

EXAMPLES OF PERSONAL AND OPTIONAL STATEMENT PROMPTS FROM PAST YEARS

*These are simply examples! Please look for the **current** prompt and instructions for each school to which you are applying. If you have questions about Statements for a particular school, we encourage you to contact that school's Admissions Office directly for clarification.*

Columbia

Personal Statement — Candidates to Columbia Law School are required to submit a personal essay or statement supplementing required application materials. Such a statement may provide the Admissions Committee with information regarding such matters as: personal, family, or educational background; experiences and talents of special interest; reasons for applying to law school as they may relate to personal goals and professional expectations; or any other factors that you think should inform the Committee's evaluation of your candidacy for admission. This statement should be printed on a supplementary sheet or two and should be returned to the Law School with other application materials. If applying electronically, you must submit an electronic attachment.

Q: How long should my Personal Statement/Essay be?

A: While there is no official page limit, a good guideline is two double-spaced pages, using readable fonts and margins. Your personal statement/essay should be clear, concise and an example of your best writing. It should also be free from spelling and grammatical errors

Berkeley

Personal Statement — Please provide more information about yourself in a written personal statement. The subject matter of the essay is up to you, but keep in mind that the reader will be seeking a sense of you as a person and as a potential student and graduate of Berkeley Law.

Berkeley Law seeks to enroll a class with varied backgrounds and interests. If you wish, you may discuss how your interests, background, life experiences and perspectives would contribute to the diversity of the entering class. If applicable, you may also describe any disadvantages that may have adversely affected your past performance or that you have successfully overcome, including linguistic barriers or a personal or family history of cultural, educational or socioeconomic disadvantage.

Your personal statement should be limited to **four double-spaced pages**. Please include your name and LSAC account number on each page of the statement. If you are applying electronically, use an electronic attachment, and include your name on each page, instead of your signature.

Michigan

Optional Essays — Supplemental essays allow you an opportunity to provide us with relevant information that you were not able to include elsewhere in your application materials. If you wish, write one or two essays (but no more) on the following topics. Each essay should be about one page.

- 1) Describe your current hopes for your career after completing law school. How will your education, experience, and development so far support those plans?
- 2) If you do not think that your academic record or standardized test scores accurately reflect your ability to succeed in law school, please tell us why.
- 3) What do you think are the skills and values of a good lawyer? Which do you already possess? Which do you hope

to develop?

4) How might your perspectives and experiences enrich the quality and breadth of the intellectual life of our community or enhance the legal profession?

5) Why Michigan?

Penn

Personal Statement — The admissions committee requires that every applicant submit an original example of written expression. The purpose of this personal statement is to provide you with as flexible an opportunity as possible to submit information that you deem important to your candidacy. You may wish to describe aspects of your background and interests—intellectual, personal, or professional—and how you will uniquely contribute to the Penn Law community and/or the legal profession. Please limit your statement to **two pages, double spaced**.

Optional Essays — If you wish, you may write an additional essay on any of the following topics. These optional essays allow you an opportunity to provide the admissions committee with additional relevant information that you were not able to include in your personal statement. Please limit optional essays to one page, double spaced. When transmitting electronically, use the electronic attachment option.

1) Why are you interested in pursuing your legal education at Penn Law?

2) Describe how your background or experiences will contribute to or enhance the diversity of the Penn Law community (e.g., based on your culture, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, ideology, age, socioeconomic status, academic background, employment experience, etc.).

3) If you do not think that your academic record or standardized test scores accurately reflect your ability to succeed in law school, please tell us why.

4) Discuss a time when you voiced an unpopular opinion.

Virginia

Personal Statement — PLEASE ATTACH TO YOUR APPLICATION A PERSONAL STATEMENT that will give the Admissions Committee any information you believe relevant to the admissions decision that is not elicited elsewhere in the application. (Use an electronic attachment if applying electronically.) The statement is your opportunity to tell us about yourself; it may address your intellectual interests, significant accomplishments or obstacles overcome, personal or professional goals, educational achievements, or any way in which your perspective, viewpoint, or experiences will add to the richness of the educational environment of the School of Law.

What sort of information do you like to see in a personal statement?

Include with your application a personal statement that will give the Admissions Committee any information you believe relevant to the admissions decision that is not elicited elsewhere in the application. The statement is your opportunity to tell us about yourself; it may address your intellectual interests, significant accomplishments, obstacles overcome, personal or professional goals, educational achievements, or any way in which your perspective, viewpoint, or experiences will add to the richness of the educational environment of the School of Law.

