

LAW

What can I do with this graduate degree?

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

INFORMATION/STRATEGIES

PRIVATE PRACTICE

Counsel
Administration
Librarianship

Large multi-office firms
Medium-size firms
Small firms
Sole practitioners
Legal clinics
Other private legal services

Acquire excellent research and writing skills.
Obtain clerkships or internships.
Large and medium-size firms frequently emphasize grades and class rank and value law review and moot court experience.
Those in administration handle office management (e.g. work flow), business development, clerk and attorney recruitment, clerkship programs, finances, and human resources.
Law librarianships may require a master's in library or information science in addition to the law degree.
Expect to exhibit management and marketing expertise and practice profitably.

CORPORATE LAW

In-House Counsel:
Transactional
Litigatory
Private Practice

Any large corporation (largest number of attorneys are at corporate headquarters)
Law firms with corporate law and related business practice areas

Corporate office summer clerkships and entry level positions are rare.
Usually only experienced lawyers are hired by corporations.
Develop tolerance for bureaucratic procedure.
An undergraduate major in business, particularly accounting or finance, is helpful.
A joint MBA/JD degree may open additional opportunities.

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW

Counsel
Legal Aid Services
Public Defense
Civil Rights Law

Legal Services Corporation
Legal aid societies
Federal, state, and local government
Public defender offices
Private groups
Nonprofit and public interest organizations, e.g. ACLU, NAACP Legal Defense Fund
Law firms practicing public interest law

Gain supervised work experience in an area through summer internships.
Demonstrate a desire to help the economically disadvantaged and show an interest in law as a means of change.
Volunteer for non-profit organizations that serve a wide range of people.
Learn to communicate and interact with a diverse clientele.

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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Counsel	Most government branches have legal counsel; some of the largest employers of lawyers are: Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation Environmental Protection Agency Central Intelligence Agency Federal Trade Commission Internal Revenue Service Securities and Exchange Commission Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps for all branches of the military	Complete an internship program with the federal government to get a foot in the door. Many lawyers start as an Assistant U.S. Attorney. New lawyers frequently go to court and litigate sooner; experience gained here can be valuable to private firms later. Government work offers a variety of practice opportunities from criminal to contracts. High academic achievement is emphasized by State and Federal judges; Federal judges usually require top 10% or 15% class rank.
Judicial Clerkships	Federal courts of appeal and district court (trial) judges and magistrates Bankruptcy and administrative law judges State courts of appeal and trial level judges Federal and state court clerkships for collective judges in a court	Clerkships can be a stepping-stone to other legal areas and provide many benefits for future career opportunities. For U.S. Supreme Court, applicants must be top law graduates with one to two years clerking at lower Federal Court. Moot Court participation in regional and national competitions is helpful. Law review membership, as an indication of writing ability, is highly valued and emphasized at all court levels.

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Criminal Prosecution Civil Law Public Defense	District Attorney's Office Attorney General's Office State agencies, commissions, boards, executive and legislative office staff Local agencies and commissions City and county law offices	Take essential courses related to criminal law, criminal procedure, constitutional law, and evidence. Participate in a criminal clinical program. Obtain summer positions in a prosecutor's office or a criminal litigation office or private firms practicing criminal law. Civil law deals with a broad range of subjects other than criminal matters and provides for a wide variety of functions including the opportunity to work with private lawyers and public officials. A demonstrated interest in public issues and completion of related internships are helpful.
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AREAS

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EDUCATION

Teaching
Student Affairs (Law Schools and General Schools)
Higher Education Administration
Pre-Law Advising
Law Librarianship
General Counsel

Law schools including departments of:
Career Services
Admissions
Student Services
Law libraries
Business schools
Undergraduate departments of History and Political Science
Paralegal schools
Universities and colleges including:
Judicial Affairs Office
Dean of Students
Human Resources

For teaching: Obtain several years of experience in private practice or government agency. The LL.M. degree and an outstanding academic record are required for law school teaching. Teaching allows for more flexibility of time and Some lawyers teach on an adjunct basis.
For administration and student affairs, consider earning a master's degree in College Student Affairs, Higher Education Administration, or related area.
As an undergraduate, participate on campus in leadership roles. In law school, secure a graduate assistantship in an office of interest, such as judicial affairs.
For librarianships, a master's in library or information science, in addition to the law degree, is often required.

PATENT, COPYRIGHT, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW

Law firms (specialized)
Corporations
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

This highly specialized area usually requires technical, science, or engineering degrees at the undergraduate or graduate level. These lawyers help protect clients' claims to copyrights, inventions, software, etc.

FINANCIAL PLANNING, ESTATE PLANNING, INVESTMENT BANKING

Bank trust departments
Brokerage firms
Insurance companies
Development offices for preparatory schools, hospitals, and universities

Insurance "Estate Planning" positions require interest and ability in sales.
Bank trust department positions are good for those who do not want to litigate or be confrontational. An undergraduate major in accounting or finance may be helpful.

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ENERGY LAW, NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Law firms
Corporations
Federal agencies, especially Department of Energy
Environmental compliance services companies
State agencies
Regulatory commissions
Advocacy organizations

This area involves rights to resources including those in the earth and dangers in production of energy as well as transportation, taxation, patents, and government regulation.
An undergraduate major in environmental science, agriculture, engineering, or science may be good preparation.

FAMILY AND JUVENILE LAW

Private practice
Government agencies
Nonprofit organizations

Work with families and individuals on matters such as divorce, adoption, and juvenile justice.

HEALTH LAW

Law firms
Insurance companies
Health Maintenance Organizations
Hospitals
Government agencies

Represent all parties in healthcare such as hospitals, physician groups, health maintenance organizations, individual doctors, insurance companies, and individual patients.

INTERNATIONAL LAW

Public
Private

Governments
International organizations
United Nations
World Bank
Private firms
Large corporations

Fluency in another language and familiarity with other cultures will help prepare one for this field.
Seek international experience by studying, volunteering, or working abroad.
Intern with a firm or organization that deals with international law.

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POLITICS

Lobbying/Government Relations
Elected Office

Corporations
Trade and professional associations
Political action committees
Law firms
Public interest advocacy groups

Clerkship or summer associate positions with law firms providing lobbying services provide good experience.
Demonstrate an interest in politics through your undergraduate major, active campaigning, or research papers/articles.
Obtain full-time law firm experience as a stepping stone into field.
Acquire superior writing skills.
Develop a pleasing personality, enthusiasm, and high energy level. Demonstrate a service-oriented attitude.
Show ability to work with people and good communication and organizational skills.
Learn to enlist the help of others.
Consider earning a Master's of Public Administration.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

- Students interested in attending law school may choose any major of interest. Some undergraduate majors can help prepare students for a particular area of law, e.g., a B.S. in environmental science for a career in environmental law.
- Develop strong research and writing skills. Enhance communication skills through public speaking courses, debate team, or Toast Masters (a public speaking organization).
- Maintain a high grade point average to increase chances of gaining admission to law school.
- Join Phi Alpha Delta professional association.
- Prepare for the LSAT (Law School Admission Test) which is required by all law schools.
- Secure strong personal recommendations from professors.
- Find part-time jobs or internships in law firms or government agencies to reality test your interest in law and to gain relevant experience.
- Participate in mock trial, student government, student judiciary boards, and other related organizations.
- Completing the law degree, Juris Doctor or JD, typically takes three years of full-time coursework. After completion, one must pass a state bar examine in order to practice law.
- Many specialties exist in the practice of law such as real estate, entertainment law, tax law, education law, sport law. New specialties are always emerging. Consider your interests and skills when choosing an area of practice.