

INFORMATION ABOUT LAW SCHOOL

Some pharmacy students or pharmacists have an interest in attending law school. The purpose of this brief section is to give them some introductory information about this and to refer them to more detailed sources of insight.

Admission to law school requires a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution of higher education. Contrary to common opinion, there is no "prelaw" major as an undergraduate. "Prelaw" is an intention, not an academic field of study. While many who go to law school have studied political science, history, or English while an undergraduate, no particular major is required for admission into law school. Consequently, one with a degree in pharmacy would meet the criteria for admission.

Law schools base their admission decisions heavily on 2 factors: cumulative grade-point average on prior academic work and a score on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). This admission test is administered numerous times per year at colleges and universities around the

country. For information about the examination, a list of test sites, or to request a current copy of the *LSAT/LSADAS Registration and Information Book*, write or call:

Law School Admissions Council
P.O. Box 2000
Newtown, PA 18940-2000
215/968-1001

Information is also available on the Internet at: <http://www.lsac.org/>.

The Law School Admissions Council (at the same address) also publishes a valuable book entitled *The Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools*. One main value of this book is that it provides a grid that indicates how many students with a certain GPA/LSAT profile applied to each school the prior year and how many were admitted. This enables one to focus on applying to law schools where a reasonable possibility of gaining admission exists.

While the cumulative GPA and LSAT score are the primary factors law school admission committees focus on, they also take other factors into account while attempting to create an academically talented and diverse entering class. As a result, the application essay can be quite important as can be the letters of reference submitted to the Admissions Committee.

There are over 175 law schools accredited by the American Bar Association. For a list of accredited law schools in the United States, write to:

American Bar Association
750 North Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, IL 60611-4497

The list is also available on the Internet at: <http://www.abanet.org/legaled/approved.html>.

Note that there are a number of law schools in this country that are not accredited by the ABA but are accredited by an agency of the state government in the jurisdiction where the school is located. Graduates of these schools may only practice law in the state that accredits the lawyer's alma mater.

The law school curriculum is 3 years in length. Usually, the first year consists of all required courses. After that, course decisions are left to the student. For this reason, it is usually advantageous to attend law school with a large number of course offerings. For example, pharmacists attending law school might be interested in enrolling in courses such as Health Law or Food and Drug Law. Not all law schools in the United States offer these courses. In response to the commonly asked question—no, there is no law school which specializes in "pharmacy law." Application of the legal principles and doctrines to pharmacy must be done by the student.

Here is a list of sources of further information about law school for pharmacists and careers in pharmacy law:

Woods WE. Career opportunities as a pharmacist-attorney. *The Squibb Review for Pharmacy Students*. 1965;1V(1):1-4.

Steeves RF. Pharmacist-lawyers. *Journal of the American Pharmaceutical Association*. 1967;NS7:145, 151.

Fink JL III. Pharmacist-lawyers. *Journal of the American Pharmaceutical Association*. 1974;NS14:565-569.

Anonymous. Pharmacists who are lawyers. *American Druggist*. 1974:34-35, 39-40.

Fink JL III. Law school for pharmacists? *American Pharmacy*. 1981;NS21:492-493.

Brushwood DB, Cole MG. The case of pharmacy law as a career. *Legal Aspects of Pharmacy Practice*. 1985;(Aug/Sept):1-2.

Brushwood DB. Career opportunities for lawyer-pharmacists. *Tomorrow's Pharmacist*. 1986;8:4-5.

Readers may also be interested to know that there is a national organization of pharmacist-lawyers and others who have an interest in issues involving the 2 professions. Pharmacists and students may become members if interested. The mailing address for the organization is:

American Society for Pharmacy Law
1224 Centre West (Suite 400B)
Springfield, IL 62704-2185
217/391-0219
217/793-0041 (fax)
Website: <http://www.aspl.org>

Once one graduates from law school, he or she must sit for the examination to determine whether sufficient competence in the law exists for the law school graduate to be admitted to the practice of law. The examination is known as the "bar exam" and is a multi-day exercise composed of both multiple choice and essay questions. As for pharmacy, many states have established continuing education requirements for law. Typically, an attorney must complete 15 hours of continuing education coursework each year to be eligible to continue in active practice.

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