

Pre-Law Advising

There is no “pre-law” major at NC State. The LSAC website says the following about choosing a college major that prepares students for law school; “There is no single path that will prepare you for a legal education. Students come from all walks of life and educational backgrounds. Choose courses [and a major] that will enhance your reading comprehension, writing, and analytical skills. By challenging yourself as an undergraduate, you will be better positioned to do well on the LSAT and in law school.”

Studying History is an ideal fit for developing these skills. As a History major, you will be required to do a *lot* of reading and will be expected to use this information to ask and answer complicated questions. You will also learn to organize and critically analyze various sources of information and to consider multiple interpretations and narrative viewpoints – all skills that are directly transferrable to the field of law. History majors are also trained to write high quality reports summarizing their findings and interpretations, another skill that lawyers use on a daily basis.

Once you have determined your major, the rest of this document provides an overview of other ways to prepare for Law School.

The first three things to do:

1. Review the Pre-Law Advising website at <https://prelaw.dasa.ncsu.edu/>
2. Join the Google Group Listserv (link is on the Pre-Law Advising page above)
 - a. The Listserv provides valuable information about opportunities such as job/shadowing experience and other events and content that will help you in building a strong application for Law Schools.
3. Meet with a Pre-Law Peer Advisor for a one-on-one orientation to being a Pre-Law student

Annual Events You Should Attend

- The NC Showcase of Law Schools (often hosted by the Pre-Law Students’ Association)
- The Law School Fair

Student Groups to Join

- All Pre-Law students are strongly encouraged to join the Pre-Law Students’ Association (PSLA)
- You could also consider joining the following: run for a Student Government Executive Branch position, run for Student Senate, apply to serve on the Conduct Board, join the College of Humanities and Social Sciences Student Council, join Mock Trial at NCSU

How To Gain Relevant Experience

- Did you know that most law schools have a higher drop-out rate than medical schools? Many admission representatives believe this is because unlike medical programs, law schools do not require pre-law students to participate in career-relevant experience prior to applying to the graduate program. However, gaining relevant experience as an undergraduate not only exposes you to the working-life of a lawyer, these experiences can also culminate in strong letters of recommendation, which are a required part of the law school application.
- What does relevant experience look like and where can you find it?
 - Start with your network.

- Ask the students in PSLA where they have done shadowing or internship experiences.
 - Ask family and friends in the law profession if you could shadow them.
 - Use ePack to connect with NCSU alumni who are practicing lawyers. Even if they can not offer an internship, ask for an informational interview.
- Many County and District Attorney's Offices have formalized summer intern programs, check their website.
- There are several legislative internships available each summer through the NC Department of Administration Summer Internship Program. Applications open in early November and are due by mid-January.
- The North Carolina Judicial Branch offers internship opportunities in select NC Judicial Districts. Check their website for more information: <https://www.nccourts.gov/>
- Volunteer as a Guardian Ad Litem

Application Materials

- You should check the admission sites of the specific schools you plan to apply to, but in general, expect to supply the following as part of your application packet
 - Your **LSAT score** (more on this below)
 - A **Personal Statement** (more below)
 - You can also add an addendum to your Personal Statement if there are extenuating circumstances you wish to explain. Examples include (but are not limited to): full semester withdrawals, any criminal record, any academic or personal misconduct that appears on your undergraduate record.
 - 2 to 3 **letters of recommendation**, one of which will need to be from a faculty member
 - Some schools also require supplemental essays.
- Most law schools *do not* require an interview – meaning admissions decisions are based on the materials you supply, above.

Entrance Exam – the LSAT

- Most law schools still require the LSAT, though a few have begun accepting the GRE.
- Check the admission sites for the specific schools you plan to apply to in order to determine which test they accept.

Preparing for the LSAT

- There are several free and low-cost materials available to help you prepare for the LSAT.
 - LSAC is a national, professional organization that offers Prep Books (LSAT SuperPrep) and sample tests at a very low cost. LSAC is a trusted source of prep material and is frequently recommended by law school admission officers. <https://www.lsac.org/lSAT>
 - Khan Academy has developed a free LSAT prep resource that is also highly recommended. <https://www.khanacademy.org/prep/lSAT>
 - Many students will use Princeton Review or Kaplan prep courses. These are not required by law schools, and students have reported mixed feelings about the cost vs. usefulness

of these fee-based programs. You should weigh the pros and cons for yourself, and ask your peers for their advice, before signing up for a costly prep program.

- We recommend that you begin studying for this test *at least* 6 months in advance. Most students will spend around a year preparing for the exam before taking it the first time.
- Be aware that law schools see **all** of your LSAT scores. Because of this, we *do not* recommend taking the test without properly preparing for it.
- Ideally, you want to take the test just once. But students do sometimes take it a 2nd time. Taking it more than 2 times is generally discouraged – if you are thinking of taking the LSAT for a 3rd time, please meet with the Pre-Law Advisor to discuss the pros and cons of doing so.
- Law Schools start in the fall (August). You will send in your application one year in advance. So, you will likely take the LSAT the summer between Junior and Senior year. Or, if you plan to take a Gap Year, take the test the summer following graduation.

Your Personal Statement

- The earlier you begin thinking about this, the better your final statement will be.
- Your personal statement should be about you. Why do *you* want to be a lawyer? Why is this school the best “fit” for you?
 - Once you have a good working draft of your Personal Statement, the advisor in the Pre-Law Advising Center can review it and offer guidance on how to strengthen/improve it.

Taking a Gap Year (or Gap Semester, if you graduate in December)

- This is becoming more common and is not seen as a negative in the application process
- Even if you are working in an unrelated job field during your brief interlude between undergrad and law school – taking time off is not a detriment.