

THINKING ABOUT LAW SCHOOL

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You will need to decide for yourself whether:

- You will enjoy the law
- You have a good chance of being admitted to law school
- You are likely to find employment as a lawyer after graduating from law school

DID YOU KNOW:

There is no such thing as a best “pre-law major.”

Law school admissions offices look for students with strong intellectual ability, excellent writing skills, critical reading and analytical thinking skills, presentation and communication skills, and a proven commitment to hard work.

The best way you can prepare for law school is to take courses that help you to gain a set of critical skills that will be helpful to you:

- In preparing for the LSAT
- Doing well in law school
- Working as a lawyer



Below, you will find recommendations for the types of courses that should be useful to you. You are encouraged to plan coursework with your academic advisor (that is, the professor assigned to you within your major) and to consult with one of the prelaw advisors at CSUSM about how to broaden your coursework beyond your major.

THE CSUSM PRE-LAW ADVISOR is
Professor Anne Lombard,
alombard@csusm.edu.

You may make an appointment to see Anne during her office hours.

LAW SCHOOL ADMISSIONS decisions are based mostly on a combination of scores of the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) and undergraduate grade point average. In addition to doing as well as you possibly can do in your coursework and on the LSAT, you may be able to improve your chances of admission to law school by doing an internship (paid or unpaid) in a legal office or a community service organization that does legal work, by participating in extracurricular activities, and by getting to know faculty members who can eventually write you letters of recommendation.

CONTACT:

CSUSM Career Center
careers@csusm.edu, 760-750-4902

CSUSM Pre-Law Advisor

Department of History
Dr. Anne Lombard, alombard@csusm.edu

LSAT

Law School Admissions Test

- Most students take the LSAT by the fall of their senior year
- LSATs are given 4 times a year
- Registration deadlines for the LSAT are well in advance of the scheduled test dates
- Most students spend several months studying and preparing for the LSAT

The website of the Law School Admission Council (LSAC) can be accessed here: <http://www.lsac.org/jd/l-sat/test-dates-deadlines>.

The LSAC website also provides a wealth of information on such topics as preparing for the LSAT, financing a legal education, and the overall law school application process: <http://www.lsac.org/jd>

Law Students

- Wish they had taken a course in symbolic logic (philosophy)
- Have strong written and verbal communication skills
- Know numbers, take economics, accounting, and statistics
- Complete a law-related internship to gain and explore your interest for law school
- Have a solid GPA along with rigorous coursework

To achieve a good GPA while simultaneously challenging yourself with rigorous coursework, you may wish to follow the following guidelines:

- Major in a subject that you find genuinely interesting, since you are likely to get better grades if you enjoy what you are doing.
- If you need to take 16 units instead of 20 in order to get As and Bs, then do so.

Grades, along with the LSAT play a critical part in law school admissions. This is something to keep in mind when planning coursework at
CSUSM

PRE-LAW CURRICULUM

CSUSM endorses the viewpoint of the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) that there is no single, "best" pre-law curriculum. You should major in a subject that interests you, as long as it is academically rigorous. Most law students have degrees in the humanities and social sciences, but law schools are also interested in students who major in math, the sciences, computer science, and the arts.

Most schools recommend that students acquire a solid understanding of western civilization and spend as much time as possible developing their skills in English composition. The importance of verbal skills cannot be overstated. Lawyers spend most of their time communicating, both orally and in writing. The more you develop your ability to express yourself clearly, forcefully, and accurately the more likely you are to be successful in law school and in the legal profession.

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IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT A STUDENT'S CHANCES to get into a particular school, since admission decisions depend not only on the student's GPA and LSAT scores but also on the strength of the student's personal statement, letters of recommendation, other aspects of the application such as internships and extra-curricular activities, and the needs of the school in a given year. Some university advising offices keep tallies of average GPA and LSAT scores in the pool of admitted applicants at schools around the country. This data can help you identify schools where your scores and grades would be competitive for admission. We should reiterate, however, that the data will not tell you whether or not you will get in.

One of the most useful compilations of data can be found on the Boston College Law Locator:
<http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/offices/careers/gradschool/law/research/lawlocator.html#locator>

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINORITY STUDENTS

The American legal profession has acknowledged that members of minority groups have historically been underrepresented in the profession. To address the problem of underrepresentation, most law schools actively recruit minority applicants. If you are a minority student, you should identify yourself as a member of a minority group when you register for the LSAT so that interested law schools can contact you. You may also wish to contact minority student organizations at the schools to which you are applying, since the members of these groups are a great source of information and sometimes play a part in admissions decisions. The Council of Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO) has summer institute programs that help economically and educationally disadvantaged students prepare for the LSAT and enter law school.

For more information, visit www.cleoscholars.com



THERE ARE A FEW WAYS TO EXPLORE WHETHER LAW SCHOOL IS A GOOD OPTION FOR YOU WHILE YOU ARE AT CSUSM.



ACHIEVING ACADEMIC SUCCESS

- Don't shy away from taking a difficult course just because you are afraid you won't do well. One poor grade won't keep you out of law school, and that course may expand your intellectual interest.
- Avoid withdrawing from courses on a regular basis. A transcript that shows repeated withdrawals from courses over several semester may suggest that the student is trying to manipulate his or her GPA, or that the student is unable to set goals and meet them. The first year law school curriculum is set, and schools want to see evidence that you can take a normal course load and complete it successfully without dropping courses.

LAW RELATED COURSES:

One possibility is to enroll in one or two law-oriented classes to see whether they hold your interest. These classes do not prepare you for law school, and they are not required for admission. Examples of courses covering law-related themes at CSUSM can be found on the next page.

In addition, professors in the History, Literature and Writing, and Political Science departments offer topic courses on content related to law from time to time. Check the course schedule for offerings.

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LAW RELATED COURSES:

HIST 330 US Constitution and American Society

PSCI 412 Constitutional Law: Powers of Government
(pre-req: PSCI 100)

PSCI 413a Constitutional Law: Civil Liberties
(pre-req: PSCI 100)

PSCI 413b Constitutional Law:
Equal Protection and Civil Rights
(pre-req: PSCI 100)

PSCI 414 U.S. Judicial Process

HIST 331 Law, Sexuality, and American History

SOC 443 Sociology of Law

The Cal State San Marcos Career Center offers a variety of services to help you throughout your educational journey and as you transition into the world of Law School. Whether you need help with choosing a major, writing a resume, writing your personal statement, finding a job or internship or prepping for interviews, we are here to help.

The
CAREER CENTER

csusm.edu/careers | 760-750-4902

OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION (bls.gov/ohh) **LAWYER**

Median Pay (2012) \$75,270 - \$113,530
Job Outlook (2012-2022) 10% (as fast as average)

Average salary in San Diego according to Indeed,
listed by specialty:

Family Law:	\$72,000
Immigration:	\$77,000
Deputy DA:	\$85,000
Tax:	\$88,000
Patent Law:	\$103,000
Corporate:	\$103,000

Starting salaries for
attorneys can be
as low as \$45,000
and as high as \$160,000



OUR SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Drop-in Advising
- Career Counseling
 - Internships
- Resume and Cover Letter Critique Service
 - Practice Interviews
- Assistance with researching careers in law schools, and writing your resume and personal statement

IMPORTANT QUALITIES NEEDED IN LAW:

Analytical Skills
Interpersonal Skills
Problem-solving Skills
Research Skills
Speaking Skills
Writing Skills

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