Among the original schools contemplated in Mr. Jefferson's plan for the organization of the University of Virginia was "Law: Municipal and Foreign, Embracing the General Principles, Theory and Practice of Jurisprudence, together with the Theory and Principles of Constitutional Government." Accordingly, the Law School was established with the opening of the University in 1825 and has been an integral part of the University since that date.

Located on the North Grounds, along with the Darden Graduate School of Business Administration and the Judge Advocate General's School, the Law School features new classrooms, seminar rooms, and moot courtrooms. The Law Grounds also include comprehensive computer facilities; an expanded library with a magnificent three-story reading room; a large career services complex; attractive offices for student organizations; full dining services; and numerous student lounges. Surrounded by inviting gardens and an elegant, tree-lined lawn, the setting reflects Jefferson's conviction that locating an intellectual community within a beautiful environment fosters learning and personal growth.

As of 2005-06, the J.D. student body is composed of 1,118 students from virtually every state, the District of Columbia, and numerous foreign countries. They hold undergraduate or graduate degrees from over 250 colleges and universities. The teaching faculty includes over 70 full-time members who have been educated at this and the country's other major law schools and who bring to Virginia wide experience in education, private legal practice, and government service. Their offerings are supplemented by several dozen distinguished adjunct and part-time faculty drawn from private practice, government agencies, the judiciary, as well as educators and practitioners from numerous other countries.

The Law School is justly famous for the collegial environment that bonds students and faculty, and student satisfaction is consistently cited as among the highest in American law schools. Intellectual challenges are complemented by a spirit of cooperation and...
camaraderie. Small first-year sections promote individual inquiry while providing support and friendship. Students read each other’s work and learn together, freely share course outlines and other materials, and rely on the honor system to maintain the highest ethical standards.

Intellectual rigor, dynamic teaching, and rich diversity of courses distinguish the Virginia curriculum. The Law School fosters creative scholarship in all aspects of law, blending skilled craftsmanship with an enlarged understanding of law’s changing functions in contemporary society. At Virginia, law in its origins, impact, implications, and full range of possibilities is analyzed and debated in classes, workshops, lecture programs, student organizations, and faculty-student informal exchanges. Faculty meet with and mentor students, exploring ideas and fostering understanding and creative scholarship. Interdisciplinary thinking comes naturally at Virginia, with a third of the faculty holding advanced degrees in fields such as psychology, economics, philosophy, and history.

The Arthur J. Morris Law Library, with more than 880,000 volumes, is one of the largest law libraries in the country. While its primary mission is to support the Law School’s faculty and student body, it also provides service to the University and the legal community beyond the University. As a member of a global community of research organizations, it links the Law School to local, national, and international information sources. It is an instructional unit within the Law School responsible for teaching techniques of effective legal research and publishing materials that assist the researcher in understanding legal bibliography.

**Address**

School of Law  
580 Massie Road  
University of Virginia  
P.O. Box 400405  
Charlottesville, VA 22903-1789  
(434) 924-7354  
www.law.virginia.edu

**Admission Information**

**Preliminary Education** The study of law requires the constant application of a disciplined mind. Therefore, those courses are best suited to prelaw study that, either in content or method of instruction, are best adapted to inculcating habits of disciplined thought. Furthermore, the scope of law is so broad that no single field of study can be peremptorily excluded. Subjects such as economics and political science are customarily recommended, but to recommend these subjects is not to suggest that other courses, such as history, mathematics, English and American literature, philosophy, the natural sciences, psychology, Latin, and modern languages are not of equal value. A lawyer is constantly engaged in communicating ideas, and to that end, emphasis on the capacity to write clearly is properly stressed. Courses in English composition are therefore recommended. Courses in accounting and public speaking are often recommended. It should be noted, however, that the School of Law offers the opportunity for pursuing these courses as related to law, so they are not specifically recommended in preference to broader and more culturally oriented courses.

**Profile of the 2005 Entering Class** The 374 students who entered the first year of law study at the University of Virginia in August 2005 were selected from a total of 5,495 applicants. Of the entering students, 232 came from 43 different states, the
District of Columbia, and 5 foreign countries (Pakistan, Korea, Canada, Nigeria, and India). The remaining members were from Virginia. This class also included 153 women students, 61 identified themselves as minorities.

Although widely differing approaches to college grading often serve to render comparative statements about undergraduate records misleading, it is significant that most students in this fall’s entering class ranked in the upper 20 percent of their graduating classes. The median grade point average was 3.67 on a 4.0 scale. (This computation does not include students whose grades could not be accurately interpolated to a 4.0 scale.) The median LSAT score was 169. Many of these students had also completed advanced degree work. The average age was 24.

The Law School has continued its policy of giving preferred status to Virginia applicants, and a large number of highly qualified non-Virginians must be turned away for lack of space. A total of 832 Virginia residents applied for admission, compared with 4,657 out-of-state applicants.

Regular Students

Candidates for the degree of Juris Doctor must have attained the age of 18 years (counting to the nearest birthday) before entering the School of Law and they must conform to the general requirements set forth below. The Law School does not offer a summer session.

Applicants should inform themselves of the character and other qualifications for admission to the Bar of the state in which they intend to practice.

Academic Requirements Each candidate must present evidence that he or she is a graduate of an accredited college or university. Candidates for admission who have not completed the required entrance credits will not be admitted with the privilege of making up the deficiency.

Applications for Admission Applications for admission must be submitted on forms obtained from the Admissions Office or using the Law School Admission Council electronic application software. Students are accepted only for the fall semester starting in late August of each year.

