

CAMBRIDGE COACHING

Guide

to 

Law School Admissions



a step-by-step overview to the application
process

154 Grand Street
New York, NY 10013

www.cambridgecoaching.com
info@cambridgecoaching.com
1 (617) 714-5956



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A Step by Step Guide to the Law School Application Introduction

So you've decided to apply to law school. Congratulations! Now what?

The law school application process has a reputation for being daunting, because it involves test scores, recommendations, personal statements, interviews, financial aid, and no small amount of anxiety. That's why Cambridge Coaching has created a concise step-by-step guide to help you to move confidently and efficiently through each step of this process. We've broken the process down to four sections:

What's Inside:

1. Assembling Documents
2. Taking the LSAT
3. Crafting the Application
4. What Happens After Submission?



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I. Assembling Documents

Remember, timing is crucial: while most applications are accepted on a rolling basis, it's important to have them in as soon as schools begin to accept them for the coming year. That means you should plan to have everything wrapped and submitted by September or October at the latest.

Before you start compiling your application materials, you need to:

- **Sign up with the Law School Admission Council (LSAC)**, the nonprofit organization that creates and administers the LSAT, and processes academic credentials for law schools.
- **Pay for the Credential Assembly Service (CAS)** account, where LSAC holds on to your letters of recommendation, transcripts, and evaluations. This should be done at minimum 4-6 weeks before your application deadline

Next, you can start to assemble the key documents that make up your application:

- **Undergraduate Transcript**
Contact your undergraduate registrar and have it sent to the LSAC.
- **Letters of Recommendation**
Reach out to the professors you wish to have as your recommenders. Doing so early will not only take the weight off your shoulders, but it's also a safeguard against slow recommenders.

Recommendations are very detailed, so providing a clear summary of your accomplishments and credentials can go a long way toward ensuring that each recommendation will be customized, detail-rich (rather than generic) and correspond effectively with your application.

II. Taking the LSAT

- **Register for the LSAT at LSAC.org.**
- **Study for the LSAT.** By now you probably know that the LSAT is the gatekeeper to law school; excel on it, and every door opens. To learn more about effective test prep for the LSAT, visit the Cambridge Coaching's LSAT Tutoring page.
- **Evaluate your score** with LSAC.org's applicant profile grids. If you're in



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the wheelhouse for the school you want, good work. Move on to the next section. If not, however, you may want to retake the exam based on which schools you are aiming for, and what kind of merit aid you hope to receive. It's at this point that many students come to Cambridge Coaching for help.

III. Crafting the Application

Up until now, it has all been straightforward. But now, questions begin to arise: what are the committees looking for? How should I present myself? What should I tell them—and what shouldn't I tell them? It's at this point that having an expert admissions coach and mentor can be an invaluable asset.

- **First, draft a list of schools to apply to,** based on your applicant profile and preferred geography. While the LSAC grids are good predictors, it's important to ensure that your list is well-balanced.
- **Write your personal statement.** The application to law school centers around a personal statement that highlights your personal, professional, and academic strengths. Next to your LSAT and GPA, this is the most significant component of your application.
- **Update your resumé** and make sure that it's perfectly formatted, and comprehensive.
- **Write the "explanatory addenda."** These essays are intended to allow applicants to expand on aspects of their candidacy not represented in the standard materials. Addenda are particularly essential for applicants who need to clarify a disciplinary, legal, or other issue—but note that while these addenda can also provide any application a crucial boost, they can do significant damage to an application if misused—for instance, an essay explaining a bad grade in Italian which begins "foreign languages have always been challenging to me" is going to hurt your application more than help it. Overexplaining things or explaining them badly can be worse than not explaining at all.
- **Wrap up by reviewing your whole application.** Check it for typos, neologisms, solecisms, everything. Committees are so inundated with applications from qualified people that they are looking for an excuse not to admit people. Don't give it to them. Only send in your application once you've made sure that it is as polished as it can possibly be.



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IV. What Happens After Submission?

After submitting your application, the waiting game begins. Unfortunately, hearing back from law schools can sometimes take months. Some schools keep track of visits, so it may make sense to visit the school during this time, and also try to meet with admissions committees.

Here is what will happen after you submit.

- **You may have a chance to interview.** Not all schools conduct interviews, and not all successful applicants are called for them (nor are interviews guarantees of admission). Some top-ranked schools, like Harvard or Chicago, are by invitation only, while others in the top 20, like Northwestern, are by request. In general, if you do get an interview, it is critical to do your research, because the interviewers will be brief, thorough, and very targeted, and you will also have a chance to ask questions at the end.

(Tip: Law school forums like Top-Law-Schools.com will often have message boards in which applicants post past questions and share vital interview prep advice.)

- **Receive your decisions.** Congratulations, you're don—oh, whoops, no you're not. Not by a long shot. Because now, either you've been rejected, waitlisted (in which case it's time to draft your Letter of Continued Intent), or accepted somewhere (hopefully many places), and have to get right to work on your financial aid.
- **Now it's time to negotiate merit aid with schools.** This is a complicated process and depends on the schools. Some will not negotiate, most will only negotiate with their peer schools. It depends on the schools (you may be noticing a theme here). The fact is that schools vary considerably, which is why having an experienced, knowledgeable guide can be so critical to success.

How Cambridge Coaching Can Help

If you still have questions, consider giving Cambridge Coaching a call for a free consultation. Our innovative law school admissions coaching program can help you wherever you are in the process. We will pair you with two coaches who can guide

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you through every step of the process: one, a current or former JD candidate from a top law school who will help you with strategy, resumé, and interview preparation; the other, an experienced professional writing coach who will steer you through the personal statement. Together, your tutors will create a customized road map just for you.

Moreover, just before you send it in, your application will benefit from an overview from a Cambridge Coaching Master tutor who has never seen your application before, and who will read it as an admissions officer would. The overview covers the entirety of your application and is the best way to ensure that it goes forth into the world of admissions committees in the best possible shape.

If you have questions, give us a call at 617.714.5956 anytime between 9 and 6 Monday-Friday, or 12 and 5 on weekends. Or send us an email at info@cambridgecoaching.com. Tell us where you are in the process, and we'll tell you just how we can help. We look forward to working with you!