Do you put a word limit on the length of personal statements?

No, we invite applicants to write essays that are long enough to express whatever they think the Admissions Committee should know. That said, applicants should remember that succinctness is a virtue.

Duke

Personal Statement — You are required to submit a personal statement. The statement is your opportunity to introduce yourself to the admissions committee and should include (1) what you think have been your significant personal experiences beyond what may be reflected in your academic transcripts and on your resume, and (2) your personal and career ambitions. There is no required length.

Optional Essays: You are welcome to supplement your personal statement with optional essays. You may submit a Duke-specific essay by letting us know why you want to go to law school and why you have decided to apply to Duke. You may also choose to submit an essay that describes how you will enhance the educational environment of the Law School and contribute to the diversity of the student body. Because we believe that diversity enriches the educational experience of all our students, Duke Law School seeks to admit students from a variety of academic, cultural, social, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. If you choose to submit the diversity essay, tell us more about your particular life experiences with an emphasis on how the perspectives that you have acquired would contribute to the intellectual community of the Law School.

Georgetown

Personal Statement — You may write your personal statement on any subject of importance that you feel will assist us in our decision. (please double-space)

UCLA

Personal Statement — Please provide a separate essay not to exceed **two double-spaced typed pages, no less than 12 point font** (or use an electronic attachment). In this essay you may discuss any attributes, experiences or interests that would enable you to make a distinctive contribution to the law school and/or the legal profession.

Public Interest Essay — Please write an essay of no more than four double-spaced pages responding to the following: We are interested in knowing about the concept and vision for your future public interest practice. This can derive from your personal or professional experience, your philosophy of how public interest practice relates to contemporary issues, your approach to problem solving, or some other relevant criteria of your own choosing. How do you hope that your public interest career will develop, and what are the means by which you expect to achieve your public interest goals?

Vanderbilt

Personal Statement — Please present yourself to the Admissions Committee by writing a personal statement. You may write about your background, experiences, interest in law, aspirations, or any topic that you feel will help readers of your application get a sense of you as a person and prospective law student. If you are applying electronically, please attach your statement to the electronic application form. Please limit your statement to **two pages** and provide your name and LSAC number (if available) on each page.

USC

Personal Statement — The admissions committee gives careful attention to your personal statement. We are particularly interested in your motivation for studying law, your academic background, and qualities you possess that may enhance the diversity of our student body. If you are a college senior or recent graduate, you may wish to mention your work history and extracurricular activities. If you have spent a year or more in the work force after college, tell us about your employment experience; enclose a resume to illustrate your chronological work history.

There is no specific word or page requirement or limit for your personal statement. However, the committee values carefully crafted essays that are clear, concise, and compelling.

Boston University

Personal Statement — What significant personal, social or academic experiences have contributed to your decision to study law? Please respond in **two pages**.

Optional Essay — In addition to your Personal Statement, you may wish to provide information regarding your ethnic, cultural or family background that is relevant to your development. You may also choose to discuss particular achievements, including obstacles overcome, that have not already been addressed in this application. Please respond in one page.

Minnesota

Personal Statement — The University of Minnesota's award-winning legal writing program recognizes that written communication is vital to the success of our graduates. All first-year students receive intensive individual instruction and writing credits are required during all three years at Minnesota. In making admissions decisions, Minnesota carefully considers the applicant's writing ability as demonstrated by the personal statement and other submissions.

This application requires that you present yourself in a personal statement. This essay may be on a subject of your choice and may be used to assess not only your writing skills, but your judgment, passions and analytical abilities. Your decision about what to present and how will assist us in evaluating you as a potential student and alum of the University of Minnesota Law School.

We suggest that your essay be **at least two and not more than five typewritten pages long**. No single spacing please. If there are ancillary matters that you wish to explain, such as breaks in your education or any other particular issue, please submit a separate essay or electronic attachment

Fordham

Personal Statement — Every year we receive many applications with similar academic credentials. In order to get a better sense of our applicants, we require a "personal statement" on a topic of your choosing. This allows you to demonstrate your ability to communicate effectively and concisely through your writing. Sharing this information provides another opportunity for us to get to know you beyond your academic record. Your personal statement should not exceed **two pages double spaced**.