

University of Pennsylvania Law School

Application Instructions

Office of Admissions and Financial Aid

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Philadelphia, PA 19104-6204

215.898.7400

<http://www.law.upenn.edu/>; admissions@law.upenn.edu;

finaid@law.upenn.edu

FIRST YEAR JD ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

We welcome your interest in Penn Law and provide this information to guide you through the admissions and financial aid processes.

Applicant Eligibility Requirements

All applicants must hold a bachelor's degree to be eligible to enroll in the Juris Doctor (JD) program. Applicants for the JD degree are admitted in the fall semester on a full-time basis only. All applicants must take the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) and must register with LSAC's Credential Assembly Service (CAS). (See LSAT and LSAC Credential Assembly Service Report information below.)

Standards for Admission

The admissions process at Penn Law is highly selective. Last year, we received approximately 5,000 applications for the approximately 250 places in the first year class. Students who apply to Penn Law come from every state in the nation, from many countries around the world, from more than 200 undergraduate institutions, and from a broad range of academic, ethnic, cultural, professional, and economic backgrounds.

There is no pre-law educational requirement or even a specific recommended course of study for admission to Penn Law. Strength of character, breadth of knowledge, and intellectual maturity constitute the base upon which our legal education builds. As such, Penn Law seeks to enroll individuals who have demonstrated outstanding academic success, who are intellectually curious, and who possess superior writing, oral communication, and analytical skills. Importantly, we also seek individuals who will positively contribute to the Penn Law community, and ultimately, to the legal profession, based on their diverse backgrounds, their personal and professional experiences, and any challenges or obstacles that they may have overcome.

The Admissions Committee considers numerous factors in the admissions process, including the student's academic record, course selection and grade

trends, the LSAT score, letters of recommendation, leadership, community service, extracurricular activities, professional and life experiences, and the applicant's examples of written expression (LSAT writing sample, personal statement, and optional essays). Importantly, the Admissions Committee bases its decision on all material submitted on behalf of each candidate. Though an applicant's academic record and LSAT score are significant factors in the review process, they are not the sole factors. We do not have numerical "cut-offs" in the application process nor do we employ the use of an admissions index.

Due to the large number of applications from all over the country and other parts of the world, the admissions committee does not grant evaluative interviews as part of the review process. However, we invite all applicants to visit Penn Law to become more familiar with the Law School, the University campus, and Philadelphia. Information sessions are offered on a weekly basis during the fall and winter months. Additionally, applicants are welcome to take a self-guided tour during our regular office hours. If you are interested in attending an information session or a class, please check our website for schedules: www.law.upenn.edu/prospective/visitus.html.

Application Deadlines

Early Decision (Binding)

Submit application by November 15*
Complete application by December 1
Receive decision by December 31

*Applications must be submitted through LSAC no later than November 15. All supporting documents, including the LSAC Credential Assembly Service Report, must be **received** by December 1 for Early Decision consideration.

Regular Decision

Submit application by March 1**
Complete application by March 15
Receive decision by May 1

**Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis beginning in November and decisions are made beginning in December.

Early Decision

Penn Law's Early Decision option is designed for applicants who have thoroughly researched their law school options and determined that Penn Law is clearly their first choice. Penn Law's Early Decision program is binding. Applicants who wish to be considered for early decision must commit to

matriculate at Penn Law if admitted. If admitted, you must withdraw your applications from all other law schools and refrain from initiating new applications. **You may not submit an early decision application to more than one law school.**

If you are interested in applying for Early Decision, please select the Early Decision Admission option under Type of Application in the Application Data section of the Application Questions. Also, you must print and sign the Early Decision Agreement in Forms. You can then upload the signed Early Decision Agreement in Attachments before transmission through LSAC. If you are not able to upload the signed Early Decision Agreement in Attachments, it can be mailed directly to the Office of Admissions. The Early Decision Agreement must be physically signed.

Penn Law's Early Decision option allows applicants to receive a decision—admit, deny, or hold for further consideration—by the end of December. Early Decision applicants must take the LSAT no later than October of the application year and submit the application by November 15. Additionally, the Office of Admissions must **receive** all required supporting documents, including the LSAC Credential Assembly Service report and letters of recommendation, by December 1.

