

Widener University Commonwealth Law School

Admissions Policies and Procedures

I. General Principles

- A. The Widener University Commonwealth Law School seeks to attract and admit applicants who have the ability to complete the program successfully, who have broadly diverse backgrounds and experience, and who will make a positive contribution to the Law School, the University, and the legal profession.

The Law School will foster and maintain equality of opportunity in legal education without discrimination on the basis of sex, gender (including identity and expression), pregnancy status, age, race, national origin or ethnicity, religion, disability, veteran status of the Vietnam era or other covered veteran, sexual orientation, marital status, or genetic information.

The Law School is committed to providing full opportunities for the study of law and entry into the profession by members of underrepresented groups and is committed to having a student body that is diverse with respect to gender, race, ethnicity, and LGBTQ+ identity.

- B. In its review, the Admissions Committee will evaluate, in addition to the applicant's Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) score, Undergraduate Grade Point Average (UGPA), and LSAC Credential Assembly Service Report all other factors relevant to predicting how successful the applicant will be in law school and thereafter including:
1. whether the applicant will make a positive contribution to the Law School and the University, to the legal profession, and;
 2. whether the applicant will contribute to a diverse student body that promotes cross-cultural understanding, helps break down racial and ethnic stereotypes, enables students to better understand persons of different races, ethnic groups and backgrounds, and prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce and society, and;
 3. whether the applicant can in all likelihood successfully complete the requirements to be admitted to the practice of law.

In addition to attributes listed above, such factors include but are not limited to experience living in other regions of the United States or in other countries or cultures; disability; personal, cultural, social, economic or educational disadvantage; the existence and nature of work experience; performance in other graduate or professional programs; military service; extracurricular activities; and participation in volunteer or service activities.

- C. The Admissions Committee will not be influenced by expressions of interest in any applicant not relevant under this Policy.

- D. The law school shall not admit an applicant who does not appear capable of satisfactorily completing its program of legal education and being admitted to the bar.
- E. Applicants have a continuing duty to update their responses to the character and fitness section of the Law School application. Omission or misrepresentation of any significant fact in any statement on their application may be considered sufficient reason for refusal or revocation of admission, expulsion, or a revocation of the law degree after conferral.

II. Admission of first-year students through the regular admissions program

- A. In reviewing applicants eligible for admission, the Admissions Committee may consider:
 - 1. Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) scores from tests taken during the five year period preceding the date for which enrollment is sought
 - 2. Undergraduate grade point averages (UGPA), taking into account the school, the major, the courses, and grade trends
 - 3. The LSAC Credential Assembly Service Report
 - 4. The applicant's personal statement
 - 5. The applicant's résumé.
 - 6. Letters of Recommendation
 - 7. Diversity Statements are an optional addition to the application
 - 8. Any necessary addenda and disclosures
 - 9. Other factors as indicated in Section I(B) of this Policy
- B. Undergraduate Degree Requirements:
 - 1. The law school requires for admission to its J.D. degree program a bachelor's degree that has been awarded by an institution that is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.
 - 2. Notwithstanding subsection (a) a law school may admit to its J.D. degree program:
 - i. an applicant who has completed three-fourths of the credits leading to a bachelor's degree as part of a bachelor's degree/J.D. degree program if the institution is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education; and
 - ii. a graduate of an institution outside the United States if the quality of the program of education of that institution is equivalent to that of institutions accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.
 - 3. Within a reasonable time after a student registers, the law school shall have on file the student's official transcripts verifying all academic credits undertaken and degree(s) conferred. At the latest, transcripts must be received by September 30th. If transcripts are not received by September 30th the student will be unable to register for spring classes until the transcripts are received or the offer of admission may be revoked and the student will be dis-enrolled from law school.
- C. The following rules apply to applicants who have been academically disqualified from this or another law school:

1. An applicant who has been academically dismissed from this or another law school must be reviewed by the full Admissions Committee.
 2. Such applicants may be considered for admission only if:
 - i. At least two years will have elapsed between the date of the applicant's disqualification and the date of the applicant's expected matriculation at this school; and
 - ii. The applicant must establish to the Committee's satisfaction that the nature of the applicant's work, activities, or studies during the period following dismissal indicates a stronger potential to complete the course of study at this law school and be admitted to the bar than that which existed upon dismissal; and
 - iii. The applicant must provide a letter of standing and an official law school transcript from the law school in which the student was dismissed.
 3. An exception may be made to Section II(C)(2) in extraordinary circumstances of hardship.
 4. The Committee may, in its discretion, require additional evidence to demonstrate the applicant's ability to complete the course of study.
 5. If the Committee admits a previously disqualified applicant, a statement of the considerations that led to the decision shall be placed in the admittee's file.
- D. The Admissions Committee may ask any applicant to supply information in addition to that which is required above.

