



Harvard Law School
J.D. Admissions
1563 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138

Junior Deferral Program (JDP)

Admissions FAQ

ELIGIBILITY

- Am I eligible for this program?
 - You are eligible to apply for the JDP as long as you are:
 - Enrolled at Harvard College
 - Recognized by the College as a spring semester Junior by the February 1 application deadline
 - Committed to deferring your enrollment at HLS for 2 years after graduating
- If I am abroad during junior year, does that affect my eligibility?
 - You are still eligible to apply for the program.
 - Coursework completed as part of any semester abroad program will be considered if the credits are reflected on your Harvard College transcript.
 - If you will not be on campus during the interview process in the spring, you should be in touch with the admissions office. For candidates invited to interview, we will make every effort to conduct a Skype interview while you are abroad or postpone until your return to Cambridge (if possible).
- Am I eligible to apply if I have taken a semester off?
 - As stated above, to apply for the JDP you must be recognized as a spring semester junior at the February 1 deadline. If you are a spring semester junior, regardless of the amount of time it took to become one, then the fact that you have taken a semester off will not affect your eligibility.

APPLICATION TIMING

- When is the application due?
 - February 1. The application will become available in mid-September.
- Is there any advantage to applying now versus after graduating and having work experience?
 - Apply when you are ready. Some people will want to apply now so that they have an answer about law school before starting a job search. Others will want to take Junior year to focus on seminars and classes, rather than an application process. It's an individual decision and we encourage you to talk with your House pre-law tutor.
- Will this be a regular rolling admission process? When is it best to apply?
 - Unlike the regular admission process, this program will not have rolling admissions. We will accept applications in the fall through the application deadline of Feb 1. We may begin reviewing files as they are complete, but all decisions will be released at the same time in mid-late June (pending receipt of applicants' Junior Spring grades).

- When should I take the LSAT?
 - Applicants must have taken the LSAT (and have a reported score) no later than the February administration. There is no advantage to taking an earlier LSAT; however, the February LSAT is the last test date we will accept for Junior applicants.
- If you are not admitted, can you reapply later?
 - Yes! If you are not selected for the JDP, we strongly encourage you to reapply either during your senior year or after gaining full time work experience.
 - If you do choose to reapply, please note that we keep applications on file for three years. If more than three years pass between your JDP application and when you choose to reapply, you must submit an entirely new application.
 - To reapply, you must register with LSAC's Credential Assembly Service, complete a new application form, submit a new personal statement and pay the application fee. You may submit new recommendations or rely on those in your previous application.
 - Your LSAT score will be valid for 5 years after you took the test.
- If I am accepted to the program, how much time do I have to respond?
 - Admitted students will be asked respond to their offer no later than August 1, 2014.
- If I accept your offer of admission, can I apply to other law schools?
 - No, if you accept the HLS offer, you cannot have an active deferral and apply to other schools at the same time. A student who wants to apply to another law school would need to withdraw from our class before submitting other applications.
- How do I apply?
 - Apply online through the Law School Admission Council (LSAC) at <http://www.lsac.org/jd>.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- What are the application requirements?
 - Expected to graduate from Harvard College with the Class of 2015
 - HLS application, Personal Statement and Resume
 - \$85 application fee
 - LSAT score (will consider the February test date)
 - Undergraduate Transcript (update required with junior year final grades)
 - A minimum of two letters of recommendation, maximum 3. We strongly encourage you to submit your two required letters from academic sources. If you are thinking about adding a professional letter, that should be your third “optional” letter.
 - By invitation, an on campus interview
- Are admissions criteria the same for the JDP as for the regular application cycle?
 - Yes, admissions standards will be the same for applicants to the JDP as for the standard pool. Admissions decisions are based on the totality of available information about each applicant, and a careful evaluation of the candidate’s past accomplishments and future promise.
 - As a general guideline, most admitted applicants demonstrate potential for success in law school through an exceptional undergraduate academic record, LSAT scores in the top

percentiles and substantial accomplishments in work or extracurricular activities; however, no one of these aspects of an applicant's file is dispositive in the admissions decision.

- Our assessment includes factors such as work experience and demonstrated leadership, as well as intangible qualities such as energy, ambition, judgment, ability to overcome adversity, high ideals, and concern for the welfare of others. Our admissions committee seeks to identify characteristics that are important to academic success in law school, and qualities that will contribute diversity of perspective and experience, general excellence, and vitality to the student body.
- Can you explain more about the interview process?
 - Interviews for the JDP are by invitation only; no applicants will be admitted without an interview, however, not all applicants will be invited to interview. Interviews will be conducted in person, by both a member of the Admissions Committee and a faculty member, on the HLS campus.

