

HOW TO RESEARCH LAW SCHOOLS

I. Two Types of Students

a. Decided

1. If you are a “decided student” it means that you know exactly which law schools you are going to apply to and if you do not get into those law schools, you will not attend or will reapply the next year. There is nothing wrong with this approach, as we have many students who, for example, need to stay in Utah, so they only apply to BYU or the University of Utah.
2. If you are truly a “decided student” it is still important to follow the research steps below so that of the schools you are applying to, you can decide which one is your top choice, which is your last choice, etc.

b. Undecided

1. If you are an “undecided student” it means that you will go to law school wherever you get in and, though you may have certain schools that you want to apply to, you are open to moving anywhere to go to school.
2. For the “undecided student”, we recommend that you apply to 10 schools to maximize your chances of getting in—5-7 “on” schools (schools whose scores match yours), 2-3 “up” schools (your dream schools that are within the realm of possibility), and 2-3 “down” schools (schools whose scores are low enough that you should get in for sure). By taking this approach, you can maximize your chances of getting in somewhere and will hopefully have several options and perhaps even some scholarship offers.

II. The 4-Tier Research Method

a. BYU Law School Locator

1. This chart is a quick way to find schools that are in your LSAT and GPA range.
2. It is a chart of all the law schools in the country that arranges the schools according to the 75% LSAT and GPA, meaning the top quartile of the law school’s incoming students last year had an average of those scores.

b. BYU LSAC Report

1. This is a report we receive from LSAC every year that tells us how BYU students did in admissions last year. It lists all the law schools in the country in alphabetical order and gives the average LSAT and GPA of BYU students who both applied and were admitted to law school.
2. It is an excellent way to identify your on, down, and up schools by using the following approach.
 - a. Look at the average LSAT and GPA of those BYU students who were admitted last year.
 1. ON = Match your scores
 2. UP = +.1 GPA and +1 LSAT point
 3. DOWN = -.3 GPA and -3 LSAT points
 - b. If the GPA and LSAT numbers do not match, go with the LSAT.
3. We have copies of this report in our office for all students.

c. ABA LSAC Official Guide to Law Schools

1. Once you have used the first 2-tiers and found schools in your range number-wise, this is an excellent resource to do some additional research. In this book each law school in the country has a 4-page spread.
2. The first two pages give numbers information (tuition, average size of entering class, bar passage rates, employment rates after graduation, etc.).
3. The second two pages are authored by the law school itself and talk about the law school’s specialties, admissions policies, etc. Also, about 75% of law schools include an admissions chart for the previous year with which you can determine the exact percentage of likelihood of you getting accepted according to your GPA and LSAT. This is a very useful chart for people whose GPA and LSAT do not match up.
4. This guide is also available online at LSAC and we have 2 copies in our office.

d. Individual Law School Websites

1. Once you have narrowed down your list of potential law schools, visit individual school websites to find out more about the school.

III. Finding Specialty Schools (joint programs, specialty programs, etc.)

a. Law School Lists (Grey Book)

1. If you are looking for joint degree programs or schools that specialize in a certain area of law, we have 2 copies of this book on our bookshelves. It is quite literally a “book of lists” that lists schools which specialize in a given area. For example, a student could look under “Environmental Law” and find all the law schools in the country that specialize in that area.