

20 Questions for Prospective Students

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1. **When do I go to law school and how many years does it take to get a law degree?**

A student does not start law school until AFTER he/she has received a bachelor's degree and has taken the Law School Admissions Test, commonly referred to as the LSAT.

At most law schools, a student must complete three years of study to receive their Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree. At the SIU School of Law, a student can receive their J.D. in two and a half years if they attend summer school full time and meet other requirements as specified by the Registrar and Associate Dean.

2. **Do I have to be a pre-law major to be in law school?**

No, there is no requirement that you be in a certain college or in a certain area of study to be admitted into law school. At some colleges and universities there is no pre-law major. As such, a student interested in law school may have to select one of the many majors available to him/her.

Many students entering the study of law will have undergraduate backgrounds in liberal arts, such as Political Science, Philosophy, English, or History. Keep in mind, however, that a liberal arts major is not required. It is more important that a student select a major in which he/she can perform above-average work than it is to select a pre-law or Political Science major as law school is very competitive.

Students interested in developing skills that will help them in law school should select courses which will improve their critical thinking, analytical and writing skills, as well as reading comprehension. Basic courses in American government, history, and the legal system would also be helpful.

3. Is it difficult to get into law school?

Yes. Depending on which law school a student applies to, as few as twenty five percent of all applicants will be accepted into law school. Among matriculated students at the Southern Illinois University School of Law in 2009, the median undergraduate grade point average was a 3.25 (on a 4.0 scale), and the median LSAT score was a 153.

4. What is the LSAT?

The Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) is a standardized test required by all accredited law schools as a condition for admission. At most law schools, the LSAT score is the single most important factor in determining whether a student is admitted. The test consists of logical reasoning, analytical puzzles, reading comprehension, and a writing sample.

The LSAT is given four times a year – June, October, December, and February – and is administered by the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC). A student interested in law school should take the LSAT during his/her junior year.

If a student takes the LSAT more than once, most law schools will average the student's scores. Some law schools, however, will take the most recent score or highest score. Currently, the SIU School of Law will use the highest score for both admission and scholarship purposes.

5. How do I prepare for the LSAT?

How a student prepares for the LSAT depends on how much time and money is available to him/her. At the minimum, a student should purchase old LSATs through Law Services or a book on preparing for the LSAT. Students with more time and financial resources should consider one of the many universities that make LSAT preparation courses available to their students. At SIUC, the Division of Continuing Education offers an LSAT preparation course for about \$325. Finally, a student who can afford to spend \$1,000 or more on LSAT preparation can look at the privately run preparation courses offered by companies like Kaplan and The Princeton Review.

6. What if I have taken the LSAT multiple times?

The Admissions Committee will use the highest score earned for both admission and scholarship purposes. Please note that applicants can only take the LSAT a total of three times in a two-year period, per the Law School Admission Council. For more information on the Law School Admission Council please visit their website, <http://www.lsac.org/>.

7. How do I apply to law school?

The first step in applying to law school is to register with the Law School Admissions Council, www.lsac.org. A student interested in law school should register for the LSAT as well as the Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS) sometime in the early part of his/her junior year of college. After that, the student can contact the law schools he/she is interested in and request an application. Students interested in applying to the SIU School of Law should contact the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid by email at lawadmit@siu.edu, visit the website at www.law.siu.edu or call 1-800-739-9187, ext. 1.

Interviews are not a part of our application process. Therefore, it is important to make sure the application and supporting documentation (admissions committee memorandum, resume, and letters of recommendation) are reflective of the applicant's ability and character.

8. What is the LSDAS and do I need to sign up for it?

The Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS) prepares and provides a report for each law school to which a student applies. The report contains information that schools use to make a decision on your application. This includes an undergraduate academic summary, copies of all undergraduate, graduate and law school/professional school transcripts, LSAT scores, writing sample copies, and copies of any letters of recommendation processed by LSAC. Most law schools require that applicants register with LSDAS.

9. How much does it cost to apply to law school?

An application for law school can be as much as \$100. Currently, at the SIU School of Law the application fee is \$50.00. Keep in mind, however, that this does not include the cost of taking the LSAT or registering with the LSDAS, which can add up to more than \$200.

10. What are the application and deposit deadlines?

Our preferred application deadline is March 1, 2010. However, the Admissions Committee will continue to review applications until our class is full. Transfer applications must be received by July 1, 2009.

