

UCA Pre-Law Fact Sheet

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Dr. Fairbanks's teaching and research expertise is in public law. She teaches, among others, courses on constitutional law, civil liberties law, and judicial systems and processes. Many of the court cases studied in these courses will be featured in law school curriculums. The pre-law advisor is also the principal advisor for students minoring in Legal Studies

(<https://uca.edu/politicalscience/home/programs/political-science/minor-in-legal-studies/>).

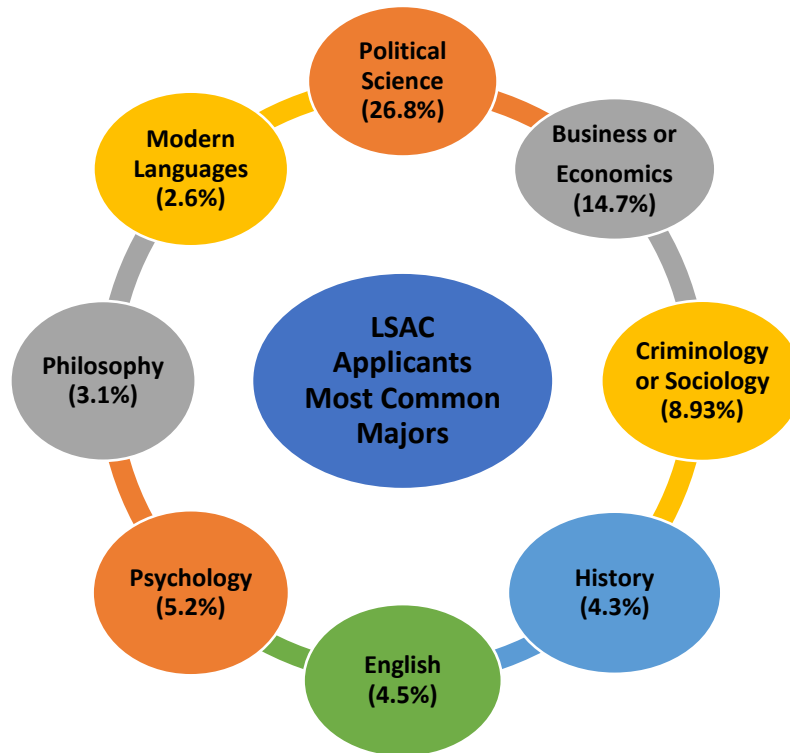
Special Note: The Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) is the organization that sponsors the Law School Aptitude Test (LSAT) that most law schools require candidates take as a part of the application process, which in turn requires opening an account with LSAC. LSAC also operates the candidate assembly service (CAS), which provides law schools with the candidate's LSAT score(s), letters of reference, the candidate's academic information, personal statement, etc. in one package. Most American Bar Association-approved law schools require the CAS for applicants. LSAC asks universities to designate one individual as the pre-law advisor and to serve as the liaison for LSAC and students considering applying to law school. Dr. Fairbanks is UCA's designated pre-law advisor and any questions about the LSAC/LSAT can be answered by her!

Pre-law Advising: In addition to serving as a LSAC liaison, the pre-law advisor assists students who are thinking about law school on, among other things, when it is best to take the LSAT, what courses offered across campus may improve the student's aptitudes and qualifications for law school, what law school programs are best suited for the student's career interests, how to improve their personal statements, etc. Insofar as students have varying academic strengths and career interests, the advice provided by the pre-law advisor is tailored to each student.

Steps to Prepare for Law School and a Legal Career:



Deciding on Law School: Ideally, the student meets with the pre-law advisor well before their senior year and uses the elective hours within their declared degree program to take the law school-related courses recommended to them by the pre-law advisor. Given these circumstances, there is no major in pre-law as such at UCA nor is there a standard or required course of study for pre-law students. Pre-law students will need to declare and successfully complete one of the majors offered at UCA. Depending on the major selected, the student may also need to declare and successfully complete a minor. UCA offers a host of majors and programs that can best facilitate enrollment into a law program in the future. LSAC surveys reveal the most common majors completed by admitted law school students. Note the variety, each one a major at UCA.



Pre-law and the Selection of a Major/Minor: A common misconception is that that a student interested in going to law school ought to major and/or minor in a particular discipline, that some majors and minors are better for winning admission to law schools than others. The fact of the matter is that when it comes to reviewing applicants, law schools do not value one major or minor over another.

Building Skills for Law School: What does matter is how well the student performed in their declared areas of study and whether they have acquired the academic skills and abilities critical to doing well once in law school. According to a LSAC survey of law school faculty, of the 70 different skills evaluated, the top 10 skills needed for success in law school are:

Reading

- Reading critically (92% of those surveyed said this is highly important)
- Reading class materials (85%)

Writing

- Writing with good organizational structure (82%)
- Arguing logically and persuasively in writing (84%)

Critical Thinking

- Identifying the principle, rule of law, or statute operating in or applicable to a case or legal problem (89%)
- Applying a case, rule, principle, or statute to a new or hypothetical set of facts (90%)

Organization

- Organizing evidence into argument (84%)
- Identifying the key facts in a case (86%)

Legal Reasoning

- Inductive reasoning - ability to **develop** a theory/idea (86%)
- Deductive reasoning - ability to **test** a theory/idea (83%)

Insofar as a wide variety of majors and minors address several of the top skills, albeit in varying degrees, the pre-law student is free to choose the major and/or minor that interests him or her the most. Students interested in the subject matter of their declared major and/or minor are much more likely to learn more, earn higher grades, and enhance their credentials for admission to a law school, especially if they take advantage of pre-law advising to develop as many of the listed skills as possible. This freedom of choice also allows the pre-law student to select majors and/or minors that supplement their career interests in law or provide viable career options should they choose not to go to law school.