

University of Montana School of Law

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■ Introduction

The University of Montana (UM) is located in Missoula on the west slopes of the Rocky Mountains. Missoula is situated halfway between Yellowstone and Glacier national parks and is surrounded by several of the largest designated wilderness areas in the continental United States. The city is known for its outdoor opportunities and quality of life.

The University of Montana School of Law was established in 1911 and serves as a legal center for the state. It has been accredited by the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) since 1914 and by the American Bar Association (ABA) since 1923. As one of the smallest law schools in the nation, the University of Montana School of Law offers students a congenial academic, intellectual, and social environment.

■ UM's Program

The University of Montana School of Law integrates theory and practice throughout its curriculum to instill entry-level practice and competence in its graduates. The School of Law's curriculum, teaching methodology, and assessment techniques are designed to address the following components of a lawyer's work: (1) knowledge of the law, (2) ability to apply legal rules to solve problems, (3) ability to use lawyering skills (e.g., negotiation and client counseling), (4) perspective on the societal role and responsibility of lawyers, and (5) sensitivity to the dynamics of social and interpersonal interaction.

The school has created three distinctive programs to acquaint first-year students with the ways lawyers think and work: (1) the Introductory Program, (2) the Lawyer Skills Program, and (3) the Law Firm Program. In the Introductory Program, students are initiated into the legal culture by surveying legal history, the American legal system, the litigation process, legal writing, and legal analysis and jurisprudence. The School of Law is one of the few to introduce first-year students to the skills involved in dispute resolution, including client counseling, legal document drafting, and oral argument. UM's program encourages students to cooperate and collaborate rather than compete as they begin to think and work as lawyers. Entering students belong to "law firms"—groups of seven students (called "associates") directed by upper-class students.

The school has long emphasized performance in its curriculum. The school's Legal Writing and Dispute Resolution programs represent a coherent and comprehensive approach to lawyering skills. Students master specific transactional skills such as planning an estate, drafting a contract, and creating a small business.

The upper-division clinical training program provides students with a wide range of opportunities to earn required academic credit by working on actual cases under the supervision of faculty and practicing attorneys in Missoula. The clinical offerings include the Natural Resource Clinic, Indian Law Clinic, Montana Legal Services Association Clinic, Prosecutory clinics (federal, state, county, and municipal), Defense clinics (federal, state, county, and municipal), University of Montana Legal Counsel Clinic, Disability Law Clinic, Child Support Enforcement Division, ASUM Legal Services, Land Use Clinic, Mediation Clinic, USDA General Counsel, and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

■ Special Programs

Because of Montana's natural setting, many students enroll in the natural resource and environmental law courses. Montana offers a certificate program in Environmental and Natural Resource Law, natural resource clinics, and the opportunity to participate on the *Public Land and Resources Law Review*.

The School of Law also offers concentrations in the areas of Trial Advocacy and Dispute Resolution, Indian Law, and Business and Tax Law. Montana is home to seven Indian reservations. The School of Law's Indian law courses, Indian Law Clinic, and Native American Law Student Association provide opportunities for students to learn about and participate in the administration of justice for Montana's Native Americans.

The School of Law offers three joint-degree programs. Students can combine their law degrees with a Master of Science in Environmental Studies, a Master of Business Administration, or a Master of Public Administration. These programs can lead to completion of the joint degree in as little as four years.

■ Admission

A committee of law faculty reviews applications. Candidates must be of good moral character, have intellectual promise, and have a baccalaureate degree from an approved college or university prior to matriculation. Applicants are considered in resident or nonresident pools. The School of Law seeks a diverse student body and welcomes applications from members of groups historically underrepresented in the legal profession.

The School of Law recommends that you submit your application as soon as possible. We begin reviewing completed applications as they are submitted. Applications are not considered complete until all application materials, including the LSDAS report, are received. If your file is completed by February 15, you will be notified of a decision (admit, deny, or retain for further review) by March 15. If your file is completed by March 15, you will be notified of a decision by April 15. Files completed after March 15 may be considered on a space-available basis.

The most important admission criteria are the cumulative undergraduate GPA and the LSAT score. If the LSAT is repeated, all scores will be used in evaluating the applicant. The admission committee weighs such factors as writing ability; college attended; trend in grades; quality of work in difficult courses; experience prior to application to law school, including graduate study; ability to overcome economic or other disadvantages; and change in performance after an absence from school.

The school recognizes a commitment to provide full opportunities for the study of law and entry into the legal profession of qualified members of groups (notably racial and ethnic minorities) who have been victims of discrimination.

■ Student Activities

All students are members of the Student Bar Association. Its programs contribute to the professional development and the social life of the student body. Clayberg Inn of Phi Delta Phi

national law fraternity encourages scholarship, promotes fellowship, and fosters the ideals of the profession. Other organizations include student chapters of the American Association for Justice (AAJ), the ACLU, Christian Legal Society, Environmental Law Group, Federalist Society, International Law Student Association, Military Law Society, Montana Public Interest Law Coalition, Native American Law Student Association, Rural Advocacy League, and the Women's Law Caucus. The *Montana Law Review* and the *Public Land and Resources Law Review* afford supplementary training in

analyzing legal problems precisely and presenting legal issues cogently.

The University of Montana School of Law is proud of its performance in interscholastic competitions. Nearly every year, the School of Law fields teams that compete at the national level. Most recently, UM won the 2000 National Moot Court Championship. UM won the ATLA trial competition national championship in 1992 and the national ABA client-counseling championship in 1990.

Applicant Profile

University of Montana School of Law

This grid includes only applicants who earned 120–180 LSAT scores under standard administrations.

LSAT Score	GPA																				Total		
	3.75 +		3.50–3.74		3.25–3.49		3.00–3.24		2.75–2.99		2.50–2.74		2.25–2.49		2.00–2.24		Below 2.00		No GPA		Apps	Adm	
	Apps	Adm	Apps	Adm	Apps	Adm	Apps	Adm	Apps	Adm	Apps	Adm	Apps	Adm	Apps	Adm	Apps	Adm	Apps	Adm	Apps	Adm	
175–180	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
170–174	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
165–169	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2
160–164	4	2	11	7	11	2	6	4	3	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37	18
155–159	19	12	19	4	20	8	25	8	13	4	8	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	109	37	
150–154	19	9	35	16	36	9	26	5	13	2	11	1	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	147	42	
145–149	12	3	22	5	23	3	28	2	15	1	11	0	9	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	122	15	
140–144	2	0	7	1	8	2	15	1	12	1	6	0	4	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	60	5	
135–139	0	0	1	0	4	0	5	1	3	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	21	1	
130–134	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	
125–129	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	
120–124	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	59	28	98	34	102	24	106	21	60	10	40	2	27	2	5	0	3	0	5	0	505	121	

Apps = Number of Applicants
 Adm = Number Admitted
 Reflects 99% of the total applicant pool.