

HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND PRELAW CENTER

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QUESTIONS TO ASK LAW SCHOOLS

Law Days, Law Forums and law school open houses provide excellent opportunities to talk personally with law school representatives about your credentials, as well as their admission criteria, special programs, financial aid, and career services. Unfortunately, many students fail to take full advantage of these events because they are unsure about what to ask. We hope this guide helps you to prepare as effectively as possible for your conversations with law school representatives.

Find basic information such as average GPA's and LSAT scores from sources such as **MAPLA PROFILES, THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO US LAW SCHOOLS**, and the Law School Admission Council's website at www.lsac.org, and other guidebooks available at the HPPLC office. Think beyond numbers for law forums and meetings with admissions representatives. Ask questions about topics not fully covered in books. Among other things, you can learn more about admissions policies, curriculum, specialties, housing, financial aid, job placement, and the general ambiance of the school. Knowing about these things will help you make a more educated decision about where to attend law school.

Following are some suggested questions:

ADMISSIONS--Focus on ways to interpret the data you collect beforehand.

- For state-supported schools--what bearing does state residency have on the admissions process? How does one attain residency in that particular state?
- When do admission decisions begin? Is there a "rolling admission" process? When does the school begin mailing admission decisions? Do advantages exist for students who apply before a certain date?
- How does the school interpret multiple LSATS?
- Is a GPA/LSAT formula used?
- How might you bring special circumstances (e.g., you worked 30 hours a week) most effectively to their attention?
- What kind of recommendations are most helpful?
- How do they deal with the more generic recommendations students might have if they attend a large undergraduate school?
- What does the admission committee look for in the personal statement or essay?
- What skills/abilities/qualities does the school look for in a candidate? How can applicants communicate these in their applications?
- What can the school tell you about the evaluation process?
- Are students active and voting members of the Admissions Committee?

CURRICULUM--Find out all you can about the curriculum, particularly beyond the first year.

- How are first-year classes organized and taught?
- Is there more of an emphasis on the theory of law or practical application of state law?
- Do most professors teach law using the Socratic method? Even after the first year?
- What clinical programs are available? Who is eligible? Is there an excess of demand for certain programs, and, if so, how are participants chosen?
- How much room is there for elective courses in a student's program?
- How is legal writing/research taught? By whom? 3L=s? Adjunct personnel? Full-time faculty?

CURRICULUM—(continued)

- Does the law school recognize classes taken outside the law school (e.g. other departments, other law schools, or abroad)?
- Is there an advising system for students? How accessible are professors and instructors?
- Are there special collections in the library which cover your areas of interest?
- How are students chosen for law reviews/moot court/trial teams?
- How are classes graded (i.e., at what level is a curve set)?

SPECIALTIES--Investigate what the school means when it says it offers special programs.

- If a special area of law is highlighted (energy, environment, entertainment, etc.), how many courses are offered in that area?
- How often are these courses offered? Every year, every two years?
- How many faculty teach in that area? Do they teach full-time? Is participation in specialty-areas and organizations open to all or is it limited? What are the bases for selection?
- What are the available clinical experiences in the area of specialty?
- If a law school considers itself outstanding in a particular area, how does its program specifically differ from other schools' programs?
- Are there special relationships with firms who might be interested in employing graduates with these special skills?

HOUSING--Investigate the housing situation on- and off-campus.

- Is graduate/law student housing available?
- Is off-campus housing available near the law school?
- Does the law school help students to find housing?
- What is the average cost of off-campus housing?
- Does the law school provide a roommate-search service?
- Is parking difficult? Is there a public transportation system?

FINANCIAL AID--Determine how much law school will cost and what assistance is available.

- What should I anticipate that it would cost over three years to attend your law school? (include cost of living and potential tuition increases)
- How do most of your students pay for law school?
- How much scholarship money is available? What criteria are used to award merit-based and need-based scholarships? Is parents' income considered? How many awards are continued throughout the three years of law school? If continuation of the scholarship is based on maintaining a certain GPA, how many students maintain the GPA?
- How does your school handle financial aid awards? Can I expect to know your aid award and proportion of loans/scholarships before I am required to pay a deposit?
- Are stipend opportunities available for summer jobs in public interest/public service law? What loan assistance/repayment programs does your school offer to students who work in public interest law?

AMBIANCE--Encourage the representative to go beyond generalities, to talk about specific qualities of the school.

- Does the representative see ways in which the school differs from other schools? (This question **really** gives them the opportunity to talk about the wonders of their schools.)
- What is the growth potential for the city/region where the law school is located?

- What schools/areas do students typically come from?
- What percentage of the students worked between college and law school?
- Is there a part-time, summer, or night program?
- What percentage of the faculty and student body are women? Minorities?
- What is the attrition rate for first year students?
- How safe is the area surrounding the law school? The whole town?
- What is the priority of the administration in terms of class makeup?
- What complaints do your students have about your law school?
- What student groups are active at your school?
- What sort of student government is in place?
- How competitive are your students with each other?
- When your students say what they like about your law school, what things are frequently mentioned?
- When students turn down your school in favor of another, what reasons do they cite for doing so?

CAREER SERVICES--Investigate placement opportunities for graduates of the law school.

- Where do the students find employment? (locally, regionally, nationally)
- Do students go to large, small, medium firms? Government? Corporations?
- Is the school committed to those students who are interested in public interest careers? How does it serve those students? Is there any loan forbearance for such careers?
- How many firms interview at the school and from what parts of the country?
- Do students participate in any job fairs?
- Is there a network of contacts which could help you obtain jobs in a particular geographical area or in an area of law in which you are interested?
- Is there a support network for students seeking judicial clerkships? What percentage of students **seek** and **get** clerkships? Where are the clerkships located?
- Are clerking opportunities available in your city for students during the school year?
- What percentage of your third-year classes have jobs lined up by winter break?
- What resources do you provide for minority students?
- What percentage of jobs does the career placement office secure for students, and how many students find jobs on their own? How many full-time employees work in the placement office?

Finally, if you have specific questions, ask them. This shows that you have already invested some time and energy in learning about their law schools. Remember that you will meet a variety of representatives: some professors, perhaps a dean or two, a few recent grads, and many professional admissions officers. You'll meet those who love their school and maybe even one or two who don't like their job on that particular day.

Many of them will be in the middle of long and tiring recruiting trips. Your thoughtful preparation, genuine interest, and engaging personality, as well as your intelligent questions, will be appreciated. In exceptional cases, a positive review from a recruiter (yes, these people are also paid to recruit bright and capable students) can make the difference in admissions.

We hope these suggestions help you prepare appropriately. If you need assistance as you prepare, please come in. We specialize in helping students prepare for admission to professional schools.

We encourage you to use e-mail to ask questions, check your recommendations, and to communicate with our prelaw advisors. Send e-mail to an individual prelaw advisor or to udivhpp@indiana.edu. Please check the HPPLC Web site for notices of upcoming meetings, campus visits by admission representatives, and other items of interest.

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