

Seattle Central College Transfer Major Planning Guide

LAW, PRE-LAW, & CRIMINAL JUSTICE

What path should I follow if I want to study law?

Students who are interested in law have a variety of academic options. Many universities offer bachelor's degrees in law, legal studies, or policy where students learn about law and policy and their real world applications. Students might decide to apply these skills to a wide variety of fields after graduation, such as public policy, non-profit work, civil rights, or business. Earning a bachelor's degree in law is not enough to become a lawyer. Students who want to be lawyers need to earn a bachelor's degree (in any field) and then apply to law school, which is a three-year professional graduate program. Students who plan to practice law must take their state's bar exam after completing law school.

Students interested in criminal justice can also earn a bachelor's degree in that field and may go on to work in corrections, the juvenile justice system, forensics, or law enforcement. Some careers in criminal justice will require additional training or education.

A few universities offer "Pre-Law" as its own major, but it is not necessary to major in pre-law or even study law as an undergraduate if you plan to go on to become a lawyer. Most students who go to law school major in something besides law as undergraduates. Strong communication, critical thinking, and analytical skills will be important for success in law school, so the best majors for potential law students will be ones that focus on those skills.

How can I prepare at Seattle Central to study law?

Unlike medical school, law schools do not require any particular coursework as part of the undergraduate major. Transfer students who plan to go on to law school after completing their bachelor's degree should choose a major that interests them and check the prerequisites for that major.

Students planning to major in law, policy, or criminal justice at a 4-year institution often take courses in the social sciences, such as **history, sociology, economics, political science, philosophy, or psychology, as well as general education requirements**, to prepare to transfer. **Statistics** may be required. Students who plan to study forensics may need additional prerequisite math and science courses. Specific requirements vary according to the transfer university, so it is strongly recommended that students work with an advisor at Seattle Central and at their intended transfer universities to ensure they take the appropriate classes to be prepared to enter the major when they transfer.

Students planning to major in law, policy, or criminal justice should consider earning the Associate of Arts – DTA degree to prepare to transfer. Advisors can help students look at prerequisite requirements and choose the degree that will work best for them.

Consider an emphasis to your associate degree before you transfer, such as Global Studies, Global Health or Equity and Social Justice. This can enhance your resume, personal experience and be something you put into your personal statement. You may even already have completed it without knowing it! For questions on how to plan your emphasis, please contact your advisor.

Tips for Success as a Pre-Law Student

- If you are considering law school, take classes to hone your writing and critical thinking skills. Philosophy classes, including logic, can be helpful preparation for the skills you will need in law school.
- Law schools do not have a specific math prerequisite requirement, although some undergraduate law or policy programs may require statistics. Regardless of the math required for your major or graduate school plans, you should take at least one college-level math course at Seattle Central. If your math skills are weak or it has been some time since you took math, do not put off getting started! Depending on your placement scores, you may need to take math for several quarters before you can complete your college-level math requirement.
- Check prerequisites, admission requirements, and GPA requirements at your intended transfer university early so you can be well-prepared to transfer.
- If you plan to go to law school, find out what programs your potential transfer universities offer to help you prepare. It isn't necessary to major in "pre-law," but pre-law student clubs or specialized advising can help you to be a competitive law school applicant.
- Check both university *admission* and *graduation* requirements at your preferred transfer university as a guide to choosing your classes. Some universities, for example, may require a year of foreign language as a graduation requirement. It may be much easier (and cheaper!) to meet that requirement at Seattle Central rather than waiting until later.

Where can I earn a bachelor's degree in law, policy, or criminal justice in the Seattle area?

Saint Martin's University – Criminal Justice, minor in Legal Studies

Seattle University – Criminal Justice

University of Washington, Bothell – Law, Economics and Public Policy

University of Washington, Seattle – Law, Societies and Justice

University of Washington, Tacoma – Criminal Justice, Law and Policy

You can use the College Navigator search engine found at <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/> to find programs in law, policy, or criminal justice in Washington State or around the country.

Next Steps:

- Research the universities you are interested in attending and the prerequisite classes they require for your major.
- Meet with an advisor to choose a transfer degree, discuss prerequisites, and plan what classes you need to take in the next quarter or two.
- If you are considering applying to law school, attend information sessions at local law schools, such as the University of Washington-Seattle and Seattle University, to find out what you can do as an undergraduate to prepare to be a competitive applicant to law school.
- Explore professional organizations in your area of interest for more information about education and career options.