Law

Application Guide

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| **Deadline for applying through UCAS** | **15th October 2016** |
| **A-Level requirements** | **AAA**  *In any subjects excluding General Studies. Language skills for the relevant country must be shown if applying for the ‘Law with Law Studies in Europe’ course. All three ‘A’ grades must be achieved in one academic year.* |
| **Aptitude test?** | **LNAT**  *Must be sat between 1st September and 20th October 2016.* |
| **Course length** | **3 years**  **(or 4 years for the ‘Law with Law Studies in Europe’ courses)** |
| **Qualification** | **BA in Jurisprudence**  **(a qualifying Law degree)** |

**UCAS Application**

* The UCAS deadline for applying to Oxford is earlier than most other universities – applications close on 15th October 2016 so it is important to have everything submitted by this date.
* Your UCAS application will include a variety of things:
  + GCSE grades (or equivalent)
  + AS grades (or equivalent)
  + A2 predicted grades (or equivalent)
  + Teacher references
  + Personal statement
  + Extra-curricular activities
* There are no specific GCSE requirements except that all candidates will have achieved at least a C grade in Mathematics. The University takes into account a range of contextual factors when considering prospective applicants’ GCSE grades – the type of school you come from plays a big part in this, so don’t worry if the grades that you’ve achieved at your local comprehensive school are perhaps not as brilliant as those of a student from a top independent school might be.
* There are no specific requirements as to which subjects you should study at A Level – all are accepted except for General Studies. There are no advantages/disadvantages to studying Law at A Level either.
* If you have suffered from any extenuating circumstances that you feel have hindered your academic progress, please make sure that the universities you are applying to are aware of this. One way of doing this is to ask your teachers to include it in their reference section on UCAS.

**Personal Statement**

* There really is no set formula for writing a personal statement so don’t get too caught up in how you should structure it and what you should include – all universities look for different things and all tutors have different preferences, so there really is no right answer.
* A good place to start is the websites of the universities that you are applying to. Many of them make it very clear what they are looking for in a candidate, and so you can use this to model your personal statement.
* It is also important to bear in mind that universities offer different modules – make sure you have looked at this thoroughly before choosing where to apply, and also make sure you don’t focus on an area of law in your personal statement that some universities you are applying to don’t offer! Oxford offers the following modules:
  + A Roman Introduction to Private Law
  + Constitutional Law

Two further modules are studied in final year. Students can pick from a range of subjects, all of which can be found here: <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/admissions/options?year=All&programme=7907>

* + Criminal Law
  + Administrative Law
  + Contract Law
  + EU Law
  + Jurisprudence
  + Land Law
  + Tort Law
  + Trusts Law
* Some things that law schools look for in prospective applicants are:

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| **Quality** | **Examples of how you might demonstrate it** |
| A passion for the subject | Here you could mention any work experience you might have, whether that’s 2 weeks at a large city firm or sitting in the public gallery of your local criminal court. However, it is absolutely NOT necessary to have loads of experience in very prestigious firms. Work experience also covers things such as part time jobs – you can mention this in relation to other skills such as communication and leadership. Other ways of showing a passion for the subject is to mention books or articles you might’ve read, trials/cases you might’ve followed in the news, extended studies (e.g. EPQ) you might’ve completed, or summer schools/programmes/workshops you might’ve attended. |
| Academic ability | This is largely covered by your grades that are entered separately on UCAS, but it might also be worth mentioning any academic awards you might have or prizes/competition you might have won – in any subject/discipline. |
| Organisation | This is a key part of the life of a law student – being able to complete long reading lists alongside managing work experience applications and extra-curricular activities requires a lot of organisation and time management. You could give examples of how you managed positions such as sport captains, volunteering or other commitments alongside studying, or perhaps how your part time job in a local estate agency has taught you to manage your time and organise the completion of several different tasks at once. |
| Communication | Maybe you’ve learned to be a good communicator as part of your job in customer services at your local Waitrose, or maybe it’s a skill you’ve developed as Head Girl – there are so many ways that you can show you know the importance of good communication, and this is definitely something to include as, especially at Oxford, communication is key when it comes to working with tutors and others in your year group. |

* These are not the only things that law schools look for, and are not necessarily the most important things either. You could include other things such as: why you have chosen to study Law, reference to particular aspects of your A Level courses that you particularly enjoy, volunteering you have completed, extra-curricular activities e.g. sports etc. However, hopefully this table gives you an idea of how to relate your experiences to your application to study Law. It’s also important to emphasise that is definitely not expected that everyone can demonstrate all of these things – as long as you include a range/balance of a few, that is more than enough.

