

ADMISSION TO THE JURIS DOCTOR PROGRAM

Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for admission to the School of Law's Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree program, a person must have either:

- A bachelor's degree based on a program of courses with substantial intellectual content from an approved institution; or
- Completed at least 90 acceptable hours of credit in courses with substantial intellectual content in an approved institution, completed all non-elective coursework toward a bachelor's degree and made arrangements with the school that will award the degree to accept law school credits for the remainder of the work required to earn that degree, so that the student will earn the degree prior to the granting of the J.D. degree.

Criteria for Admission

The School of Law restricts the number of students admitted each year in order to maintain a favorable faculty-student ratio and to provide the best possible legal education for each student enrolled. Because many more people apply to the School of Law than there are seats available, admission is competitive.

While substantial weight is given to each applicant's LSAT score and undergraduate GPA, the School of Law and its faculty also consider other factors in shaping an entering class. These factors include:

- Advanced or specialized educational achievement demonstrating potential for academic excellence in the study of law.
- A history of overcoming challenges and barriers.
- Demonstrated leadership qualities.
- A significant and sustained commitment to public or community service.
- Other accomplishments or qualities that indicate the applicant will contribute to the School of Law's academic and service missions.

Admissions Process

Applicants are required to submit a completed application form, the application fee, a personal statement, a resumé, official copies of all undergraduate and graduate transcripts, and two letters of recommendation. All of these items must be submitted through the Credential Assembly Service provided by the Law School Admission Council (LSAC). Instructions for this service may be found on the LSAC website. Once all materials have been submitted, a file is considered complete and ready for review.

The Admissions Committee invites qualified applicants to have a personal interview as part of the application process. The law school makes admission decisions on a rolling admissions basis. That is, decisions are made as files are completed. This process begins in September of the year preceding the academic year applicants are applying for and continues until sufficient admissions are granted to fill the entering class. Accordingly, applications should be submitted as early as possible.

Seat deposit fees must be paid by specified deadlines to secure a spot as a student at the School of Law. These fees are nonrefundable but will be credited toward the cost of tuition and fees for the first semester of law school classes. Students planning to start law school in the Summer semester typically will have seat deposit fees due in April. Students planning to start law school in the Fall semester typically will have a first seat deposit fee due in April and a second seat deposit fee due in May. The exact deadlines for seat deposit fees will be specified when an applicant receives an offer of admission from the School of Law.

LSAT/LSAC

In order to gain admission, an applicant must take the LSAT. An LSAT score is required to complete the application for admission, and it is the applicant's responsibility to take an LSAT exam that will be scored in time to meet the application deadline. Information concerning the test is available online at <http://www.lsac.org/> or by writing to:

Law School Admission Council (LSAC)
662 Penn Street
Newtown, PA 18940

Applicants also must submit official copies of their college and university transcripts (and graduate school transcripts, if any) to LSAC via their Credential Assembly Service. Further information and a registration form for this purpose may be obtained at the website and mailing address above. LSAC will automatically provide LSAT scores and copies of transcripts to the School of Law once an application has been submitted and processed.

Prerequisites

No undergraduate courses are specifically required for admission to the Law School. The best preparation is a broad liberal arts education designed to provide an understanding of the institutions and values with which the law deals and the development of those skills and habits of thought essential to legal reasoning.

Any course of study leading to an undergraduate degree will be sufficient for admission, as long as the emphasis was an intellectually demanding one that challenged the student to employ critical-thinking skills and communicate effectively. Courses with a strong emphasis on writing are particularly encouraged in light of the crucial role effective writing plays both in law school and law practice.

Matriculation Options: Full-Time and Part-Time Progress

Most students matriculate on a full-time basis. Some students, however, may do so on a part-time basis.

The opportunity to proceed part-time is designed for students who are unable to enroll on a full-time basis, such as those with family or career responsibilities. These students typically enroll in 8 to 9 hours of classes each semester in the first year, and 8 to 12 hours per semester thereafter. In all other respects, students enrolled part-time are required to satisfy all graduation requirements applicable to full-time students, including the requirement that they complete all degree requirements within five years (unless special permission is granted to extend that time limit). Part-time students develop programs with the associate dean that are designed to parallel, as much as possible, the sequence of courses for full-time students.

A full-time student may not become a part-time student without permission of the associate dean. Part-time students may not become full-time students until they have completed all first-year courses, unless they obtain permission to proceed full-time from the associate dean. Once part-time students have completed all required first-year courses, they may enroll full-time or part-time for remaining coursework at their option. Students are cautioned, however, that enrollment in 13 or more hours triggers the rule limiting outside work to no more than 20 hours per week and full-time first-year law students should not engage in any outside work.

Admission with Advanced Standing

Transfer applicants typically have completed one full year of law study, and admission will be largely based on law school academic performance, although all parts of the evaluation will be evaluated as part of the holistic review process. An applicant for admission with advanced standing must complete the UMKC Law Transfer Application, containing the same kind of information as an entering student, via the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC); directly submit to UMKC Law a “letter of good standing” (be eligible to return as a student in good standing to their current law school; and present a letter from the Dean of their law school showing such eligibility); and directly submit an official law school transcript with courses taken and grades received. For transfer applicants seeking to start courses at the School of Law in the Fall semester, an admissions decision generally would be made in the summer, as soon as the application is complete and the applicant’s current law school has issued grades for the Spring semester.

When a transfer applicant is admitted, the School of Law will review the work successfully completed by the transfer applicant at other law schools in order to determine how many transfer credits the applicant will be awarded and which of the School of Law’s course requirements the applicant has already fulfilled. The School of Law generally will award transfer credit for a maximum of 45 credit hours, but may grant special permission to give transfer credit for more than 45 credit hours.

Except in the case of students transferring from the University of Missouri-Columbia, hours for a course in which the transfer applicant received less than a C grade will not transfer. Although transfer credit will not be given for a course with a grade of C or below, the Associate Dean for Students has the discretion to decide whether any course required by UMKC may be waived such that the applicant would not need to retake the required course. Grades earned at another law school are not transferred, nor are such grades used to calculate UMKC JD GPA for class ranking purposes.

Admission Without Undergraduate Degree (3+3 Programs)

Students who have completed at least 90 acceptable hours of credit in courses with substantial intellectual content and have completed all non-elective coursework toward a bachelor’s degree, may be admitted on the condition that the undergraduate degree be earned prior to or simultaneously with the granting of the J.D. degree. This condition can only be met if the institution which will grant the undergraduate degree will accept credits earned in the UMKC School of Law.

Since the UMKC School of Law does not confer the undergraduate degree and assumes no responsibility in regard to it, it is the duty of the student to make certain that the requirements for the degree are satisfied. Questions concerning requirements for the undergraduate degree or of the transferability of law credits to complete the degree should be directed to the institution granting the undergraduate degree.

A letter from the institution confirming that it will accept credits earned in the UMKC School of Law to complete the undergraduate degree must be submitted as part of the application for admission.

For more information on our 3+3 Programs, visit the Law School’s website at: <https://law.umkc.edu/admissions/3-plus-3-programs.html>