III. Admission of first-year students through the Trial Admissions Program

- A. The Trial Admissions Program (TAP) is a performance-based, admission program offered to applicants who have demonstrated potential for law school success and the ideals of Section I above but do not meet the criteria listed in Section II above. Invitations to participate in TAP are offered at the Admissions Committee's discretion.
- B. No academic credit toward the J.D. degree is granted for TAP.
- C. Candidates who successfully complete the program are granted admission to Widener University Commonwealth Law School. Successful completion is defined as earning a 2.30 GPA or higher in TAP and adhering to all TAP policies and procedures as defined in the TAP Program Policies and Procedures Memorandum.
- D. Candidates who do not successfully complete TAP must wait two years before they can reapply for admission to the law school.
 1. Upon reapplying the applicant must establish to the full Admission Committee's satisfaction that the nature of the applicant's work, activities, or studies during the period following the unsuccessful completion of TAP indicates a stronger potential to complete the course of study at this law school and be admitted to the bar than that which existed upon unsuccessful completion.
 2. An exception may be made to Section III(D) in extraordinary circumstances of hardship

- E. Participation in TAP does not guarantee an offer of acceptance to the law school. Participants are not entitled to a review of their performance and decisions are not appealable.
- F. The Admissions Committee may ask any applicant to supply information in addition to that which is required above.

IV. Admission of Transfer Students

- A. The Admissions Committee may admit a student and grant credit for courses completed at another ABA approved law school if the courses were undertaken as a J.D. degree student.
- B. The Admissions Committee may not admit a student and grant credit for courses completed from a non-ABA accredited law school.
- C. In accordance with the Law School's Academic Rules, the Law School will grant credit to an applicant accepted for transfer toward the J.D. degree of this school for courses taken at an ABA-approved law school on a case-by case basis. In no event will transfer credit be awarded if the applicant has not earned a grade of C, its equivalent, or better in the class to be transferred.
- D. Each transfer student will be required to complete the required course work at this school to qualify for the J.D. degree, except for those courses for which transfer credit has been granted and which are deemed to be the subject-matter equivalents of required courses at this school.
- E. In reviewing applicants eligible for transfer admission, the Admissions Committee may consider:
 - 1. A letter explaining reasons for transferring.
 - 2. An official transcript from the law school last attended including law school grade point averages (LGPA), taking into account the school, courses, and grade trends
 - 3. A letter from the law school last attended, certifying that the applicant is in good standing and is eligible to continue studies at that school
 - 4. The applicant's class rank (this requirement may be waived only in cases where the other law school does not calculate a class rank)
 - 5. Transfer applicants who completed less than 20 hours of coursework must submit and addendum explaining their law school performance
- 1. Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) scores from tests taken during the five year period preceding the date for which enrollment is sought
- 2. Undergraduate grade point averages (UGPA), taking into account the school, the major, the courses, and grade trends

3. The LSAC Credential Assembly Service Report
 4. The applicant's personal statement
 5. The applicant's résumé.
 6. Letters of Recommendation
 7. Diversity Statements are an optional addition to the application
 8. Any necessary addenda and disclosures
 9. Other factors as indicated in Section I(B) of this Policy
- F. An applicant who qualifies for consideration for transfer may be admitted if:
1. There is space available in the class to which admission is sought; and
 2. The applicant is in good standing at the law school last attended and is eligible to continue in such school; and
 3. Is found by the Admissions Committee, on the basis of the applicant's whole record, to be likely to be successful in completing the requirements for the J.D. degree at this school.

V. Admission of visiting students

- A. Students from ABA-approved law schools may be admitted to visit on a space-available basis. Students from non-ABA approved law school may not be admitted to visit.
- B. To be eligible for consideration for admission, a visiting applicant must supply:
 - a. A letter explaining reasons for visiting.
 - b. A list of the classes the applicant would like to take
 - c. A letter from the appropriate law school authority certifying the applicant's good academic standing at the applicant's current law school and indicating that the applicant has permission to take courses at this school
 - d. Any other information requested.
- C. Visiting students are not candidates for the J.D. degree of this school.

VI. Requests for deferment

- A. Deferments are granted only to incoming first-year students who have been offered admission to the Law School and have made a seat deposit. Transfer and visiting students are not eligible for deferments.
- B. The Admissions Committee may grant a deferment for up to two academic years to a petitioner who has been admitted both to the Law School and to another college or institution under a joint degree program, in order to enable the petitioner to complete the degree requirements of the other program or who have military, Peace Corps, AmeriCorps commitments.
- C. In all other cases, the Admissions Committee may grant a deferment for no more than one academic year. The Admissions Committee should take into account the reason for the requested deferment and the number of requests for deferment to the following year already granted. Only one deferment request per petitioner will be granted.

Adopted: November 11, 2020