's Letter/Certificate verifies your enrollment at MIT
- Provides information about any academic or disciplinary action
- Can be obtained from the Registrar's Office, 5-119

*\*Not all schools require a Dean's Letter.*



# Letters of Recommendation

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- Select at least 2 recommenders
  - Academic and non-academic letters accepted. Depends on your status.
- Register with the Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS) for letter distribution to schools
- Have recommendation letters sent directly to the LSDAS



# Tips for Requesting Letters of Recommendation

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- Ask potential recommenders if they can write a “strong” letter of recommendation
- Give 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

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- Typically 1-2 page essay
- Should be personal, well-written, and convey your motivation to attend law school
- Important sample of your writing ability

## *Tips...*

- Have essay reviewed by your prelaw advisor and Preprofessional Advising staff
- Attend/review the essay writing workshop:  
<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/preprof/lawessay.pdf>



# Resources for the Application Process

- Preprofessional Advising Counselors  
617-715-5328, Building 12-185
- Prelaw Essay Workshop  
<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/services/workshops.html#preprof>
- Prelaw Events  
<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/events/>



# Resources for the Application Process

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- Preprofessional Walk-ins Hours
  - Thursdays 3-4pm
- Prelaw Website  
<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/preprof/prelaw.html>
- Prelaw Advisors  
<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/preprof/lawadvisors.html>



# Additional MIT Resources

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- Alumni Externship Program:  
<http://alum.mit.edu/students/NetworkwithAlumni/ExternshipProgram/Student>
- Organizations:
  - MIT Law Club (provides list of law-related courses & Law Journal):  
<http://web.mit.edu/lawclub/www/>
  - Mock Trial Team:  
<http://web.mit.edu/mocktrial/www/>
  - Debate Team: <http://web.mit.edu/debate/www/>



# Non-MIT Resources

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- Law School Admission Council <http://www.lsac.org>
- NAPLA Prelaw Guide  
[http://www.napla.org/NAPLA\\_Pre\\_Law\\_Guide.doc](http://www.napla.org/NAPLA_Pre_Law_Guide.doc)
- Association of American Law Schools  
<http://www.aals.org/>
- Law School.com  
<http://www.lawschool.com/>
- U.S. News and World Report  
<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/grad/rankings/law/lawindex.htm>
- ABA-LSAC Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools (free)  
[www.LSAC.org](http://www.LSAC.org)