

LAW ADMISSIONS INTERVIEWS



APPLYING TO LAW SCHOOL

Interview by Jordan Hurd
Willamette University College of Law

1.) When is the best time to apply to law school?

Bryan Hinkle, Assistant Dean, Law Admissions & Financial Aid
Santa Clara University School of Law

We generally suggest applying early in the application process. Many schools have "rolling admissions" policies in place. They will continue to admit until they have enough candidates for their desired class size. Applicant pool sizes vary from year to year, so there may not be consistency from one application cycle to the next when it comes to "filling" a class. So, just to be safe, it is best to apply early in the cycle to maximize your chances for admission and scholarship consideration. It also helps to get organized and create a spreadsheet or other document where you can note early decision/application deadlines, priority deadlines, financial aid deadlines, etc.

Mike Chavez, Associate Director of Admissions & Diversity Initiatives
University of San Diego School of Law

An individual should submit their application when they are confident the file, in its totality, fully articulates their aspirations, interests, and readiness for the rigors of law school. While application deadline dates are undoubtedly an important consideration when assessing when might be the best time to apply – more on that shortly - an application should not be rushed at the expense of submitting a quality work-product that is judiciously crafted. An application is ready when it both (*cont. next page*)



Jordan Hurd
Associate Director of Admissions
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demonstrates a high level of professionalism and effectively provides insight into the skills, strengths, experiences, and perspectives that define a future law student.

In addition to the substantive aspects of an application, there is a period in the admissions cycle that constitutes the best time to apply - this is "early" in an admissions cycle. Early is a relative term, because priority and/or final application deadlines vary widely between law schools. A priority deadline date is defined as the date when a completed application must be received in order to obtain the greatest consideration. The final deadline date is defined as the last date a completed application can be received in order to be given any consideration. An application will not be accepted for review after the final deadline date. Generally speaking, the further away from a deadline an application is received, the more competitive an applicant is for admission and scholarship consideration.

An additional factor to consider is whether a law school renders admission on a rolling basis. In this circumstance, applications are reviewed in the order received and decisions are rendered continuously until a maximum number of admitted students is reached. Here, the closer an application is received to an application release date, the more competitive an applicant is for admission and scholarship consideration. In every admissions cycle, September 1st is the first day an application can be released by a law school on the LSAC portal. Similar to application deadlines, application release dates vary among law schools.

For a school-specific discussion on deadlines and the best time to apply based on a school's historical and current application volume trends, we recommend scheduling an admissions counseling session with each target law school.



2.) What do you want to see from a reapplicant's application?

**Bryan Hinkle, Assistant Dean, Law Admissions & Financial Aid
Santa Clara University School of Law**

Maybe it is best to start with what we DON'T want to see. We don't want to see the candidate submit the same, exact application. You need to update your application materials, and let us know what you have been doing. Update your personal statement, acknowledge that you were a previous candidate. If there was a part of your application that you know was weak or problematic, it is pretty safe to assume that the admissions committees zeroed in on that weakness when you last applied. Consider addressing those weaknesses in addenda. If there were external factors that *(cont. next page)*

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University of San Diego School of Law

affected your academic performance, or performance on the LSAT, address those. But, even more importantly, let us know the steps you have taken to assure that you will now be successful in the very difficult and demanding law school academic environment.

**Mike Chavez, Associate Director of Admissions & Diversity Initiatives
University of San Diego School of Law**

During the law school application process, USD Law is assessing in part, an individual's ongoing desire to work hard, challenge themselves, and commit to self-improvement. These are characteristics critical to success in law school and within the legal profession. It is therefore exciting to see when law school "reapplicants" manifest these attributes through new skills, experiences, and achievements acquired in the window of time between their prior and now current law school application. Ultimately, the most effective way to communicate this information and illustrate their growth is through a new personal statement, updated resume, and at least one new letter of recommendation.

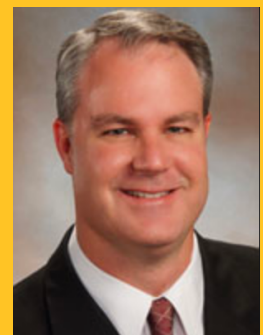
A new and well-written personal statement immediately conveys the serious and purposeful mindset of a law school reapplicant. Self-awareness and diligence are two characteristics required to compose an original and impactful personal statement. When a reapplicant invests the time and effort to accomplish this feat, they represent a desire to work hard and tell their story. New personal statements also serve as another writing sample and showcase a reapplicant's writing abilities.

At USD Law, a resume is an optional component of the application process. While they are not mandatory, they are highly recommended. Resumes outline how an individual directs their time in academic and professional settings. They also summarize the skills and experiences developed in each of these settings. Through an updated resume, a reapplicant can highlight new academic achievements and new professional accomplishments. This growth, particularly when it occurs between the time a prior law school application is received and a new application is received, evidences a willingness to take on academic and professional challenges and commit to self-improvement.

Finally, a few comments about letters of recommendation (LORs) which may be optional at USD Law, but are also strongly advised. Reapplicants are not expected to replace every previously submitted LOR with a new LOR. In fact, a reapplicant might be quite content with the caliber of all their pre-existing LORs. However, if a new academic or professional source LOR is available, and its author is sure to discuss attributes not already shared in prior letters, the new letter may enhance the overall competitiveness of a file. The logic here is simple: when an admission committee has more high-caliber and diverse LORs to review, the greater their capacity to assess an applicant's ability to thrive at their law school.

In summary, a reapplicant should strive to show an admission committee they are industrious life-long learners who seek to improve and advance themselves academically and professionally every day. Submitting a new personal statement, updated resume, and at least one new LOR is one way reapplicants can support this narrative.

"Even more importantly, let us know the steps you have taken to assure that you will now be successful in the very difficult and demanding law school academic environment."



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