

About Before the JD II

Study Overview

Before the JD II is a national research study examining undergraduate students' post-graduation plans. The study is being conducted by the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) and the Law School Admission Council (LSAC) with institutional recruitment support from NORC at the University of Chicago.

Before the JD II will be based on a large-scale survey of enrolled, bachelor's degree seeking undergraduate students across a diverse set of institutions. The study is designed to produce a **representative and inclusive sample** by intentionally capturing a wide range of undergraduate experiences, institutional contexts, and post-graduation aspirations.

The research focuses on several core questions, including:

- What are undergraduate students **aspiring and planning to do** next after completing their bachelor's degree?
- When are undergraduate students **considering and deciding** what is next on their anticipated pathways after completing their bachelor's degree?
- How are undergraduate students **preparing themselves for success** in their anticipated pathways after completing their bachelor's degree?
- Which **resources and opportunities are available and used** by undergrad students to prepare themselves for success in pursuit of their anticipated pathways after completing their bachelor's degree?

Before the JD II builds on the work of the 2018 Before the JD study, which provided a national portrait of undergraduate views on law school. More information on the 2018 study can be found on the AALS website: <https://www.aals.org/research/bjd/>

Why This Matters Now

Undergraduate advising models are evolving as institutions seek to better align support structures with students' diverse goals. At the same time, pathways to graduate and professional education are becoming less linear, and students' decision-making is increasingly shaped by financial, social, and institutional factors.

Understanding students' aspirations—and what they need to realize them—has become central to how institutions:

- Design advising and career readiness models;
- Allocate resources to academic and co-curricular programs; and
- Demonstrate the value add of their unique undergraduate experience.

Successful continuation of graduates into both the workforce and graduate or professional education is also an important differentiator for institutions. This study provides an opportunity to learn directly from your students about what supports would most help them act on their aspirations.

Benefits for Participating Institutions

Participating undergraduate institutions will receive **tailored reports** that include:

- Aggregate findings from their own students who participated in the survey; and
- Comparative insights drawn from peer institutions in the study.

These data can be leveraged to inform program design, advising strategies, and institutional planning—helping campuses better prepare students to actualize their post-graduation goals.

What We Are Requesting

To support survey administration, we are requesting a roster of **currently enrolled, bachelor’s degree seeking undergraduate students** (of any year), including:

- Student name (Required)
- Institutional email address (Required)
- Undergraduate year (Optional)
- Major declaration status (Optional)
- Major(s) and minor(s), if applicable (Optional)
- School or college within the institution (e.g., Arts & Sciences, Engineering) (Optional)

Study Timeline

Student roster collection will take place during Summer 2026. LSAC will administer the voluntary Before the JD II survey to students in Fall 2026, with major public reports and institutional deliverables released in 2027.

Confidentiality and Informed Consent

All data will be handled in strict confidence. Personally identifiable information – including student email addresses - will be used solely for survey administration and will **not** be published or disclosed in any reports. Student participation is voluntary, and all respondents will receive clear informed consent information prior to taking the survey.

Study Sponsors

The Before the JD II study is a joint project between the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) and the Law School Admission Council (LSAC). NORC at the University of Chicago is conducting institutional recruitment for the study.

For more information about AALS, LSAC, and NORC, please visit:

- AALS: <https://www.aals.org/>
- LSAC: <https://www.lsac.org/>
- NORC: <https://www.norc.org/>

Contact the Study

Please contact the institution recruitment team at NORC by email at bjd-recruitment@norc.org or by phone at **312-759-0386** with any questions and to confirm your institution’s interest in participating in Before the JD II.