Early Decision applicants who are held for further consideration will be reevaluated during the regular admissions process. Applicants who choose to apply for Early Decision, but are unable to complete their application by December 1, will be reviewed as regular admissions applicants. An applicant's decision will no longer be binding if accepted through the regular admissions process.

Regular Decision

Applicants who submit applications by March 1 and complete applications by March 15 will receive a decision—admit, deny, hold, or waitlist—by May 1. If your application is not submitted by March 1, we will try to respond with a decision within twelve weeks of the application's completion, but we cannot guarantee a decision by a particular date. Due to the rolling admissions process, applications submitted after April 1 are strongly discouraged. We suggest Regular Decision applicants should take the LSAT no later than December of the application year but we will accept the February test of the application year.

How to Apply

We **require** you to submit an application using the following format: LSAC electronic application (with electronic submission through LSAC) Available at [LSAC.org](https://lsac.org).

Application Requirements and Instructions

Application Form

Please provide complete information for each question on the application in the spaces provided. You may attach additional pages (as an upload in Attachments) to complete or elaborate on this information. Please answer all questions fully and accurately. A copy of your law school application will be retained for a minimum period of three years. For those students who matriculate, a copy of your application will be sent to the Committee on Character and Fitness when you apply to take a state bar examination or seek admission to the bar. Prior to matriculation in a JD program, the American Bar Association recommends that students determine the character, fitness, and other qualifications required for admission to the bar in the state(s) in which they intend to practice. For more information, please contact the American Bar Association by mail at 321 North Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60654-7598 or by phone at 800.285.2221 or at www.abanet.org.

Please answer all questions on the application form unless otherwise noted.

Application Fee

The application fee is \$80 (nonrefundable). You must pay the application fee by debit or credit card when you submit your application through LSAC. When you pay the application fee through LSAC, you will also sign your application with the electronic signature option.

Fee Waiver Application

If submitting the application fee will cause undue financial hardship, you may request a fee waiver. **You must fill out the Fee Waiver Application before you transmit the LSAC Electronic Application through LSAC.** If you are granted a fee waiver, you will be assigned a fee waiver coupon number. The fee waiver coupon number can be entered on the payment page once you select to transmit your application through LSAC.

The Penn Law Fee Waiver Application (located on our website at www.law.upenn.edu/prospective/jd/apply/) and the fee waiver supporting documentation must be mailed directly to the Penn Law Office of Admissions. For the fee waiver supporting documentation, you must submit a copy of your most recent tax return or W2 form(s), a copy of a recent pay stub and an itemized list of expenses if you are not currently enrolled in an academic program. If you are presently in school, you must submit a copy of your financial aid award letter (not your financial aid transcript). In addition, you must submit a copy of your parents' most recent tax return if they claimed you as a dependent regardless of whether you are enrolled in school. **Please do not pay the application fee if you are requesting a fee waiver. We will not refund the application fee.**

LSAC Fee Waivers

If LSAC has granted you an LSAC Fee Waiver, you do not need to submit the Penn Law Fee Waiver Application. Candidates who receive a fee waiver from LSAC will automatically receive an application fee waiver from Penn Law. When you transmit your application, you will be prompted to electronically sign your application but you will not be prompted for payment information.

Teach For America Fee Waivers

Based on the Penn Law and Teach For America partnership, all current Teach For America core members and alumni are eligible for an application fee waiver. **You must request a Teach For America Fee Waiver from Penn Law before you transmit the electronic application through LSAC.** In your letter of request, please provide your full name as registered at LSAC, LSAC account number, and email address. In addition to the letter of request, you must provide documentation of your participation in Teach For America such as an appointment letter. You do not need to submit the Penn Law Fee Waiver Application.

Once your participation in Teach For America has been verified, you will be emailed a fee waiver coupon number. The fee waiver coupon number can be entered on the payment page once you select to transmit your application through LSAC. Please make sure to note your Teach For America appointment on your résumé.

