I was once in the very position that I’m assuming many of you are in today. I was an environmental governance student at the university of Guelph, and while passionate about the program and its overall value to my academic development I wasn’t too sure about the real world practicality of the actual degree. In today’s world it’s almost taken for granted that your undergraduate degree alone will never land you your “dream job” and although there are many avenues of getting to this idyllic destination I chose the path of law school as the appropriate avenue.

Law school application requirements vary somewhat province to province, but are always based on at least three things: University transcripts (yes, your marks from first year do count after all), your Law School Admission Test (LSAT) score and a personal statement. Examples of the range in requirements include McGill Law requiring a French language proficiency test, two letters of recommendation required to apply to all Ontario law schools, while Uvic and UBC don’t require any letters of recommendation.

If you are considering applying to law school, the first thing I would suggest is looking into the exact requirements of each school you are interested in attending. Usually schools will release a composition of statistics based on admitted applicants from the previous academic year and this will help you build an appropriate idea of what kind of grades and LSAT scores you will need to have a competitive application. Do not despair if at first the odds of you actually getting into law school seem impossible; getting a good sense of your areas of strength/areas of improvement are useful to developing your own personal strategy.

To give you some context, in my case, I was expecting to graduate with a 3.8 GPA (80%) and a strong history of extracurricular activities, so I anticipated that my LSAT score would have to be at least a 164 (90th percentile ranking) in order to get a range of acceptances, and therefore greater flexibility in my choice of law school to attend.

Your next step will be preparing for the LSAT. I studied for the LSAT for 5 weeks post-graduation with a part-time preparation course, while also working a part-time job. Everyone has their own strategy and knows under which condition they learn/study best, so I would suggest going with your instinct and following through on whatever routine you decide on. Worst case scenario, you don’t get the mark you wanted, but you are that much more experienced the next time around. That being said, I didn’t find the overall experience particularly enjoyable, so I was grateful to only have to take it once (I scored a 165).

Next begins the somewhat arduous process of finalizing and submitting your applications to each school. Writing your personal statement is a bit like writing a cover letter, and each school has various requirements (including length). I would
highly recommend submitting your personal statement to someone with experience in writing a personal statement to law school for editing. In my case, I asked the law student who had taught my LSAT course and he was kind enough to say yes. Overall, your personal statement is an opportunity to highlight positive qualities and experiences that should reflect your strong ability not only to be a successful law student, but also your ability to contribute to the community after having received a legal education. In particular, I used this section to discuss my volunteer experiences, the nature of my education at Guelph, academic interests and my desire for a legal education.

That basically summarizes the law school application process and should give you a good idea of a beginning strategy if you are considering applying to law school. Other than this, I would suggest taking full opportunity of earning your education at the university of Guelph and participate in a variety of volunteer opportunities, consider adding a minor to your degree, and taking an experiential learning course. All of these experiences will contribute to both your academic and personal development and will also give you a competitive edge, whether you decide to pursue a legal education or not.

Since, I’ve only currently got 2 weeks of legal education under my belt, I can’t really speak to what law school is like, but I can say I am genuinely happy with the decision to attend law school.

For some final context, I applied to law schools at Uvic, UBC, Osgoode (York), OttawaU and UofT, and I was accepted everywhere except UofT. I chose to attend UBC both for its strong reputation, its aboriginal and environmental law specializations and for the opportunity to move to Vancouver.

If anyone has any questions please feel free to email me at kamilla.break@gmail.com I would be happy to help in any way I can.