



Five Steps to Law School

Step 1: Self Assessment

Time: October-April

Central Questions:

- 1) *Who am I and where am I going in life?*
- 2) *What is important to me and why?*
3. *Why do I want to be a lawyer?*

1. Take time to reflect upon your identity – ask yourself
 - a. What issues are important to me and why?
 - b. Where do my passions lie?
 - c. What are my strengths?
 - d. What are my weaknesses?
2. Ask yourself: *Are these traits compatible to lawyering?*
 - a. If the answer is no, try to find areas of compatibility
 1. I love to read and to write.
 2. I enjoy solving problems that require analytical reasoning.
3. Answer this question: *So why do you want to be a lawyer?*
 - a. Common answer: *I've always wanted to be a lawyer.*
 - a. Update this response by learning more about what it is lawyers do, and what kinds of work they do, and why this appeals to you as an adult.
 - b. *I want to go to law school, but I don't plan to practice law.*
 - a. If you don't plan to practice, then ask yourself: what value is legal training to me?
 - b. Conduct the research necessary to determine if a JD, or another credential is necessary given your goals.
 - c. Some reasons to attend law school:
 - a. Career plans – I want to practice law.
 - b. Intellectual rigor – I love school and have researched the law curriculum.
 - c. Skill building – law school will help me build skills such as...



d. Some reasons ***not*** to go (at this time):

- d. My parents say that I must.
- e. I want to own a Mercedes (a new one).
- f. I want to “help” others (most jobs help others in some way).
- g. Default choice – my roommate is applying to law school.
- h. I have “unfinished business,” meaning personal goals (travel, writing a novel, starting a business, etc.). Pursue these before attending law school.

4. Become an “informed consumer” - research can help answer your questions. Career research should go in tandem with the law school application process.

- a. The pre-law adviser can talk to you about law careers and about conducting a self assessment: <http://chicagogps.uchicago.edu/law>
- b. Alumni networking – conduct informational interviews with the alumni
 - i. https://alumniservices.uchicago.edu/Careers/network_main.asp.
- c. Talk to lawyers (ask faculty, mentors, family members for contact names).
- d. Find relevant employment/volunteer activities:
 - i. Ask at UCSC: <http://communityservice.uchicago.edu/>.
 - ii. Prelawlist archives: <https://listhost.uchicago.edu/mailman/listinfo/prelawlist>
- e. Read: LSAC publications, browse in a big bookstore for relevant titles:
 - i. <http://www.lsac.org>

Now go on to Step 2: Make A Plan