LSAT and LSAC Credential Assembly Service Report

Every applicant must take the LSAT and must register with the Credential Assembly Service (CAS). You may register for the LSAT and/or the Credential Assembly Service online at LSAC.org or by phone at 215.968.1001.

We will accept LSAT results from any exam taken within the last five years prior to fall enrollment, i.e., June 2006 or thereafter for the class entering in fall 2012. In view of our March 1 deadline and the length of time needed for processing, we suggest the LSAT should be taken no later than the December 2011 administration but we will accept results from the February 2012 test administration.

If you take the LSAT more than once, all scores will be considered. If there are circumstances that you believe affected your performance on a prior test, we encourage you to attach an additional statement with your application (see Optional Essays) explaining those circumstances. At its discretion, the admissions committee may evaluate your application based on the higher or highest LSAT score.

Each applicant must also register with the Credential Assembly Service and arrange to have all transcripts sent from each college or university attended to LSAC. When we receive your application, we will automatically request your LSAC Credential Assembly Service Report, and LSAC will send it directly to us. The LSAC Credential Assembly Service Report includes your LSAT score(s), LSAT writing sample(s), copies of your academic transcript(s), an undergraduate academic summary, letters of recommendation, and other information. Please note that your law school report will NOT be released by LSAC until all required transcripts have been received and processed by LSAC.

Penn Law School **requires** that any international transcripts be submitted through the LSAC Credential Assembly Service for applicants who completed any postsecondary work outside the US (including its territories) or Canada. You must use this service for the evaluation of your international transcripts. The one exception to this requirement is if you completed the international work through a study-abroad, consortium, or exchange program sponsored by a US or Canadian institution, and the work is clearly indicated as such on the home campus transcript. This service is included in the Credential Assembly Service registration fee. An International Credential Evaluation will be completed by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), which will be incorporated into your LSAC Credential Assembly Service report. If we determine that you need to submit a TOEFL score, you must contact the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and request that your TOEFL score be sent to LSAC. LSAC's TOEFL code for the Credential Assembly Service is 0058. Your score will be included in the International Credential Evaluation document that will be included in your LSAC Credential Assembly Service report.

To use the Credential Assembly Service, log in to your online LSAC account and follow the instructions for registering for the service. Be sure to print out a Transcript Request Form for each institution and send it promptly to them. More time is usually required to receive international transcripts.

Applicants are reminded to monitor their LSAC account to ensure that the account is current so that their law school report will be released to us on a timely basis.

Recommendation Forms and Letters

Penn Law requires that you submit your letters through the LSAC Letter of Recommendation Service. Your law school report will not be released to Penn Law until at least two letters of recommendation are on file with LSAC. This service is included with your Credential Assembly Service registration. You must use the letter of recommendation form available online through the LSAC Letter of Recommendation Service for each letter submitted to LSAC. **Please do not send letters directly to Penn Law.**

Letters of recommendation from individuals who can comment on your intellectual capacity and analytical and written communication skills are extremely useful in a rigorous selection process. Therefore, we require two letters of recommendation from individuals who have served as recent academic instructors or advisors. However, if you have been out of school for several years and obtaining academic references will present a hardship, letters from employers or others who have worked closely with you are sufficient. Note that we will accept up to four letters of recommendation; however, your application is deemed complete with two letters of recommendation.

In addition to the required two letters of recommendation, we will accept up to two evaluations from the LSAC Evaluation Service but they are not required.

Personal Statement

The Admissions Committee requires that every applicant submit an original example of written expression. The purpose of this personal statement is to provide you with as flexible an opportunity as possible to submit information that you deem important to your candidacy. You may wish to describe aspects of your background and interests—intellectual, personal and/or professional—and how you will uniquely contribute to the Penn Law community and/or the legal profession. Please limit your statement to two pages, double spaced and mark it as "Personal Statement."

Optional Essays

If you wish, you may write an additional essay on any of the following topics. These optional essays allow you an opportunity to provide the admissions committee with additional relevant information that you were not able to include in your personal statement. Please include the essay with your application by electronically attaching it to your application before submission through LSAC. You may answer more than one essay topic if you so choose. Include your name and LSAC account number on each page. Please limit any optional essay to one page, double spaced and title it appropriately.