**Work Experience/Volunteering**

* While it is brilliant to be able to demonstrate that you have taken part in work experience, this is not something that is expressly required (universities understand how hard it can be to get!) so please don’t worry if you don’t have any.
* Some tips for getting work experience:
  + Send emails/letters to firms in your local area – explain that you are a student looking for an unpaid insight into law. Many firms are supportive of students and will often accommodate you, even if only for an afternoon or a few hours.
  + Go to your local criminal court and sit in the public gallery. Anyone can do this and this can often be the most exciting area of law!
  + Approach firms/organisations that perhaps aren’t directly related to law in the typical sense. If it is proving difficult to get work experience at the more usual law firms, maybe you could approach organisations such as your local government, local politics-related organisations, or your local Citizens Advice Bureau. All of these things are related to law and will still teach you skills that are relevant to a legal career. Even things such as working in a local estate agency will allow you to see how an office environment works – all of these things can be transferred to the legal profession.
* Always dress smartly and be enthusiastic when attending any work experience placements.
* Make sure you ask lots of questions and show a genuine interest in what you are doing.
* Volunteering, in any sense, is always a positive thing to have on any application, so even if you can’t find any form of work experience, this is certainly another avenue to explore. Local primary schools, animal rescue centres, care homes etc are always looking for volunteers – all of these allow you to develop the communication/organisation skills mentioned earlier, and are usually good fun too! Overall, this shows that you’re a personable, ‘well-rounded’ person too.

**Reading Recommendations**

* It’s always a good idea to keep up to date with current affairs and legal issues that arise in the press. This doesn’t mean reading the Financial Times or the Economist religiously (although if that’s what interests you, then there’s certainly no harm!) – just following a few relevant accounts on Twitter/Facebook (Legal Cheek, Lawyer2B, The Student Lawyer, Lawyers Weekly) and scrolling/flicking through a respected newspaper (there are specific ‘law’ sections in both The Times and The Guardian) on a regular basis is more than sufficient. It’s also quite a good idea to follow any key stories you notice (e.g. the Pistorious trial, or the debate surrounding human cloning) through to the end so that you’re able to discuss them if you feel you’d like to in interviews.
* Another good way to stay up to date with corporate law (only if you’re interested!) is through following law firms social medial pages. Clifford Chance, Freshfields, Allen and Overy and Linklaters all have brilliant summary/update pages where they publish information about new deals etc – it’s worth a look if that’s an area of law that you might be considering. There’s definitely no need to know facts/statistics on topics such as this in any detail.
* If there’s a particular area of the law that you’re really interested in, maybe you could go to your local library and find a book on the subject.
* Introductory books are also useful (and interesting!):
  + ‘What About Law?’ by Catherine Barnard and Janet O’Sullivan
  + ‘Letters to a Law Student’ by Nicholas McBride
  + ‘The Law Machine’ by Clare Dyer
  + ‘The Rule of Law’ by Tom Bingham