If admitted into the entering class of 2009, the student will be required to pay a \$400 seat deposit. The first deposit of \$200 is due April 1, 2009. The second deposit of \$200 is due June 1, 2009.

11. How do I report character and fitness disclosures in my application (i.e. academic probation, traffic violations, felonious conduct, etc)?

The Illinois Board of Admissions to the Bar requires all individuals who apply to sit for the Illinois Bar Examination to disclose fully acts of prior academic and behavioral misconduct. The School of Law Admissions Committee requires similar disclosures, and considers an applicant's acts of prior misconduct in the admissions process. Additionally, the School of Law must certify to the Board of Bar Admissions of each state that its graduates are fit to practice law. Failure to make complete disclosure on the application may result in revocation of your offer of admission to the School of Law and/or denial of your application for admission to practice law in a particular state. Also, discrepancies between disclosures on the application and on your character and fitness application for admission to the bar may result in serious consequences while in law school and when applying to take the bar examination.

If you do not plan on taking the Illinois bar exam, we advise you to check the state bar requirements, where you intend to practice, regarding the character and fitness certification.

For complete instructions on filing disclosures, please refer to section IX "Character and Fitness" in the 2010 application for admission.

12. How do I arrange a visit to the law school?

The Office of Admissions and Financial Aid welcomes visitors to observe a first-year law class, take a tour of our law school, and meet our faculty and students. We welcome

both individual and group visits. To arrange a visit, please complete the online form at <http://www.law.siu.edu/admission/visitsol.asp> or you can call our office at 1-800-739-9187, ext. 1.

13. Where is SIU School of Law located?

Located in beautiful southern Illinois, the city of Carbondale is a community of 27,000 residents. For more information on the Carbondale community, please visit the Carbondale Convention and Tourism Bureau:

<http://www.cctb.org/local/local/local.php?sectionid=1>

14. What does it cost to attend?

Since SIU School of Law is a public institution, we have both in-state and out-of-state tuition rates. Out-of-state students are eligible for in-state residency after six (6) months.

2009-2010	In-state Tuition	\$11,022/year
2009-2010	Out-of-State Tuition	\$29,925/year

For a complete breakdown of the current cost of attendance, visit our website:

<http://www.law.siu.edu/pdf/Estimatedbudget.pdf>.

To learn more about our in-state residency requirements, visit our website:

http://www.law.siu.edu/admission/qual_res.asp

15. What are the median LSAT and UGPA scores?

While the Admissions Committee will consider LSAT and undergraduate grade point average (UGPA), there are several non-numeric factors (admissions committee memorandum, resume, and letters of recommendation) that are also considered. Therefore, the Admissions Committee reviews all applicant files regardless of LSAT and UGPA scores. As a reference, the entering Class of 2009 had a median LSAT of 153 and median UGPA of 3.25.

16. Where do students come from?

The entering Class of 2009 was comprised of students from 16 different states and 58 different colleges and universities.

17. What are my housing options if I decide to attend SIU law?

The University has on-campus housing for students who wish to reside within walking distance of the law school. For information regarding on-campus housing options, please visit the University Housing website: <http://www.housing.siu.edu/>

The majority of our law students elect to live off-campus. While many students live within Carbondale, there are several options within a 15-mile radius of the law school. For more information regarding off-campus housing options, please visit our Property Owners and Managers list: <http://www.law.siu.edu/admission/housinginfo.asp>.

18. Do I have to specialize in law school?

No. A student does not have to specialize in a certain area of law (like criminal law or environmental law) while they are in law school. In fact, at most law schools, the entire first-year curriculum is required, leaving only two years for the typical student to select electives in an area of interest.

19. Do School of Law graduates only take the Illinois Bar Exam?

While a majority of our graduates elect to take the Illinois Bar Exam, there are some students that decide to take another state's bar exam. For example, in the past our students have taken the Bar Exam in the following states: Indiana, Missouri, Wisconsin, California, Florida, Iowa, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Washington. For more information about bar preparation, visit the student life website: www.law.siu.edu/studentlife.asp.

20. Where do our graduates find employment?

Currently, we have alumni working in 48 states and several foreign countries including Austria, Belgium, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, Puerto Rico, Ukraine, and the Virgin Islands. For more information visit the Career Services website: <http://www.law.siu.edu/careersrv.asp>.