Personal Preparation

Before you decide whether law school is right for you, you should decide what about law school and a legal career appeals to you. Many mention the desire to help others, the prestige/compensation, the intellectual challenge, or even family pressure to attend and/or following in a parent's footsteps.

Whatever drives you, it should be something that can sustain you through the inevitable low points that you will encounter in your legal study or practice. The simple “I like to argue” motive will not get you through long nights memorizing civil procedure rules. However, the ability and inclination to critically analyze facts and events, and then persuade others to your point of view are valuable and necessary for a life in the law.

Law school is too expensive and too difficult to undertake on a whim or as a passive, fallback choice. Be certain that law school is the correct choice for your interests and career goals before you begin. Consider employment statistics for lawyers in private practice, government or public interest work and whether the law school you are considering will offer you the opportunities you seek. Pre-Law Advising Center and the UTD Pre-Law Society regularly offer workshops and speakers on these topics.

Career Exploration and Outlook

Lawyers engage in a variety of activities and can be found in various work settings. The primary function is to provide legal assistance in the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Lawyers work for government agencies, educational institutions, hospitals, service organizations, trade organizations or as judicial clerks. Some continue their education in other disciplines and some go on to teach others as professors in law or other subjects. The American Bar Association and the Law School Admission Council have many resources available on their websites for prospective law students interested in learning more about the legal profession and various legal specialties, as well as listings for various employment opportunities.

While a law-related internship is not required nor even recommended for law school admission, it certainly can enhance your education, give you a greater understanding of the profession, afford networking opportunities or help you decide that a legal career is not for you. It can also be helpful to have professional experience on your resume when you begin your summer job search as a law student. Pre-Law Advising Center posts internship opportunities to the prelaw email list when we become aware of them. You may also check with UTD’s Career Services Office for any opportunities posted there.