

## College Juniors Everywhere Can Now Apply to Harvard Law School



**Summary:** Harvard Law School has extended their junior pilot program from accepting only Harvard College juniors to allowing juniors at any college or university to apply.

Two years ago, Harvard Law School created a pilot program called the Junior Deferral Program that allowed Harvard College students to apply to the school while they were a junior. The program was such a success that the law school is now allowing college juniors from any school to apply. Starting this fall, college juniors can submit their application for admission.

The one condition upon acceptance is that they must successfully finish their undergraduate degree and then continue on with at least two years of work, study, or the pursuit of research or fellowship opportunities before starting law school. The intention of the program is to encourage students to obtain work experience before law school as well as motivate students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math fields to bring their skills to the legal field.

Harvard Law Dean Martha Minow said, “The Junior Deferral Program is one of many efforts underway here to remove barriers as we seek the most talented candidates for law and leadership. By offering admission to the most promising college juniors, we can encourage them to pursue important and fulfilling experiences without concern about effects on a later application to law school. We are delighted with the success of the pilot effort and see already that students admitted through the program explore a wide range of valuable experiences, and get ready to come to campus for their 1L year with vibrancy and intellectual enthusiasm benefitting the entire law school community.”

Harvard Law has taken steps over the past few years to eliminate obstacles so that their student body can be more diverse. Starting next year, the school will accept GRE scores in addition to LSAT scores. This is another attempt to attract students that had planned on pursuing other means of higher education by taking the GRE test but change their minds to pursue law instead.

Associate dean of admissions and strategic initiatives, Jessica Soban added, “We have students who are pursuing public interest work with think tanks or doing direct advocacy work. We have people doing more corporate and private sector work, whether they are consulting or in finance. We also have students who are pursuing scholarship or other graduate work.” She continued, “This program is allowing people to pursue their passions in ways that may not be available if they didn’t already have their pathway to law school set.”

Harvard hopes that this program with the two-year work conditions will help students learn what they want and don’t want out of their legal career. Soban explained that one of the students starting this fall as part of the Harvard pilot program has a martial arts background advancing their work as a Hollywood stunt devil by night and a paralegal by day.

Soban said, “The three years of the JDP pilot have proven to be a tremendous success. As we hoped, it has attracted a number of students from the STEM field, and encouraged all students to pursue varied and exciting work and study opportunities. I look forward to welcoming the first class of JDP students to HLS this fall. And I am excited to extend this opportunity to all college juniors.”

Would you have been interested in a program like this when you were a college junior? Tell us in the comments below.

**To learn more about alternative law school admission programs, read these articles:**

- [New 3+3 Program at USC Gould School of Law](#)
- [Florida State University College of Law to Accept Qualifying College Juniors](#)
- [Rowan University to Start a Combined Bachelor’s and Law Degree Program](#)

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