Getting Ready for Law School

Explore majors that interest you.
There are NO preferred majors for law school.

Join the Pre-Law Society
The Pre-Law Society at the University of Washington Tacoma shall act as an information, support, and guidance provider to any University of Washington Tacoma student with an interest in law. It seeks the success of its members in whatever career they pursue. Email uwtpls@u.washington.edu

Pay attention to your grading options.
Watch out for grading options that result in S or NS: at the UW, they protect your grade point; but Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS) converts them to "0.0".

Take writing courses and any courses that involve a lot of reading, writing and research.
Beyond the required English composition, take all the writing you can to improve your writing skills. Law is mostly reading, writing and research, and much of a lawyer’s, as well as a law student’s, time is spent in a library. Other courses that are helpful: economics, philosophy, public speaking.

Plan for letters of recommendation: visit your professors during his/her office hours.
Develop relationships early and often! These are the people that will be writing you letters of recommendation for law school. Aside from enriching your studies, getting to know a faculty member can result in a letter that goes beyond the general to one that makes a striking impression on admissions committees. Most letters of recommendation are completed through www.lsac.org

Try a legal internship.
There are many places that hire interns, including: City Attorney, Public Defender, Public Prosecutor, ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) Private Law Firms

Register for the Law School Data Assembly Services (LSDAS)
Register 18 months prior to starting law school. This is the online service you use to apply to law schools. Your transcripts, LSAT scores and letters of recommendation are all sent there. Find online at www.lsac.org

Pick professors you want to ask for a letter of recommendation.
You want to have at least one letter from a professor, preferably two. If you’re working, consider asking your supervisor for a letter. Ask for letters of recommendation by August. Give your writers a least a 1-month notice.

Write a memorable personal statement.
This is a very important part of the application Give yourself enough time to write several drafts. Ask several, trusted reviewers to read your essay and give you feedback. The personal statement is the only part of the application that you have total control over and it’s important that you enlist your best writing skills in completing it

Prepare for additional statements/addendums
Meet with a pre-law adviser to discuss writing additional statements or addendums such as the diversity statement, grades addendum, etc.
Prep for the LSAT the summer before you apply to law school.  
Most UW students prep during the summer and take it in September/October. Consider taking a prep course. The test is primarily logical and analytical reasoning, and should not be taken “for fun” (that is, without studying). There are prep courses available see below or for those who choose to study on their own, it’s easy to buy a number of released tests from the LSAT booklet.

Secure Dean’s Forms  
Many schools do not require this form, but the UW is one school that does. The intention of this form is to have an appropriate official (administrative rather than dean) verify that you are a student in good standing (that is, one who has not been called up for cheating or other academic infractions). The place to take it is UWT Student Affairs Office MAT 106.

Take the LSAT in late September/early October.

Attend the Annual Law Fair.  
The annual Law Fair at the University of Washington Seattle campus provides a unique opportunity for students to explore their law school options by meeting admissions representatives from 80+ law schools. The fair is held every November from 10am-2pm.

Finalize your list of law schools after you’ve received your LSAT score.  
Consider applying to at least 7 schools: 2 dream, 3 realistic and 2 safety. Location, environment, class size, tuition, demographics, commitment to diversity, student-professor ration, bar passage rates, and career placement resources are all important aspects to choosing a school that’s right for you.

Apply to law schools early, by October/November/December if possible.

Before you accept, visit your top choices in person.  
This is important. You don’t really know what a place is like until you visit. Don’t believe all that you see on the school web sites.

Helpful websites  
www.lsac.org  
www.findlaw.com  
www.cleoscholars.com  
www.deloggio.com  
www.gradloans.com  
www.finaid.org  
www.personalstatementschool.com/index.html

LSAT PREPARATION COURSES  
• KeyBank Professional Development Center University of Washington Tacoma, www.tacoma.washington.edu/pdc  
• Steve Klein Company www.stevenklein.com/  
• Kaplan, www.kaplan.com  
• Princeton Review, www.princetonreview.com  
• Steven Sandweiss, www.sandweissptestprep.com  
• Testmasters, www.testmasters.net.

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