- Describe how your background or experiences will contribute to or enhance the diversity of the Penn Law community (e.g., based on your culture, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, ideology, age, socioeconomic status, academic background, employment experience, etc.).
- Please discuss the work of art or literature that most influenced your decision to pursue a legal education.
- How will your legal education and professional development at Penn Law support your five year plan upon graduation?

- If you do not think that your academic record or standardized test scores accurately reflect your ability to succeed in law school, please tell us why.

Applying for Joint-Degree Programs

Penn Law leads in cross-disciplinary education of law students. Every year, a number of our applicants and students apply to one of our 19 formal joint-degree programs, either contemporaneously with the Penn Law application or in the first or second year of their law study. Additionally, on an ad hoc basis, students have successfully combined graduate study outside of these formal programs in other graduate and professional schools at the University, including combining JD/MD study at the School of Medicine. If you are interested in study at other departments, we encourage you to discuss that interest with their Admissions Department. Note that you must apply individually to each program; admissions decisions are made by each program independently. You will find a list of most of our available formal joint-degree programs on the Application for Admission. Additionally, detailed information regarding each program may be found on our website at www.law.upenn.edu/crossdisc/study/jointdualdegree/. If you are applying to another graduate program, or intend to, please provide the information requested in the Application Data section of the Application Questions.

Exception: If you are applying for the three year JD/MBA program, please do not fill out nor submit this Fall 2012 -- First Year JD application through LSAC. Instead, you must apply exclusively through Wharton at www.wharton.upenn.edu/mba/. There, you will find a Law School Application Supplement. Please reference the Law School Application Instructions and Guidelines through Wharton for further important information.

Application Status/Questions

The Penn Law Office of Admissions is committed to serving our applicants as efficiently and effectively as we can during the application process. We will notify you of the date upon which we receive your application in an email acknowledgment. Please be advised that it may take approximately two to four weeks from the date that we receive an application to process and evaluate the file for completeness. At that time, we will inform you of any missing required documents if we have received the LSAC Credential Assembly Service report. We will also notify you of the date upon which your application is complete. Once your file is complete, it is put in the queue for the admissions committee and files are evaluated on a rolling basis. The evaluation process typically takes at least **twelve weeks** from the date upon which the application is completed, though you may receive a decision much sooner.

Applicants will be able to check the status of their application at any time using Online Status, Penn Law's online status checker. To access the online

status checker, you can go to our website at www.law.upenn.edu/prospective/jd/apply. Please be sure that you have allowed adequate time for your application to be processed, completed, and evaluated before calling the Office of Admissions to check on the status of your decision. Also, if you call the Office of Admissions, please understand that due to the large volume of applications that we receive, we may not be able to verify whether a particular item has been received and filed with your application.

Email Notification

Please note that an email address is required. We communicate via email with applicants regarding the status of their application; thus, **it is imperative that you provide an email address on your application and it remains current throughout the admissions process.** You will be notified by email when your application is received, again when your application file is completed, and possibly at other times to update you on the status of your application.

Please promptly notify us of any changes to your email address or any changes to your other contact information. Applicants should be aware of their service provider's procedures for spam filtering that may affect delivery of any email communications sent from the Office of Admissions. Steps should be taken to ensure that messages can be delivered promptly.

Reapplication

Applicants who are denied admission may reapply to Penn Law in a subsequent year. It should be noted, however, that candidates are unlikely to be admitted unless there is some significant change since their previous application. Previous applicants who wish to reapply must:

- Submit the current application, a new personal statement, and résumé
- Submit the \$80 application fee
- Register with the LSAC Credential Assembly Service if registration is no longer current, and pay for an additional report
- Send updated transcript(s) to LSAC for all academic work—undergraduate, graduate, and/or professional—completed since the last application
- Submit new letters of recommendation to replace previously submitted letters

