

The Law School Addendum

What is an Addendum?

- It is an optional essay as part of the application. Be sure to carefully review the application instructions from each school, as they may have differing writing prompts.
- It discusses legitimate reasons for any weaknesses in an application, not excuses.
- It should be about one to three paragraphs in length (no more than a page), double-spaced, 12-point font, no less than 1-inch margins. Carefully review the application instructions from each school for specific details.
- Like the personal statement, it is a writing sample. Lawyers write professionally, so you must demonstrate exceptional writing abilities throughout your application.

Some Reasons to Write an Addendum

- A long gap in your college attendance or resume.
- Academic misconduct, disciplinary action in college, or a criminal record.
- An LSAT score that does not accurately reflect your law school potential (only if you are able to demonstrate prior academic excellence despite low standardized test scores). For example, if you scored a 1000 on your SAT, but were able to graduate with a GPA of 3.9, the SAT was obviously a poor predictor of your college performance, and there would be reason to believe that the LSAT might be a poor predictor of your law school performance. In such a case, you should include an official copy of your SAT or ACT score, along with an addendum, discussing prior poor standardized test scores and excellent academic performance.
- An exceptionally poor grade or withdrawal in a particular course, or a markedly poor semester of grades on an otherwise solid transcript, or an overall GPA that is not indicative of your true abilities. This could be due to a particular semester or year in which your grades were much lower than usual. Also, if you believe that your overall GPA was not as high as it could have been due to financial circumstances, such as the necessity of your full-time employment throughout your college career, an addendum could be useful.

Things to Consider

- If you think an admissions committee will review your application and come away from it with questions in mind, an addendum is necessary to proactively answer those questions.
- Weaknesses should be portrayed as obstacles that were overcome and helped to pave a path towards growth and experience. Always mention what you learned from the experience.
- Focus on the facts, not on emotions, arguments, or excuses.
- Do not write an addendum if there is no glaring weakness in your application.
- Clearly label it ADDENDUM and include your full name and LSAC number.

Additional Resources

- Use online resources through various websites, such as [NYU Prelaw](#).
- The [NYU Preprofessional Advising Center](#) can help you to decide whether an addendum is warranted.
- The [NYU Writing Center](#) reviews drafts for graduate and professional school admissions. Schedule an appointment.