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In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

## AMBA Law School Application Toolkit

17 June 2021

This toolkit contains a framework to optimize a law school application for admission into a target program.

# 1. Components of the Law School Application

- Transcripts from all institutions of higher education attended.
- A LSAT score, the law school admission test necessary to gain admission to law school, or a GRE score, a graduate record exam that some law schools accept as an alternative to the LSAT.
- Essays, including personal statements, diversity statements and supplemental essays.
- A Resume.
- Letters of recommendation.
- Other: Addendums, criminal records, portfolios, etc.

### Accessing the application:

- Head to [LSAC.org](https://lsac.org) (the Law School Admission Council's website). This organization administers the LSAT and **collects all application materials** to send to law schools.
  - ◆ Once all the components of the application are submitted on LSAC, then CAS, the Credential Assembly Service within the LSAC, will compile the materials and send them to the respective law schools.

## 2. The Number Game

Similar to many graduate programs, law school admissions is largely a **numbers game**. The numbers that heavily determine admission to law school are **GPA** from all institutions of higher education attended, and your **LSAT** score (some schools have begun accepting the GRE). The negative aspect of this system is that these numbers play such a large role, that they can **overshadow more important elements** of an application. The positive of this system is that **it's clear what is needed to gain admission** into a particular program, as law schools publish what scores gain admission into their programs.

It is hard to say if one number is more important than the other. One thing to keep in mind is that the **LSAT can be postponed**, retaken, and has no set deadline. Whereas, a **GPA is impossible to change** afterward. Focusing on achieving the highest GPA possible during the semester and then dedicating breaks to LSAT prep may be one way to accomplish a healthy balance. **Maintaining or improving a GPA should not be sacrificed in order to prepare for the LSAT**, but this is not to diminish the importance of the LSAT score.

Refer to [AMBA's LSAT Handbook](#) more information on the LSAT and how to prepare for it.

## 3. The Story

The story portion of the law school application is the **personal aspect of the application**. It's said that the numbers get the application on to the desk and the story gets the application placed into the correct box. All the elements of this portion of the application should be **consistent** in expressing what kind of applicant a student is. Ideally, having **strong numbers, paired with a strong story**, places an applicant in the best position for admission into their target school.

A strong story is one that displays **moral integrity, work ethic, unique experiences, ambition, and grit**. A strong story stands out from the crowd, shows a law school that a student can endure the rigor of a Juris doctorate program and that the student's future will reflect well upon the law school. Every law school wants an ambitious and morally driven graduate to spread the law school's name as they change the world in a positive manner.

The applicant tells their story through a few medians:

- **Personal Statement:** A powerful essay about one's unique experiences, motivations, ambitions, and reasons for wanting to attend law school.
  - Customize for every law school. **Do not submit the same exact generic essay to every school.** Express interest in **particular programs, professors** and other attributes that make that specific law school attractive.
  - Be aware that every law school has different length requirements. Shortening essays can be an unpredicted time-consuming task.
  - **Review by professors, peers, and mentors.**
- **Diversity Statement:** An essay written to elaborate on the applicant's unique experiences and why their admission would enrich the school's culture.
  - Take advantage of every opportunity to present a reason for admission.
  - This essay can focus on an applicant's **disability, race, gender, orientation, religion, ethnicity, and or an intersection of any unique identities.**
  - **Review by professors, peers, and mentors.**
- **Resume:** Working as a paralegal is not necessary, or very unique, but launching a food pantry should be connected to a dedication to helping others.
- **Letters of Recommendation:** At least two are needed, but more can be better if a law school allows more submissions.
  - Applicants will be drawn towards letters from people with impressive titles, but a generic letter from an impressive personality is less powerful than a custom, personal, strong, and positive testimony from an **actual personal connection** with a professor or previous employer.
  - Tell your recommender about the narrative you're painting in the application so they can focus on emphasizing that narrative.
- **Supplemental Essays:** Some schools require you to answer additional questions and write short essays on various topics. Make sure to cut out enough time for these tasks!
- **Addendums, records and or portfolios** (if applicable)
  - An addendum can be used to **explain any aspect of the application further.** For example, if there is a discrepancy in grades due to a family emergency or natural disaster, this is where to explain. An addendum can be used to discuss factors explaining a criminal record, academic dishonesty record, an LSAT score, a GPA, and/or anything else that the admissions committee should know while reviewing an application.
  - Most schools will require **disclosure of any academic offenses or criminal offenses.** A record of one's past is just that, the past, and cannot define one's future. People with records have graduated from some of the best law schools and achieved great goals.
  - If an applicant has a **portfolio to share of their research of projects,** this can strengthen their application. A portfolio can display one's unique talents and or intellectual prowess.