TUITION AND FINANCIAL AID

Cost of Education	(2011-2012)
Tuition	\$47,600
Technology Fee	\$800
General Fee	<u>\$2,318</u>
Total	\$50,718

Living Expenses Budget	(2011-2012)
Room	\$8,822
Board	\$4,570
Books	\$1,300
Health Insurance	\$2,950
Miscellaneous	<u>\$2,900</u>
Grand Total	\$71,260

The **General** fee is a partial contribution toward the support of the Student Health Service, graduate student activities, recreational facilities, the physical development of the University, and other services not directly associated with specific courses. The Trustees reserve the right at any time to amend the regulations concerning tuition, fees, and method of payment and to make such changes applicable to students currently enrolled in the University as well as to new students. Tuition and fees are adjusted annually. The living expenses estimate will vary according to personal lifestyles.

Applying for Financial Aid

It is the policy of Penn Law, insofar as possible, to assist deserving students with their legal education by reducing the distraction of financial pressures. Financial assistance is available to qualifying applicants in the form of need-based aid (grants), merit scholarships, public interest scholarships, the Public Interest Loan Repayment Assistance Program, and federal and private student loans. Admission decisions at Penn Law are made without regard to an applicant's financial need. Therefore, financial aid applications are reviewed only after a student has been admitted.

If you are interested in applying for need-based aid, complete the requisite financial aid forms, described below, as early as possible so that your financial aid package can be completed soon after you have been admitted. We strongly recommend that all applicants submit these forms by March 1 **even if they have not yet received a decision.**

Need-Based Aid

It is relatively easy to apply for need-based financial assistance (grants) at

Penn Law. We use the financial information that you provide for yourself, your parent(s), and if applicable, your spouse. Applicants for financial aid are required to submit two applications:

1. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) which is available online at www.fafsa.ed.gov/.
2. The Need Access Financial Aid Application which is available online at www.needaccess.org/.

These forms must be received by March 1. Due to limited University resources, we must consider each student's entire financial situation. Accordingly, the University of Pennsylvania Law School requires applicants applying for need-based grants and their families (except those students over the age of 30 by December 31 of the year of enrollment) to complete the parental, student, and spouse (if applicable) sections of the Need Access financial aid applications. On the FAFSA, you are considered independent as a graduate school applicant under federal guidelines and are only required to complete the student sections.

If you have any questions regarding the application or evaluation process, please contact the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid at 215.898.7743 or send an email to finaid@law.upenn.edu.

Merit Scholarship Programs

Penn Law awards merit scholarships to a select number of students based primarily on their academic achievements and intellectual ambition, but also based on nonacademic factors such as leadership, service, and professional or life experiences. All applicants who are admitted to the Law School are considered for our merit scholarships. Although there is not a separate application for merit scholarships, applicants who are nominated by the Admissions Committee may be asked to complete an interview or to submit an essay for particular scholarships. Scholarship nominees and recipients are notified on a rolling basis between February and late April.

Levy Scholars Program

Penn Law identifies outstanding entering students. The Levy Scholars program provides Scholars outstanding access to faculty and the opportunity to attend exclusive programs in areas of their academic interest, emphasizing and supporting the cross-disciplinary interests of these fine students. We award approximately 10 Levy scholarships every year.

In 2002, the Chair of our Board of Overseers, Paul Levy L'72, decided with his wife, Karen, to make an incredibly generous gift to create the Levy Scholars Program. This prestigious program is all encompassing, starting with a merit scholarship of full tuition and fees for three years of study at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. It also includes establishing

mentoring relationships with faculty in areas of interest to the recipients, specialized programmatic support, research assistant opportunities, and more.

Penn Law's commitment to a broad and modern legal education and our proximity to some of the nation's finest graduate and professional schools make cross-disciplinary study one of the defining characteristics of Penn Law—though it is by no means a requirement for consideration or participation in the Levy Scholars Program. Rather, it is our hope that Levy Scholars will want to avail themselves of these rich opportunities and resources by exploring joint-degree or certificate programs or by taking cross-disciplinary classes at the Law School.

