

Prelaw Handbook

There is no prelaw major at UNC. Any major is fine as long as it is academically rigorous. As a prelaw student, you should have certain goals for your undergraduate education -- you should acquire good oral and written communication skills as well as good listening skills, you should learn to think analytically and critically, and you should learn to read and synthesize large amounts of materials.

Whatever major you choose, challenge yourself. Try to take honors courses when possible. Take a full course load, keeping twelve-credit semesters to a minimum. Attempt honors in your major if possible.

Good writing skills are essential in law school and in the practice of law. Law school is not the place to learn these skills. All students will benefit from taking a writing course such as English 305 and any additional writing courses of interest that fit in with your requirements. You are also encouraged to take your research and other course papers to the Writing Center, located in the SASB Building, for assistance and guidance. The Writing Center will work with you to help improve your writing skills. The Center's phone number is 962-7710. You may also request help with your writing by contacting the Writing Center at <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb> [1].

While there is no prelaw major, certain courses may be useful in preparing you for law school. Though law schools are increasingly looking for evidence of good writing skills (such as strong performance in writing courses on a transcript), no specific courses are required for Law School, and we do not recommend that you take many law-related courses. One or two are adequate. These courses can be found in many departments such as, but not limited to, Business, Communication, English, History, Journalism, Philosophy, Political Science, Public Policy, and Statistics.

Just as law schools do not have a preference as to your major, they generally do not care if you **double major** or if you have a **minor**. Again, what law schools care about is that you take academically rigorous courses and do high-quality work.

Law schools do not look favorably upon a lot of pass/fail grades in your transcript. You should limit these.

Studying abroad for a semester or a year will not greatly affect your chances of admission to law school. Law schools are, however, interested in students who have

diverse educational backgrounds. Additionally, bilingual attorneys often have a competitive edge. If you plan to study abroad, do so only at a reputable program that is academically rigorous.

Working for a lawyer or similar legal experience may be useful in assessing your interest in being a lawyer, but in general will not significantly affect your chances of admission to law school. If, however, you do something exceptional in such a job or internship, that experience may help you be admitted. You should do well enough during your internship to obtain a letter of recommendation from your supervisor. To learn more about opportunities to intern in a legal environment for academic credit, see a career counselor in University Career Services.

While law schools do not require students to participate in extracurricular activities while undergraduates, law schools do look favorably on leadership skills and community service in their applicants. You should not participate in an activity just for your resume, but instead undertake such an activity only because you have a true interest in it. Aim for quality over quantity. Making real contributions to just one or two organizations is much more meaningful than superficial affiliation with many groups.

Source URL: <https://careers.unc.edu/students/pre-professional-pre-graduate-advising/pre-law/prelaw-handbook>

Links

[1] <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb>