

THE LEGAL PROFESSION

Very broadly, the legal profession involves advising and representing individuals, businesses, and government agencies on legal issues and disputes. Those who decide to practice law must possess superior research, verbal, advocacy, writing, analytical, and logical thinking skills. There are several specialties of law which one can pursue including bankruptcy, constitutional, corporate, environmental, healthcare, family and juvenile, intellectual property, international, immigration, public interest and tax, among others.

Not everyone who completes law school seeks to become a lawyer (also known as an attorney). Many industries benefit from hiring employees who have an understanding of the law. These areas include the federal, state, or local government, not-for-profit organizations, real estate, human resources, and education.

UNDERGRADUATE PREPARATION

A bachelor's degree must be completed before entering law school. While law schools encourage a variety of majors, the most common include political science, history, English, psychology, sociology, economics, business, and philosophy and religion. Students should major in the field that most interests them. An applicant's GPA is a significant determining factor for acceptance into a law school program. There is no prescribed coursework and students should consider taking courses that will give them a broad-based knowledge to build their studies upon. Law school admissions committees do consider the level of difficulty of courses taken, how many courses are taken at the upper levels, and how many classes are taken Pass/Fail. Students should avoid a series of withdrawals on their transcripts.

BEYOND ACADEMICS

As a first step, interested students should talk to **several** professionals who have obtained a law degree. This process of conducting research through informational interviews and/or shadowing is not optional; rather, it is imperative to get a realistic understanding of the challenges and rewards of pursuing the legal profession.

Outside of the classroom, students are also encouraged to participate in experiences such as leadership roles, volunteer opportunities, and research. Admissions committees are looking to create a diverse and stimulating learning environment with the students they accept; any experience gained that allows you to offer unique opinions is valuable. Pursuing an internship or obtaining a position with a law firm (e.g., runner) will demonstrate a commitment to and knowledge about the profession.

At Nebraska Wesleyan, involvement with the Pre-Law Club will help students to learn more about the legal profession. Students may also be interested in organizations such as History Club, Psychology Club, The Yip (Student Newspaper), Student Affairs Senate, Student Conduct Board, Interfraternity Council, and Panhellenic Council. Also, consider Pi Sigma Alpha (Political Science Honorary), Sigma Tau Delta (English Honorary), Psi Chi (Psychology Honorary), and Omicron Delta Epsilon (Economics Honorary).

LEGAL EDUCATION

Law school is a significant investment of time and financial resources. The costs of law school and a realistic understanding of the legal job market and the practice of law should be carefully considered. It is also important to know that while in law school students are ranked based on grades, which can create a very competitive environment.

There are 199 American Bar Association (ABA) Law Schools in the United States, with two in the state of Nebraska: University of Nebraska College of Law (at University of Nebraska - Lincoln) and Creighton University School of Law. Law school education is comprised of three years of rigorous course work leading to a J.D. (Juris Doctorate) degree. The total number of credit hours may vary. The first-year curriculum is fairly standard between all law schools. Students generally have more choices during the second and third years. Most law schools also have joint degree programs to obtain a law degree and another graduate degree (i.e., MBA/JD). Practical experience is important, so most schools will have clinics with the student's own caseload of clients while being supervised by a professor.

APPLICATION AND ADMISSION

1. The Law School Admission Test (LSAT) is given eight times a year: June, August, September, October, November, January, February, and April. Taking the LSAT early allows students to re-take the test and still be on track for most law school admissions cycles. However, law schools view multiple LSAT scores differently, and the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) has limits on how many times the test can be taken. Check their website at www.lsac.org for updated information on this policy. Registration information can be obtained from LSAC. The LSAT is administered digitally (either at a test center or remotely) and measures logical reasoning, analytical reasoning, reading comprehension, and a student's writing ability through a writing sample. Students are encouraged to take practice tests as much as possible to familiarize themselves with the test and develop the skill areas the test is designed to measure. There are many study guides and books available to help you with this process. A few study guides can be checked out for free in the Career Center, and you can also take a free practice test of the LSAT at portal.mometrixlibrary.com.

2. The Credential Assembly Service (CAS) is a standardized reporting service that prepares a report on applicants for distribution to law schools. The registration material for CAS is available at www.lsac.org. CAS will compile your LSAT score(s), undergraduate transcripts, and letters of recommendation (if you utilize the optional service) and send this information to law schools you are interested in. You will also receive a copy of this report. You should register for the CAS service sometime in the early fall of the school year prior to entering law school or at the same time you register for the LSAT. The subscription to the service is good for five years.

3. Law School Application Components: Your application to law school will include all your undergraduate academic information, a personal essay, and your LSAT score. Most likely, the law schools you apply to will also require letters of recommendation and a resume of your work experience and extracurricular activities.

2020 Stats	Median LSAT Score	Median GPA	Length of Program	Overall Bar Pass Rate
UNL College of Law	156	3.66	3 years	93.4%
Creighton University School of Law	153	3.29	2/3/4 years	72.9%
Washington University (St. Louis, MO)	169	3.81	3 years	95.5%

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

<http://www.lsac.org> (Law School Admissions Council)

<http://www.americanbar.org> (American Bar Association)

<https://www.hg.org/students.html> (Law Network Directory & Legal Resources)

<https://www.nalp.org/prelaw> (National Association for Law Placement)

<https://www.planc.org/planc-resources> (Pre-Law Advisors National Council)

How do I connect with NWU alumni in the legal profession?

Visit career.nebrwesleyan.edu and scroll down to "**Career Assistance Network**". Use this database to find alumni in this profession and see their current position titles and employers. Feel free to reach out!