

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL OF LAW ADMISSIONS POLICY

adopted December 2, 2005
reaffirmed and amended October 21, 2011

The University of Mississippi seeks to train lawyers who will enhance the legal profession and the practice of law, advance development of the law, serve the public, and improve the quality of justice throughout the nation. Moreover, as a state institution, the law school has a special responsibility to educate state residents and to train lawyers who will serve the legal needs of Mississippi. The law school seeks to graduate students who will continue the tradition of outstanding contribution by our graduates to the legal profession

To further these goals, the law school strives to enroll a student body with strong academic qualifications. Furthermore, the enrollment of diverse incoming classes represents a compelling state interest that is essential to the law school's educational mission. Whenever possible, admission of a critical mass of members of historically underrepresented and excluded groups is necessary to further the school's interest in securing the educational benefits of diversity. A class composed of students with varied backgrounds, characteristics, and perspectives enhances legal education. In order to serve a broad range of clients and constituencies, to formulate and implement policies for the state, region, and nation, and to function in varied public and private capacities, students must gain experience in interacting with people having a wide range of perspectives and diverse points of view.

Admissions criteria. To accomplish the law school's goals as set out above, members of the admissions committee will review each file in light of those goals and in light of the following criteria, but without automatic admission for individuals belonging to any group, quotas for any group, or separate review for any group (except for consideration of residency). Given the large number of applicants for the limited seats available in the first-year class, the Law School will admit only students whose academic credentials indicate a realistic expectation of success in law school.

Academic qualifications and likelihood of success. The admissions committee relies heavily on an applicant's score on the Law School Admissions Test and undergraduate grade point average as predictors of success in law school. Other important indicators include the strength of the applicant's undergraduate program, major, and course work, significant trends in the applicant's grades, the age of an applicant's grades, class rank, scholastic awards and achievements, and advanced degrees.

While grades, test scores, and other academic indicators of success are given significant weight, other factors play an important role in predicting and applicant's likelihood of success. An applicant's work or military experience, extracurricular activities, leadership, and public service are considered by the admissions committee. The fact that an applicant has overcome adversity or hardship, achieved beyond expectations, or proven to be highly motivated, may be significant factors.

In addition, an applicant's references and quality of the applicant's essay are factors in the committee's evaluation.

Contribution to diversity. The committee will consider the extent to which an applicant will contribute to the diversity of the class, taking into account the applicant's age, disability, educational background, ethnicity, family background, gender, race, socio-economic background, and other factors such as individual perspectives that promote a multiplicity of viewpoints.

In particular, the committee seeks to admit classes that substantially increase the proportion of members of underrepresented and historically excluded groups so that such groups will be present at the law school in meaningful and not token numbers. The committee shall especially be sensitive to the admission of African-American applicants given the historical underrepresentation and exclusion of African-Americans from the law school. The committee shall treat an applicant's race or ethnicity as a plus-factor within the context of holistic file review of each file. Although minority applicants shall receive automatic admission or separate review at any range of indexes, when the committee reviews applicants at the same general level of academic credentials, the race of the applicant may tip the balance in his or her favor.

Residency. As a state institution, the law school has a special mission to educate and serve the citizens of Mississippi. The committee shall evaluate resident and nonresident applications separately. In doing so, it shall endeavor to achieve an appropriate balance of resident and non-resident students, meaning that the committee shall give resident applicants strong preference and shall strive to ensure that residents comprise a substantial majority of the students enrolled in incoming classes.

PERIODIC REVIEW. The faculty shall review the effectiveness of this policy and reconsider its provisions no later than three years from the date of its adoption.