MAJORS/ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

- What majors are you looking for?
 - Students from all academic disciplines and majors are encouraged to apply. The Junior Deferral Program may be of particular interest to students in STEM majors.
- If I am a STEM major, why might the JDP be particularly interesting for me?
 - Lawyers with experience in the sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics fields are currently involved in some of the most important legal and regulatory questions of the 21st century and will continue to be. If you have a STEM background, you may wish to work in the field for a few years for practical experience in the sciences before studying the legal aspects that regulate such work.
- Does it make a difference if I have a BA or a BS? Do you take into account differences in GPAs across concentrations?
 - Harvard Law School considers applications for all undergraduate majors. There is no preference given to any particular discipline. The admissions committee will review your entire transcript which includes examining the rigor of your curriculum as well as grades received. The committee will be looking for both breadth and depth in your curriculum. Advanced seminars, labwork and classes with extensive research and writing components are often ways students can demonstrate knowledge in a particular field.
- What if I studied abroad?
 - If you have completed any of your undergraduate coursework at a foreign institution, Harvard Law School requires that your foreign transcripts be submitted through the [LSAC's Credential Assembly Service](#). The one exception to this requirement is if you completed the foreign work through a study abroad, consortium, or exchange program sponsored by a US or Canadian institution, and the work is clearly indicated as such on your Harvard College transcript.

THE TWO YEAR DEFERRAL REQUIREMENT

- Are there any restrictions on what I can do during my deferral period?
 - Students may decide to spend the two years between college graduation and matriculation at HLS in a variety of ways. Most will choose to pursue full time employment or a masters degree program. Students may also choose to pursue research or fellowship opportunities. The time *must* be spent in a structured educational program or employment situation.
- What if I want to do something entrepreneurial or start my own business?
 - Great! If you decide to pursue something entrepreneurial, we will ask to see a copy of your business plan, commitments from financial backers, etc.
- Will applicants be judged on what they say they intend to do with the two years before enrolling?
 - As with any applicant for law school, we will be interested in how you plan to use your law degree, and how you envision your time before law school helping you to shape or refine that vision. As you learn more about the programs available to you at HLS and as you spend time considering your plans post-college graduation, we understand that vision may change. With that in mind, you may choose to tell us about your plans, but you don't have to.
- Is there any career advising associated with the program?
 - Career advising for students admitted to the JDP will still be available through the Harvard College Office of Career Services as well as through your House pre-law tutor.
- What are the implications of this program on my employment search?
 - You should discuss this with the Office of Career Services at Harvard College with regards to specific employment options. However, universities, companies and employers are increasingly familiar with this type of academic program. We do not anticipate difficulties in the job search process; however, if you find that an employer has questions about the program after your acceptance, the J.D. Admissions Office will work with you to help however we can.
- Can I defer for more than two years?
 - We will work with you on a case by case basis if you are admitted and are considering an extended deferral period.
- What if I decide that I don't want to defer?
 - Students admitted in the JDP cannot elect to go “straight through” and matriculate immediately after undergraduate graduation. If you decide you would prefer to go directly to law school, you must withdraw and reapply to HLS in the standard admissions process during the fall of your senior year.

FINANCIAL AID

- How is financial aid awarded at HLS?
 - Similar to the financial aid philosophy of Harvard College, Harvard Law School's financial aid program is need-based therefore HLS does not award “merit” or “full-ride” scholarships. Our financial aid program has two central goals: to help make a legal education accessible to every student in the JD program through need-based aid, and to preserve the broadest range of career options for graduates through need-based loan repayment assistance (the Low Income Protection Plan, or LIPP). For more information, visit the Student Financial Services webpage at: <http://www.law.harvard.edu/current/sfs/basics/index.html>.

- Will parents' income be included in financial aid considerations?
 - As part of running a need based program, the HLS believes that the most equitable way to measure financial need is to consider family (parental) resources for all students under the age of 25, with a reduced assessment of family resources for students between 26 and 28. Parental resources are not considered for students over the age of 29.
- How will the financial aid process work for JDP students?
 - You will not apply for financial aid until the spring before you intend to matriculate. More information will be available to admitted students in with their offer letter.

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

- What if I don't apply for the JDP but I decide to apply as a senior? Will it hurt my chances?
 - No! There is absolutely no penalty in the admissions process for not applying as a junior. Applicants should apply when they feel they are able to present a strong application. Students who wish to enroll in their J.D. program the fall after graduation are not eligible to apply in the JDP program, and so, must apply as a senior.
- Does a summer internship help with admission?
 - Work experience is a valuable aspect of any application. The admissions committee will consider the nature of your work and volunteer experiences when evaluating your ability to handle the academic rigor of our program.
- How many students will be admitted under this program?
 - The number of offers for admission will depend on the number and strength of the applications received. As this is the first year of a pilot program, we will determine the number if admits based on the size and strength of the applicant pool.
- Is this compatible with other graduate school programs?
 - Applicants to the JDP who are considering a joint degree should contact our partner schools (HKS, HBS, HMS, GSD, HSPH, or GSAS) for more information about the degrees offered. To be eligible for a joint degree program, you must be admitted separately to both Harvard schools. Masters or PhD work will be counted towards the two year deferral period at HLS.
- What if we are also considering the 2+2 program at HBS?
 - Applicants may apply to both the 2+2 program at HBS and the JDP at HLS. Both programs require two years of work experience before matriculating. The student, in conjunction with HLS and HBS Admissions will need to determine which program they enroll in first, and which program they will defer for a third year. This decision will be made on a case by case basis.
- Is there any special process for international students?
 - The application process is the same for all current Harvard undergraduate students applying for the JDP program, including international students.