

# PRE-LAW

*Cornell College does not have a Pre-law major or minor, but we do have some recommendations for preparing for law school.*

## General requirements for attending law school:

**Degree:** Virtually all law schools require that you have an undergraduate degree. Cornell offers two paths to this degree for pre-law students:

**Completed    To Be Completed**

**(1) Traditional:** Complete any degree program at Cornell: BA, BFA, BMus, BSE, or BSS.

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|--|-------|-------|
| 1. At least 31 course credits  | _____ | _____ |
| 2. At least one <b>major*</b> , 9 to 20 credits:   | _____ | _____ |
| 3. General education requirements for your degree<br>(see the catalog requirements for your degree and the year you entered Cornell) | _____ | _____ |

**OR**

**(2) 3 + 3 Program:** Cornell, in partnership with The University of Iowa College of Law, offers a program that allows you the option to complete both degrees in six years instead of seven.

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|--|-------|-------|
| 1. Complete at least 24 course credits through Cornell, <i>and</i> successfully complete the equivalent of 7 course credits in your first year of law school | _____ | _____ |
| 2. At least one <b>major**</b> , 9 to 20 credits:<br>(in rare cases, some 1L classes may meet major requirements if approved by your department)             | _____ | _____ |
| 3. General education requirements for your degree<br>(see the catalog requirements for your degree and the year you entered Cornell)                         | _____ | _____ |

**Recommended study:** The following courses are **not required**, but may be helpful in both the application process and in your law school and legal career.

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|--|-------|-------|
| 1. Intensive writing courses (as many as you can fit)<br>Practice writing persuasively and concisely | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Logic and reasoning courses (1 or 2)  | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Basic macroeconomics (1 or 2)   | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Legal content courses (1 or more)   | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Internship/career exploration (1 or more)   | _____ | _____ |
| 6. Subject matter exploration (0 to a full major*)   | _____ | _____ |

**The Application:** You will apply to law school in late fall/early winter of the school year before you plan to attend, and ideally should begin preparing one year before that. For the 3+3 program you would begin prep in your sophomore year, and apply in your junior year. If you plan to go straight from Cornell to law school, you will submit your application by December of your senior year. Even if you plan to apply at some time after you graduate, it is still a good idea to get some of the following elements in place while you are still at Cornell.

Be sure to talk to the Associate Director for Law and Society, in the Berry Career Institute, your academic advisor, and the folks in the Writing Studio for more personalized assistance with the process.

\_\_\_\_\_ **GPA:** While most law schools don't have formal grade requirements, a GPA of 3.0 or higher will significantly improve your odds of getting into law school. For admission to the most elite schools (the "big 14"), aim for a GPA of at least 3.5, and for the top three (Harvard, Yale, and Stanford) a 3.8 or higher; higher grades will increase your odds of admission.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Letters of Recommendation (2 to 3):** Begin cultivating relationships with faculty, advisors, coaches, and employers so that they will be able to write you a great letter. Ask for these in the summer or early fall of the year before you plan to attend law school.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Personal statement:** This statement functions as both your writing sample and a marketing tool for you-as-law student. Work on it with your pre-law advisor and Laura Farmer in the Writing Studio. Aim to have a rough draft by the end of Block 2 in the year you are applying for law school.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Standardized testing:** Most law schools require the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) as part of your application, though a few now accept the Graduate Record Examinations General Test (GRE) in substitute. Study for the LSAT (and possibly the GRE), and take the test at least one year before you plan to attend law school.

Choose one or more test preparation strategies:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Cornell's LSAT Prep course  
(we recommend you take this 1 year before you plan to apply to law school)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Free online Khan Academy prep courses through LSAC
- \_\_\_\_\_ Study on your own, with the materials of your choice
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other paid test prep course (Kaplan, Princeton Review, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hire a professional LSAT tutor
- \_\_\_\_\_ Show up on the day of the test and wing it (*not actually recommended*)

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\* There is no single major that provides an advantage to students in being accepted to law school. We recommend *any* major you enjoy and can do well in. Students with an interest in a particular area of law may want to explore courses and majors related to that field—for example, a grounding in a STEM field is essential for patent attorneys, and students interested in criminal law may want to explore courses in sociology and psychology.

\*\* Depending on the major requirements, not all majors will be compatible with this program.