Pre-law students frequently ask, “What should I major in if I want to apply to law school?” The answer is that law schools do not require any particular major, and they do not have a checklist of “pre-law courses.”

The Association of American Law Schools says students interested in pursuing a law degree need a broad undergraduate liberal arts education that provides “comprehension and expression in words, critical understanding of the human institutions and values with which the law deals, and creative power in thinking.”

Most law school applicants are liberal arts students; the second largest group comes from business schools. Both disciplines are valuable for success in law school. If you are a liberal arts student, it is wise to also take economics and accounting courses. Business students should also have a grounding in traditional liberal arts courses.

Since no particular major is required, select a major that stirs your curiosity and inspires you. Choose an academically rigorous major which encourages independent and analytical thinking.

Important Considerations

Here are some important considerations when choosing your undergraduate courses:

- A wide knowledge of history, literature, philosophy and economics is excellent preparation for law school;
- Communication skills, both written and oral, are especially important for the pre-law student. The ability to organize thoughts and to express them clearly in speech and in writing is essential;
- Choose elective courses that require critical and analytical thinking and writing;
- Courses requiring research papers and essay exams are both useful and valuable;
- An understanding of quantitative methods and statistical analysis is important;
- WSU’s Career Development Center can help you explore law-related employment experiences;
- A course in Logic (Phil 125) will be especially helpful when you take the Law School Admission Test. Specific sections of the LSAT focus on logic and analytical reasoning.

Taking the LSAT is part of most law school applications. The LSAT is offered four times per year on the WSU campus. Not all lawyers argue cases in a courtroom. Here’s a short list of some jobs that law school graduates can fill: corporate general counsel, bank trust officer, legislative analyst, probate referee, legal aid staff attorney, labor negotiator, legal publication editor/writer, lobbyist, legal reporter, law firm public relations manager, affirmative action officer, commercial loan administrator, political campaign manager, political fund-raiser, law librarian, ombudsperson, management consultant, agent for athletes/entertainers, novelist, screenwriter, claims adjuster, human resources manager, real estate developer, stockbroker and many others.

Related Opportunities

You might want to find employment as a legal assistant or “runner” in one of Wichita’s law firms. This experience may help clarify and confirm your professional goals. The WSU Pre-Law Student Association is an opportunity for students interested in the field of law to collaborate and learn together about the legal system, the LSAT and law school admissions. The faculty advisor is Dr. Jeffrey Hershfield. Students may also contact advisors in the LASAC.

The Association of American Law Schools and the Law School Admission Council publish the Pre-Law Handbook yearly. It discusses pre-law education and other requirements for law school and admission. Another valuable resource is the Law School Admissions Council Web site at lsac.org. If eligible, you may be selected for university academic honor societies such as Phi Kappa Phi and Mortar Board.

For more information

For additional information about law schools, academic program planning or the admissions process for law school, call the Liberal Arts and Sciences Advising Center and make an appointment with an academic advisor. The phone number is (316) 978-3700. The LAS Advising Center is located in 115 Grace Wilkie Hall. You may also visit the LASAC website at wichita.edu/advising and click on pre-law under featured links.
For more information
To receive more information or to arrange a campus visit, contact:

Office of Admissions
Wichita State University
1845 Fairmount
Wichita, KS 67260-0124
(316) 978-3085
wichita.edu/admissions
wichita.edu/visit

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For more information on pre-law at WSU visit wichita.edu/advising or call (316) 978-3700.