

SELECTING A LAW SCHOOL

Deciding where to apply can be difficult as there are over 200 accredited law schools in the U.S. It is important to bear in mind that rankings are only one factor in selecting a law school. Keep in mind that the institution that best meets your needs may be very different from the best school for your classmates.

Some of the criteria which a student should consider in selecting a law school are:

Location:

Do you have strong ties to a particular geographic location? Do you prefer city life to a more rural setting? Is there a specific geographic area where you would like to practice?

Size:

Do you think you will have a better experience in a smaller class where the faculty to student ratio will likely be higher or do you welcome the advantages provided by a larger student body (i.e. more course offerings, a greater number of faculty members, and more students to interact with)?

Character of the Law School:

Law schools are made up of people—students, professors and administrators—therefore, each school has its own unique character. Some student bodies are more competitive while others are more collegial and supportive. The best way to figure out the character of a law school is to speak with alumni who have or are attending the law school or to arrange for a visit to the school.

State/ Regional/ National Schools:

Is the law school characterized as a national, state, or regional law school? Do students at the law school typically practice in state, in the region or do they have the mobility to practice in a variety of states across the nation? Students should look at the school's placement statistics, NALP and <https://www.lawschooltransparency.com/> for the answers to these questions.

Faculty:

Students should research the number and caliber of full-time faculty members. They should also look at the number of part-time faculty, and the administrative staff of the law school. Faculty to student ratio, class sizes, and the approachability of faculty members are also important factors to consider.

Employment Rate/ Career Services:

Does the school have a strong and supportive career services office? How successful has the school been in terms of placing students each year? What areas are these students working in and in which geographic areas? What assistance is given to students who are not

interested in working in law firms? This information can be obtained from NALP and/or from <https://www.lawschooltransparency.com/>

Those students interested in working for a law firm should look into which firms participate in the school's On Campus Interview ("OCI") process and how deep into the class (i.e, top 10%, 20%, 50%...) each firm will go.

Journals:

Does the school have journals in the areas you are interested in? How frequently are these journals cited in published opinion?

Joint Programs:

Does the school offer joint program in an area you are interested in?

Area of Interest:

Do you have a specific area of interest? If so look for schools that have a journal, a clinic and a full time faculty member in that area. Some schools will claim to offer a specialty but in reality only have 1-2 classes in that area.

Academia/Clerkships

Do you have a desire to go into academia or to clerk? Certain schools have much stronger placement rates for these positions.

Alumni Network:

Does the law school have a strong alumni network committed to assisting future graduates?

Bar Passage Rate:

How many students pass the bar on their first try each year?

Cost/ Scholarship Offers:

What is the annual tuition per year? What are the additional living expenses for each school? If merit scholarships are not offered, what loan reimbursement plans are available?

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