

Law: Ontario Law School Applications

Hello and welcome to the Centre for Career Action's video tip series for Ontario Law School applications. My name is Pam Waechter, and I'm Katie Denomme, and we are Career Advisors in the Centre for Career Action that work with undergraduate and graduate students, and alumni on the planning, application, and interview processes for graduate or professional school. In this video series, we will work through the Ontario Law School (or OLSAS) application, and briefly the out-of-province schools, to provide you with tips and strategies. The application can change each year, so please be sure to check the OLSAS website and individual law school sites for the most up-to-date information. In addition, we have created sample application answers used in these videos. These samples are for your learning only and are not to be plagiarized (copied or used in any form) in your personal application.

OLSAS or the Ontario Law School Application Service, is the centralized application for all Ontario law schools: Lakehead University, Osgoode at York University, University of Ottawa, Queen's University, University of Toronto, Western University, and the University of Windsor are the 7 schools you can apply to through this site. At our Professional & Post-Degree Day in October, held in the Student Life Centre, some law school reps will be there.

This centralized application allows you to submit just one application and then OLSAS distributes it to the schools to which you are applying.

With this application log-in, you can enter and exit the application package until you hit "submit" – meaning you don't need to complete the whole application at once. There are also extremely useful "help screens" that provide information on how to fill out every section of the application. You can also view the OLSAS instruction booklet, GPA conversion chart and a chart of requirements, on the OLSAS website, OR, **in the Centre for Career Action, in the resource library, there is a binder that has a copy of the current year's application if you want to review it.**

The application is **due November 1st each year – with no exceptions!** OLSAS starts to send information to the schools mid-November, and some of the schools, like Toronto, start sending offers as early as the end of November. Ottawa has also been known to make some admissions decisions in the fall term. Although the deadline to submit your application is November 1st, it is still possible to write the LSAT in December, and be considered for admission; however, the schools will not review your file until it is complete (including LSAT scores). This means if you write in December of the year you are applying, the earliest the schools will review your application is about 6 weeks after the test, or whenever they receive your scores.

At the beginning of the application, you will need to fill out contact and biographical information in text boxes and drop-down menus to get started. The first section that you may have to write a somewhat significant answer, addresses these questions. Have you ever attended a law school? Have you ever been required to withdraw from a law school or other postsecondary program? (If yes, give details.)

You only have 100 characters, including spaces, for each answer.

This means, that you need to keep your answer very concise, and stick to the facts about why you needed to leave, or were required to leave, your program. Within the 100 characters, don't just provide an explanation, and certainly don't make any excuses, but instead include strategies that you used to overcome whatever challenge required you to withdraw. If you have had success, or positive results in overcoming the situation – share it here.

The next step is to actually select the programs that you want to apply to. There are 7 Faculties of Law that you can apply to through OLSAS, and if you are also applying to other Canadian law schools outside of the province, you would complete separate applications for those schools and apply directly through each out-of-province school's individual website.

Before making your decision on where to apply, make sure to review the information in the OLSAS PDF and on each of the school's websites (like area of focus, spirit of the school etc.) to have a good understanding of what the admissions committee is looking for in candidates. Many students ask "how many law schools should I apply to?" That is entirely up to you – however, the law school application process is competitive, and if you meet the requirements, and have an interest in attending the school, we recommend applying to as many as you can. Keep in mind any financial considerations as well.

As of 2015, there was a flat Application Service Fee of \$200 to use OLSAS. For each Ontario law school that you apply to, it also costs \$90. OLSAS collects the Law School Application Service fees and remits them to the universities to cover a portion of the costs associated with the admissions assessment. For information on financial assistance and fee-waivers, please watch our "Tuition and Scholarships" video.

When you click on each school, in the list of programs, it will take you to another screen (this is an example of Osgoode). Here you choose the specific program to which you are applying (the JD program is the typical first-year law program that students select).

It is possible to select more than one program per school (for example if you would like to apply to the JD/MSW program at Windsor, but still be considered for the JD only program if you are not admitted to the joint program – you can choose to apply to both).

If you are applying for a joint degree, a separate application is required for the other degree. You will need to check the individual school's websites for details on application and deadline dates.

Additionally, sometimes requirements are waived for the joint program. For example: If you are interested in a JD/MBA program, sometimes the work experience requirement can be waived for the MBA program (although it is still usually preferred) or for example specifically at Toronto, they might waive the GMAT requirement for the MBA program if your LSAT score is above 165.

Also, the University of Ottawa and Windsor University offer dual JD programs so that you can earn a Canadian JD and a US JD so you could practice in both countries, and you would have knowledge of US law while practicing for a Canadian law firm. Therefore, the Canadian & American Dual JD Program prepares its graduates to sit for both the Canadian and U.S. bar exams.

At Ottawa, it is a 4 year program with the choice of attending one of two American universities. You need to identify in your Personal Statement which school you would like to attend in the US (Michigan State or American University). Students who apply to the Dual JD program will also be considered for admission into the regular JD program.

At Windsor it is a 3 year program (including summer after first year), with the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. You need to apply to both the dual JD and just the JD program in the online application. To do this, you select one program option and then go back and add the additional choice. Although the application for the Windsor dual program is due in mid-April, you must submit the OLSAS application by November 1st. We recommend submitting everything for the dual program by November as well, as they use a rolling admission process – meaning they review the applications and make decisions as they are submitted.