There is no separate application process for this scholarship. All admitted candidates are considered for this scholarship. Students with exceptional academic records and a significant demonstrated commitment to leadership will be invited to participate in the Scholars' selection process.

Toll Public Interest Scholars Program

The Robert and Jane Toll Public Interest Scholars Program offers a challenging program for select students seeking academic training and practical experience in public interest law. Scholars are selected on the basis of their demonstrated commitment to public service, their academic record, and their potential for leadership in the legal community. The Program defines public interest broadly to include government and nongovernment work in a wide variety of substantive legal areas including environmental, health, family, civil rights, poverty, international human rights law, and women. We award approximately six Public Interest scholarships every year.

The Toll Public Interest Scholars Program provides intellectually ambitious professional and academic opportunities to students pursuing public service careers. Scholars are selected as they apply for admission to Penn Law and receive full tuition in the first year and two-thirds tuition in the second and third years. Scholars are selected based on their academic record and their potential to contribute to the public interest community at Penn Law.

There is no separate application process for this scholarship. All admitted candidates are considered for this scholarship. Students with exceptional academic records and a significant demonstrated commitment to public service will be invited to participate in the Scholars' selection process.

Silverman-Rodin Scholars

The Silverman-Rodin scholarship was established in 2004 by alumnus Henry Silverman, in honor of Judith Rodin, former President of the University of Pennsylvania. Selection is primarily based on the student's academic achievement and demonstration of leadership. The Silverman-Rodin Scholars

receive a full-tuition scholarship for their first year of law school and half-tuition scholarship for their second year of law school. Two students from this fall's entering class will receive a Silverman-Rodin Scholarship.

There is no separate application process for this scholarship. All admitted candidates are considered for this scholarship. Students with exceptional academic records and a significant demonstrated commitment to cross-disciplinary study will be invited to participate in the Scholars' selection process.

James Wilson Scholarship

The James Wilson Scholarship provides an award of \$60,000 to \$75,000 in tuition coverage, spread out over three years. James Wilson, signer of the Declaration of Independence, architect of the Constitution, and one of the original justices of the United States Supreme Court, was Penn's first professor of law. Our selection committee seeks accomplished individuals who embody the pioneering spirit and leadership of James Wilson, and who will be fully engaged in the unique academic community at Penn Law. The number of James Wilson scholarships awarded varies every year. There is no separate application process for this scholarship. All admitted candidates are considered for this scholarship.

Dean's Scholarship

The Dean's scholarship award is a merit scholarship based primarily on academic achievement and nonacademic factors such as leadership, service, and life or work experience. These awards range from \$30,000 to \$60,000 over three years. The number of Dean's Scholarships that are awarded varies from year to year. There is no separate application process for this scholarship. All admitted candidates are considered for this scholarship.

Toll Public Interest Loan Repayment Assistance Program (TOLLRAP)

Penn Law, committed to promoting the pursuit of public interest careers, offers postgraduate financial aid through the Toll Public Interest Loan Repayment Assistance Program. TOLLRAP offers generous repayment assistance, on an annual basis, to Penn Law graduates working in public sector careers. The amount of assistance is based on a formula that considers the applicant's annual income and law school debt. A full description of TOLLRAP can be found on our website at www.law.upenn.edu/cpp/alumni/publicinterest/tollrap/.

Loans

Various federal and private loans are available to aid students who do not qualify for need-based assistance or whose needs are not entirely met by a scholarship or grant award. Terms of interest and repayment vary. All

students who apply for need-based aid will be considered for a Federal Perkins Loan. The Law School also refers students for Federal Direct Loans, the Federal Direct Graduate Plus Loan, and other student loan programs. Please note, if you are applying for loans only, you need only submit the FAFSA. The Need Access Application is only required for students who are applying for need-based grants.

International Students

International students may apply for need-based aid (grants) and loans from private student loan companies. Please note that student loans for international students typically require a U.S. cosigner. U.S. federal student loans **are not available** to international students.

International students admitted to Penn will also be considered for the merit scholarships described above; a separate application is not required. International students are eligible to participate in our Toll Public Interest Loan Repayment Assistance Program (TOLLRAP).