

Covid-19 and Law school- What's the latest?

Below are a list of questions about how the COVID-19 pandemic, and the responses to it, might affect various aspects of the law school admissions process. This post will be updated regularly, but remember that events are moving VERY quickly, and circumstances are changing all the time, and will most likely continue to do so. When in doubt, double-check the info to make sure it's up to date. In particular, if you have applications pending right now, don't hesitate to contact individual law schools for the most accurate information about their own admissions process. I will continue to update this as warranted.

What about the LSAT?

The March 30th LSAT has been cancelled. Everyone who signed up for that date has been automatically switched to the April 25th sitting (or the June sitting for those who had signed up to take it abroad). However, with so many colleges and universities closed, LSAC remains uncertain about whether they'll have adequate test sites. And, of course, with a still evolving situation, it's hard to know right now whether additional public health measures will make the April sitting advisable or even possible. LSAC is updating this page regularly as new information emerges or as plans change.

Will law schools take into account how the pandemic has impacted test prep and might impact test experiences going forward?

It is nearly certain that they will. The admissions process is never *just* a numbers game, even as the LSAT and GPA weigh heavily in decision-making, and admissions committees really do engage in holistic reviews of applications, taking into account all the many factors that have gone into shaping applicants and their experiences, perspectives, and so on. Without question, the pandemic and the challenges it is presenting to all of us will play a role in the admissions process from here on out.

UPDATE: LSAC confirmed on 3/31 that all candidates who apply to law school, at any point, with a 2020 spring term on their transcript will have a "Dear Colleague" letter attached to their profile that will serve as a reminder that many students will have an altered spring 2020 transcript.

Are law schools extending their application deadlines?

Many application deadlines had passed before the anti-COVID19 measures went into effect, and are therefore not impacted by the epidemic. For those with late March or April deadlines we may see schools extending those dates either with a blanket deadline-change or on a case-by-case basis. If your ability to complete your application has been negatively affected by the current crisis, you should absolutely reach out to the particular law school to ask about their own accommodations for late submissions. This certainly includes those of you who were counting on applying with a March LSAT.

Are law schools extending their seat deposit deadlines?

If you've already been admitted to one or more law schools and are still trying to decide which offer to accept, you may face a more difficult situation with regard to the seat deposit deadlines. The earliest of these are coming up in April. Thus far no law schools appear to be issuing global extensions of these deadlines, but admissions officials are always open to considering extensions on a case-by-case basis. If there are specific reasons your decision has been impacted by the crisis (apart from inability to visit schools—see below), then definitely contact the schools to inquire about their flexibility.

How can I make a decision when I can't visit the law schools?

It's of course true that law school visits are critical to the decision-making process. Getting that "feel" for a school can be so important to your experience over the subsequent three years. Now that visits to most schools are impossible, how do you research that "feel"? Many schools are offering virtual tours, and making faculty and current students available for video chats. You can also ask admissions offices to put you in touch with current students, especially those that match your interests or background in ways that might make their perspectives particularly useful to you. And you can also still reach out directly to Career/Placement offices at individual law schools, and to faculty—all should be available via email and/or phone. But don't expect law schools to extend their seat deposit deadlines just because you haven't had a chance to visit. Since that situation won't change before you need to deposit, an extension wouldn't help too much.

One or more of my Spring 2020 classes is being converted to Pass/Fail—will that count against me in the law school admissions process?

No. Again, the law school admissions committees are looking at the whole picture, not just one grade or set of grades. Recall that law schools welcome addenda explaining anomalies in your academic record. A brief explanation of the circumstances will suffice to allay any concerns they might have. This is true whether you are applying this year or several years from now with perhaps an odd-looking Spring 2020. And of course, it is likely that in different ways many applicants in the future will have "odd-looking" Spring 2020 semesters on their transcripts. Everyone on the admissions side will be aware of what has happened.

UPDATE: Now that ETSU has officially offered the P/F option to students, remember that you need to make an informed decision as to whether you should accept a letter grade or switch to P/F. Remember that P grades do not impact your GPA, so you can not raise your GPA by choosing this option. Also know what admissions directors will see your entire transcript, which means that if you have 3 As and 2 Ps they will be aware of the choice you made. This of course does not mean you should not choose this option. But it does mean that you need to be very cognizant of choices you are making and seek help from advisors if you need it.

Is ETSU still offering Pre-Law advising?

Of course!! You are free to email me with any questions or to make an appointment for a phone/Zoom meeting as well, feel free to reach out at glennon@etsu.edu

Special thanks to Diane Curtis, Director of Pre-Law advising at Umass-Amherst for providing the template for this update to all Pre-Law advisors.