

SKIDMORE COLLEGE

PRE-LAW GUIDE

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

CONTACT US: 518-580-5790
WWW.SKIDMORE.EDU/CAREER

Skidmore offers several resources to students interested in law school including:

Career Development Center (CDC)

Zachary VanGalder, Associate Director of Inclusive Career Exploration and Pre-Law Advisor, helps support students interested in pre-law. To arrange an appointment, please use Handshake and select Pre-

Is law school worth the cost and how am I going to pay for it?

First consider how this degree will benefit your future career. Next, calculate your potential earnings against any debt you might incur as a student. In addition, you may want to evaluate some of the following options: public law schools, scholarships, part-time programs, or working for a couple of years.

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Skidmore's Career Development Center offers a number of networking and recruiting events.

How do I decide where to submit an application?

A number of factors can influence where you decide to attend law school – reputation, career opportunities, specialties, location, faculty, etc.

Grad School Matrix
If you log-in to your CDC Account (select Forged Password if you haven't logged in recently, then check your e-mail and follow the prompts), you will find a document called Grad School Matrix under the Resources tab. This chart will help you to organize the information you find during your research.

Pre-Law Advisor

You should plan to meet with Skidmore's Pre-law Advisor, Christine Kopec, Esq. As an attorney,

Personal Statement /Narrative

What constitutes a good personal statement?

A good personal statement conveys the root of your interest in law and shows your enthusiasm for the field. It's your chance to allow the reader to get to know you as an applicant.

Skidmore has several ways to receive assistance with revising your graduate admissions essays including: Faculty, The Career Development Center, and the Writing Center.

As you begin the process of writing your personal statement, please allow enough time to write 3-6 drafts, which could take about 2-3 months. We are happy to work with students and alumni at any stage of the writing process. However, working on drafts that are immediately due encourages "quick fixes" and is contrary to our goal of approaching writing as a process.

Start building a pool of possible topics and points with some simple writing exercises:

- x List all experiences related to law. Write for 1-2 minutes each. The one that you had the most to say about could be a topic of interest for your statement.
- x Was there one time when you realized what you wanted to do? What is your ultimate goal? What do you want to do with this degree?
- x Write 5-7 skills, come up with one example for each
- x What is the most important concept you learned in college?
- x What do you consider the most important book, article, play, or film you have ever read/seen, and how has it influenced you?
- x Which writers and which particular articles in your field of study have had the greatest influence on the development of your thought?
- x Who were your favorite professors in college, and why? How has each influenced you?

There are a number of authors who write on the subject including Don Asher and Joe Schall.

Here is a rough outline of the process:

- 1) Identify the question you need to answer and the character/word limit that you must follow.
- 2) Log-in to your My CDC Account and review the one page handout on the Do's and Don'ts on Writing Personal Statements. Also, consider reviewing some of the other materials listed above and completing the writing exercises.
- 3) Start an outline and create your first draft. Worry about the character limit later.
- 4) Make an appointment for a critique. Send your personal statement via e-mail as a Word document by the day before the appointment. Feedback will be shared with you during the appointment.
- 5) Revise your document. Read the paper to see if it flows from one topic to another, determine if the organization is logical, check to see if the paper fits the actual assignment. Consider rewriting paragraphs to make them sound better and to support the claims you have made.
- 6) Schedule a 2nd appointment and continue revising until you have a final draft.
- 7) Once you have a more final draft, have it reviewed by two other people – possibly a lawyer, a faculty member who knows you well, or the Writing Center.

What We Can Do:

- x Assist students in developing critical reading and writing strategies, including breaking

- x The earlier you submit your application in the application cycle, the more seats are available. The longer you wait, the more seats fill, and the process becomes more competitive.
- x If seeking federal financial aid, complete FAFSA in Jan/Feb; the deadline is June

- x Attend the Graduate School Expo, attend any law related workshops
- x Attend Career Jam, meet any law related volunteers
- x Consider applying for and attending one or more of the Career and Internship Consortium (CIC) events
- x Consider attending a Transitions and Transformations networking event in New York City or Boston *advanced registration required
- x Consider attending Law School Admission Council (LSAC) events in your area
- x Meet with or talk to career advisors that attended law schools of interest