ACQUIRE A RIGOROUS, WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION

There are no specific course requirements or recommended majors for law school, so choose a major that truly interests you. Challenge your thinking and reasoning skills by pursuing a rigorous and diverse undergraduate education. Seek ways to distinguish yourself and enhance your academic experience.

Listed below are important skills, values, knowledge, and experience that you should acquire prior to law school. These will provide a sound foundation for a legal education. (For more details see Preparing for Law School written by the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar http://www.americanbar.org.)

CORE SKILLS

Prelaw students should develop a foundation of basic skills through educational and life experiences that will prepare them to become competent law students and legal professionals.

- **Analytical and Problem Solving Skills**: Courses in philosophy, logic, ethics, economics, math, the sciences, and computer science can help you develop these skills.
- **Critical Reading Skills**: Opportunities to develop critical reading skills can be found in a wide range of experiences, including the close reading of complex material in literature, political or economic theory, philosophy, or history.
- **Writing and Editing Skills**: Seek as many experiences as possible that will require rigorous and analytical writing, including preparing original pieces of substantial length and revising written work in response to constructive criticism.
- **Oral Communication and Listening Skills**: Develop these skills through activities such as engaging in debate, making formal presentations in class, or speaking before groups in school, the community, or the workplace.
- **Organization and Management Skills**: You can develop this skill through undertaking school projects that require substantial research and writing, or through the preparation of major reports for an employer, a school, or a civic organization.

CORE KNOWLEDGE

There are certain basic areas of knowledge that will be helpful to you during your legal education and your development as a competent lawyer. Types of knowledge that will maximize your ability to benefit from a legal education include a broad understanding of the following:

- History, including the various factors (social, political, economic, and cultural) that have influenced the development of our society in the United States
- Political thought and of the contemporary American political system
- Economics (particularly micro-economics and an understanding of the interaction between Economic theory and public policy)
- Basic mathematical and financial skills, such as algebra, statistics, and an ability to analyze financial data
- Human behavior and social interaction
- Diverse cultures within and beyond the United States, International institutions and issues, world events, and the increasing interdependence of the nations and communities
IMPORTANT GRADING POLICY INFORMATION

There are two important differences between the way your GPA is calculated on your U of U transcript and the way your GPA will be calculated when you apply to law school.

1. **Credit/No Credit (CR/NC):** For classes graded CR or NC instead of a letter grade, a CR grade will not be included in your GPA when you apply to law school. However, unlike at the U of U, an NC grade will be converted into a failing grade (an E at the U of U). This includes exercise and activity classes.

2. **REPEATED CLASSES:** When you repeat a class previously taken at the U of U, your U of U GPA will only include the most recent grade. However, the first grade remains on your transcript, and both grades will count towards your GPA when you apply to law school.

‘W’s (Withdrawals): ‘W’s do not affect your GPA when applying to law school. One or two ‘W’s on an entire transcript is not of concern, and a ‘W’ is far better than a poor grade. However, law schools are concerned with a pattern of ‘W’s throughout a degree, which can lead to questions about grade manipulation and/or an applicant’s judgment.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Academic achievement is important, but not enough. What you do outside the classroom shows that you excel in more than just academics. Law related experience is not required. Like your major, the type of activities does not matter as much as the substance. Law schools particular value activities that demonstrate qualities like, Leadership, initiative, collaboration, and community engagement. These activities, however, supplement your application. They will not make up for poor grades.

A list of some of the U of U resources is on the PPA website, [http://ppa.utah.edu](http://ppa.utah.edu). You are not limited to activities on that list, and they are not better than other activities you might enjoy.

Things to Remember
- Keep contact information for supervisors for future recommendation letters.
- Writing reflections on what you learn through each experience in a journal will be helpful when you write your personal statement.

PLAN FOR LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION EARLY

Most law schools require 1-3 letters of recommendation. At least one letter should be from an instructor who is able to make specific observations about your personal and academic achievements and your potential for graduate study.

Getting To Know Professors
- Utilize your instructors’ office hours to ask questions and get clarification
- Attend short programs by the professor
- Work as a research assistant for the professor
- Keep in touch with the professor after the class is over
- Take more than one class from the professor

OTHER CAMPUS RESOURCES
- **Annual Law School Fair.** Every fall, Law school representatives from across the U.S. come to the Law School Fair in the Student Union, to talk with students and distribute information. Approximately 100 law schools are usually represented.

- **S.J. Quinney College of Law:** The U of U law school hosts a Law School Application Workshop and Law School Financial Aid Workshop each Fall semester. They also provide the opportunity to visit a law school class [https://sjquinney.utah.edu/](https://sjquinney.utah.edu/).