

Tips for Getting the Most Out of a Law School Fair

Law School Fairs seek to give prospective law students an opportunity to talk personally with representatives from law schools and to collect admission materials from law schools in attendance.

Before You Go

Preregistration: If registration is required, find out if you can pre-register. This will save you time on the day of the fair/forum.

Planning your day: Law School fairs and the LSAC Law School Forums are typically open-house style; you can arrive at any time and leave at any time during the scheduled fair hours. Most people spend from several hours up to an entire day at a fair. This allows time to attend live workshops as well as time to talk with law school representatives. Print out a schedule ahead of time so that you can plan your day around your particular interests. The fair/forum will usually furnish a list of participating schools, and a floor plan of the fair showing you the location of each school and vendor table.

Tips for Planning Ahead

- Make a list of schools whose tables you want to visit or from which you want to pick up information.
- Create a set of questions for which you have not yet found answers.
- Plan to visit with schools outside your geographic region as well as those inside your home region.
- Do your research. Use the *ABA-LSAC Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools* (available at the Law School Admission Council web site [<http://www.lsac.org/>]) to learn more about schools that interest you.
- If possible, determine what your own requirements are for choosing a law school (for example, any geographical limitation), so that you can choose wisely whom to meet and how to manage your time at the fair more efficiently.

Talking with Law School Representatives: The Most Important Activity. A law school fair is an opportunity to talk personally, and in one location, with representatives from many different law schools. The representative could be an admission officer, a faculty member, a recent graduate of the law school, or even a current student. These representatives will not speculate on your personal chances for admission, although you can inquire generally about the qualifications and profiles of their admitted students. (This information can also be found on

the LSAC website and, ideally, should be part of your pre-fair research. This kind of preplanning will help you narrow your search, since it is difficult to talk to representatives from every single law school in attendance at these events.) The representatives are not there to take your résumés, writing samples, or any other documents. But they can and will talk to you about their school's programs, facilities, student body, and any other questions you may have that will help you to decide whether to apply.

You should also take the opportunity to tell them a bit about yourself, your personal and academic background, and bases for interest in law school. This is commonly referred to as your "elevator talk" – i.e., the essential information about you that lasts as long as the average elevator ride (i.e., about 30 seconds). It needs to be short, concise, and memorable. If you succeed, you will have registered an impression, and in a small way begun a relationship that can benefit you later in the application and admission process.

Law school representatives will likely be wearing identifying name tags, and you may ask for a business card. Take a business card if you have one, and follow up later with a personal note. If you think you may be interested, be sure the representative has your fair registration number so the school can send you updated information.

What a Law School Fair Is Like. Fairs are generally held in large room settings, such as our Rangos ballroom in the Cohon University Center. Rows of tables, separated by walk-through aisles, are set up for the schools in attendance. Each table will identify itself by both school name and a number corresponding to the number on the fair seating chart, and is staffed by at least one law school representative. Tables are stocked with admission materials, viewbooks, and other informational items (plus, frequently, cards inviting you to leave your name and contact information). You may look at the materials, take some to look over or use later, or talk to the person at the table. Do not feel compelled to ask questions or engage in conversation; this is entirely up to you.

Tips for the Day of the Fair

- Scan the fair seating chart/floor plan and circle the numbers for the schools whose tables you have already decided to visit. This will help you keep track of where you have or haven't yet gone. Fairs can be crowded, and you would do well to remain flexible about the order in which you visit the tables. If a particular table—or even aisle—looks very busy, you can detour to another area, and your seating chart will help you find your way back to visit your "don't miss" schools.

- Note the workshop schedule (to be included in the fair program), and build into your plans the time(s) and location of workshops that you want to attend.

A Day at the Fair: Useful Strategies

If you are applying for next fall ...

While you may focus on your prepared list of schools, this is a great opportunity to pick up information about other schools. Keep an open mind. Tell the representatives about yourself and any particular interests that you have, which may in turn lead you to discover particular programs, clinical opportunities, or peer review journals that are offered that map well onto these interests. In this way, plan on coming away with ideas about schools you may apply to that you have not previously considered. Take as much material as you can to review later. Be sure to pick up the materials for the schools to which you definitely wish to apply so you have the most current information about applications, deadlines, visiting dates, and so forth.

If you are applying for enrollment beyond next fall ...

Come prepared to take home a lot of information. You should try to pick up as much information as possible and talk with as many law school representatives as possible. You will have plenty of time to review the information later, and you may find the perfect school for you that you didn't even know existed. At a minimum, get a fact sheet and the website address for each school. You can get a head start in preparing to attend a fair next year and some ideas for creating a list of questions for the schools you want to visit.

Additional Tips

- Follow up attendance at a fair or forum by exploring the websites of the schools that interested you. The schools have complete information available on their sites, and you can access links to them through LSAC's website: www.lsac.org.