Applications may be filed after the completion of six semesters (or the equivalent) of undergraduate work. Application volume was approximately 5,500 in 2005-06; applicants should therefore file and complete their applications as soon as possible in order to allow the Admissions Office sufficient time to process them efficiently. Applicants should consult the School of Law website at www.law.virginia.edu for information on relevant deadlines and application instructions.

All applicants will be notified, upon acceptance, that they will be required to pay a deposit to secure a place in the entering class. This deposit will be credited toward tuition.

Each year, many highly qualified college graduates apply for the necessarily limited number of places in the first-year class. The admissions process aims to select from the applicant pool an entering class of students who will contribute to the Law School, to the Commonwealth of Virginia, and to the nation. These contributions, both before and after graduation, require exceptional academic ability. No applicant is admitted without the prospect of successfully completing the requirements for the degree, but qualifications other than academic credentials are also necessary to succeed in the legal profession today. Legal education must prepare students to work in a wide variety of settings with individuals who come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Exposing students to a multiplicity of perspectives, and to classmates who will express
those perspectives, is essential to preparing them for the challenges that they will face in their professional lives. To that end, the admissions committee considers many factors in addition to intellectual aptitude and academic achievement. Among these are geographical, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological diversity, as well as individual traits and experiences that predict success, such as dedication or a constructive response to adversity.

Applicants are sorted in the first instance by LSAT scores, undergraduate grades, and a numerical index that takes account of the success in law school of students from the same undergraduate institution. No one, however, is admitted or denied admission solely on the basis of any purely numerical indicator. Rather, all of the information in each application file is reviewed personally by an admissions professional. That review involves assessment of personal characteristics and achievements, as well as letters of recommendation. Based on their review of the entire file, admissions professionals can admit or deny applicants with either very high or very low qualifications, or they may refer such applicants to a faculty committee. All other applicants must be referred to the faculty committee.

Ordinarily, at least two readers consider each file. Each reader, whether an admissions professional or a faculty member, is instructed to assess each applicant as an individual. This assessment takes account of numerical indicators, but also includes a number of other factors, including the strength of an applicant's curriculum, the nature and quality of any work experience an applicant may have had, the nature and quality of any graduate study that the applicant may have undertaken, the personal qualities displayed by the applicant, and any hardships or difficulties that the applicant may have had to overcome. Diversity of all sorts also figures in this assessment. Each reader makes a recommendation on each file, whether to admit, deny, wait-list, or hold for reconsideration in light of the entire pool of applicants. If there is disagreement between the initial two readers, the file is sent to further readers as necessary. At the end of the process, the Associate Dean of Admissions works toward a ranking of the remaining applicants, in consultation with the faculty committee and the Dean of the Law School.

In this process, no quota is set for any classification of applicants, though an effort is made to assure an appropriate balance of Virginia residents and out-of-state students. No quantitative advantage is given to any classification of applicants. Every application is considered its merits, recognizing the strong qualifications of many applicants for a limited number of places. Finally, no separate track or special admissions procedures apply to any classification of applicants, except that resident and nonresident applications are reviewed separately from one another. Every application is evaluated individually in an effort to meet the goal of admitting a class of students who can best serve the Law School, the Commonwealth, and the nation.

**Admission From Other Law Schools** No person who has previously attended any law school in the United States shall be eligible for admission as a student in this School of Law unless he or she is eligible for re-admission to the Law School previously attended. Applications of students contemplating transfer with advanced standing will not be acted upon until one full year of work has been completed.

**Credit for Courses Taken Before Enrollment as a J.D. Candidate** No credit is granted to any student, except transfer students, for any academic work completed prior to enrollment as a J.D. candidate, including law courses in the Law School and graduate courses in schools and departments at the University of Virginia with which the Law School maintains combined degree programs.

**Advanced Standing Credit** Credit toward the degree of Juris Doctor in this School of Law may be given, at the discretion of the dean or assistant dean or upon vote of the law faculty, for courses satisfactorily passed in a law school in the United States that is either approved by the American Bar Association or is a member of the Association of
American Law Schools. However, in no event, is this credit to exceed the equivalent of the work of three full quarters or two semesters. Similar credits may be given, in like manner, for work done in law schools outside the United States.

No credit will be given for work in any single session during which the student failed in two or more courses, nor will credit be given for any course in which the student did not receive a grade of D (or the equivalent) or better, and credits once given may be withdrawn for unsatisfactory work in this school. The dean and assistant dean are given power to make such rulings and adjustments as necessary for the fair and equitable administration of this general provision.

Transfer students are eligible to participate in combined degree programs with other departments and schools of the University and to receive academic credit for graduate-level courses taken in other departments and schools of the University on the same basis as regularly enrolled students. In considering the admission of a transfer student to a combined degree program or the authorization of non-Law School credit for a transfer student, the faculty advisor or the assistant dean, as the case may be, may take into account the transfer applicant’s academic record and the institution from which he or she has transferred.

**Degree Requirements** The degree of Juris Doctor is conferred upon students who, having been admitted to candidacy, have satisfactorily completed a minimum of 86 credits including all required courses; meet minimum grade requirements; complete six residency semesters; satisfy the Writing Requirement; and maintain a satisfactory record characteristic of a prospective member of the legal profession.

**Health** Students who have been admitted to the University must complete a personal medical history form. Appropriate forms are sent after admission is granted. All health requirements must be met prior to registration.

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