**The LNAT**

* The LNAT test is the National Admissions Test for Law that is required of prospective applicants of some universities. The full list of universities that require it can be found here: <http://www.lnat.ac.uk/what-is-lnat/do-i-need-to-sit-the-test/>
* It is an aptitude test; it tests your verbal reasoning skills, your ability to understand/interpret information, and your ability to draw conclusions – it does NOT test your knowledge of the law.
* If you are applying to Oxford, you must sit your LNAT between 1st September 2016 and 20th October 2016 – for all other universities, the deadline is 20th January 2017.
* It is taken at a test centre completely independently of your school. It is up to you to book it and arrange to sit it. More information about booking your test can be found here: <http://www.lnat.ac.uk/registration/booking-your-test/>
* The format is a 2 hour 15 minute test divided into two sections (more information can be found here: <http://www.lnat.ac.uk/what-is-lnat/test-format/>).
  + Section A: 95 minutes, 42 multiple choice questions.
  + Section B: 40 minutes, a choice of one of three essay questions.
* It is very difficult to ‘revise’ for the test as such – it is not designed to be revised for. The best thing you can do in way of preparation is to familiarise yourself with the types of questions that might occur. The LNAT website has a preparation guide as well as a few practice tests that will allow you to do this: <http://www.lnat.ac.uk/how-to-prepare/>
* You could also practice planning/writing essays on a range of topics under pressure – or at least within the 40 minute time limit. The test is conducted on a computer so it might be worth practising your speed-typing skills too! Don’t forget there will not be a spellchecker, so accuracy is also important.
* A good book to considering purchasing is ‘Mastering the National Admissions Test for Law’ by Mark Shepherd. This might also be available at your local/school library so maybe check this out before spending the money.
* There is a cost to sit the LNAT, but there are a range of bursaries etc available if this is a problem so do consider these. More information can be found on the LNAT website (<http://www.lnat.ac.uk/on-test-day/>).
* Do make sure you read the ‘On the Day’ section (<http://www.lnat.ac.uk/on-test-day/>) of the LNAT website carefully as there are several complexities involved in sitting the test e.g. bringing your passport with you etc. You will not be able to sit the test if you don’t do all of these things, so make sure you have read it thoroughly!
* The LNAT is designed to be difficult – the average score for the multiple choice section is often around about 23, so please don’t be discouraged if you’re finding it tricky to master. Just remember that it is only one factor of your application, so even if it goes horribly that doesn’t necessarily mean that your application isn’t still strong.

**Interview**

* If your application is successful after the first round of initial screening, you will be invited to interview.
* Sometimes this takes place at the college you applied to, but sometimes it might be at a completely random college – the same applies if you decide to make an open application. Also, once you have been through your first round of interviews, it might be that you are also interviewed at a second college. This is nothing to worry about, and is actually quite common.
* For Law, you normally have two 30-minute interviews – although this can vary from anywhere between 25-40 minutes.
* Sometimes the format will be that you receive a passage just before your interview, and the discussion will be based around what you have read.
* Other tutors choose to structure their interviews around your personal statement and own personal experiences, followed by a completely spontaneous discussion of a particular area of law.
* It is important to remember that NO knowledge of the law is assumed whatsoever – in fact, if you are familiar with the area of the law that the tutor chooses, he/she will often pick another area to avoid the discussion of knowledge/subjects you have already studied.
* The tutors are not interested in the knowledge of the law, they are interested in how you think. When answering their questions, try to think out loud. By doing this, tutors will be able to follow your thought process and see how you arrive at different conclusions.
* Tutors will often deliberately disagree with you – even if you are right! Don’t let this put you off – they are often only playing devil’s advocate to stimulate discussion. Listen to their comments, consider how this fits in with the opinion you have already given, and be prepared to adapt your ideas if you think they have a point. However, do feel free to dismiss their comments (politely!) if you don’t think they fit with your discussion.
* In terms of what to wear, some candidates will wear very relaxed attire (e.g. jeans and a t-shirt) but others will wear smart clothes or a suit. Wear whatever you feel comfortable in – there is no right answer. However, it is important to make sure you present yourself in the best way possible, and as a professional. There is absolutely no need to go out and by a new expensive suit, but it is perhaps advisable to give the impression that you have made an effort.
* Further advice on Oxford interviews can be found here: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/interviews/sample-interview-questions>

**More information about applying to study Law at Oxford can be found at:** <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/undergraduate-admissions-faqs-ba-jurisprudence>

**If you have any further questions, please don’t hesitate to email Keble at Large:** [kebleatlarge@outlook.com](mailto:kebleatlarge@outlook.com)