LSAC and the LSAT:
A Proven Track Record
of Supporting Legal Education

Key Insights About the LSAT

Created to promote greater access to legal education and designed in consultation with law schools, the LSAT is the trusted resource for law school admission:

- The LSAT is the **only** standardized test designed specifically for law school admission.

- Research consistently shows the LSAT is the best single predictor of law school success, even better than undergraduate GPA. Similarly, research consistently shows that the combination of the LSAT and undergraduate GPA provides the strongest prediction of law school success, as an invaluable component of a holistic admission process.

- The LSAT is designed in direct consultation with law schools, to assess the **critical reasoning**, **reading comprehension**, and **persuasive writing skills** that are critical to success in law school. Other tests are designed for different purposes and test different skills.

- LSAC conducts **correlation studies** and other research – free of charge – for individual schools, on how LSAT scores and other applicant credentials correlate to student performance at their school. Schools have a long history of using the LSAT and know how to use the test and other predictors in their holistic admission process.

- Properly used, the LSAT is a **tool for increasing diversity**, identifying highly qualified candidates who might be overlooked on the basis of undergraduate institution, GPA or other factors.

- **LSAC is far more than just the LSAT**. LSAC's single focus is legal education, so all of LSAC's energy and resources are devoted to expanding and diversifying the pool of law school candidates and programs to support students and schools.

About the LSAT®

The **Law School Admission Test® (LSAT)** is developed and administered by the Law School Admission Council, a not-for-profit organization devoted to advancing law and justice by encouraging diverse, talented individuals to study law and by supporting their enrollment and learning journeys from prelaw through practice. LSAC provides products and services that support candidates and schools throughout the law school admission process, and innovative solutions to expand and diversify the range of prelaw students, enhance student outcomes in law school, and support legal professionals throughout their careers.

- The LSAT provides law schools with a proven, standardized way to assess applicants' readiness for law school, as part of a holistic admission process.

- The LSAT is the **only** standardized test designed specifically for use in law school admission. Other standardized tests are designed for different purposes and assess different things.

- The LSAT is designed and periodically refined in direct consultation with law schools.

Demonstrated to be fair, valid, and reliable, the LSAT is more than a mere general skills test.

The LSAT measures the reading and reasoning skills essential for success in law school.

It measures the ability to read complex texts with understanding and insight; the ability to think critically; and the ability to analyze and evaluate the reasoning and arguments of others.

In LSAC's **periodic skills analysis studies**, law school faculty consistently rate all of the skills assessed by the LSAT as the skills most essential to success in law school and legal practice. LSAC also uses reports from the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) and the American Bar Association (ABA), along with focus groups of students and law school faculty to ensure the LSAT assesses the most relevant skills.

Likewise, the **LSAT Writing** is based on a prompt designed by legal writing faculty to mimic the sort of argumentation required in law school essays.

LSAT Format

The **LSAT** consists of four 35-minute sections of multiple-choice questions. Applicants to law school also take an unscored writing section, which is administered separately from the multiple-choice portion of the test on a secure online platform. Copies of test takers' writing samples are sent to all law schools to which they apply.

Multiple-choice sections include:

- One reading comprehension section, which measures the ability to read, with understanding and insight, lengthy and complex materials similar to those commonly encountered in law school.

- One analytical reasoning section, which measures the ability to understand a structure of rule-based relationships and to draw logical conclusions about that structure.

- One logical reasoning section, which measures the ability to analyze and critically evaluate arguments as they occur in ordinary language.

- One unscored section (commonly referred to as the variable section) that is used to evaluate new test questions and ensure they are free from any form of bias.

Test Validity

Year after year, research conducted with the cooperation of ABA accredited law schools consistently shows that the LSAT is the **strongest single predictor** of first-year law school success – even better than undergraduate GPA – and that the combination of the LSAT and undergraduate GPA provides the strongest prediction of law school success as part of a holistic admission process. This is not surprising, given the LSAT is the **only** test specifically designed for law school admission.

Test validity can be defined as the extent to which a test accurately measures what it is meant to measure. **Validity is made up of a number of different components**, but two of the key components of validity for the purposes of law school admissions are **construct validity** and **predictive validity**.

CV   In a nutshell, **construct validity** consists of measuring the right skills in the right way. In other words, a test has construct validity with respect to law school admissions if it measures skills that are directly necessary for success in law school, and if it measures those skills accurately and effectively. The LSAT was designed specifically for this purpose, and it is constantly re-validated for this purpose.

PV   **Predictive validity** refers to the extent to which a test accurately predicts the relevant outcome. LSAC conducts large-scale studies of the LSAT's predictive validity every year and makes the results available to all member schools.

In short, because the LSAT is designed to accurately measure the skills that are critical to success in law school (construct validity) and it predicts first-year law school performance more accurately than any other single factor (predictive validity), the LSAT is a valuable tool for admissions professionals to use in crafting their successful incoming classes, as part of their holistic admission process.

LSAT Scores

The LSAT is scored on a scale from 120 to 180. This score scale has been used in law school admission since 1991. Admission offices, therefore, have deep experience with LSAT scores, as well as access to reams of data on scores and how students at various score points have historically performed at their individual schools. Scores on other tests are not backed by this kind of historical data from previous admission cycles, nor is there reliable data on how performance on other tests compares to performance on the LSAT.

Comparisons of percentile ranks on different standardized tests can be inaccurate and misleading, as different tests assess different skills and percentile ranks place individual test takers in relation to the rest of the population that has taken the same test in recent years. The various graduate-level tests in use today have distinct populations, and those populations are quite different in terms of the distribution of abilities and other characteristics. Percentile ranks on two different standardized tests cannot be compared directly. There is no "correction" or tool that can make the scores and percentiles from disparate tests directly comparable to each other.

Year after year, **LSAT Correlation Studies** show that LSAT scores are the most accurate individual predictor of first year law school performance. The best predictor of all, however, is a combination of LSAT score and Undergraduate Grade Point Average (UGPA). Using LSAC's data and First Year Averages reported by schools, LSAC creates a customized, predictive index that combines LSAT score and UGPA for each member school.

Correlation studies are conducted for individual schools, and school-specific results are reported exclusively to the schools whose data are analyzed. Correlation studies help member law schools determine how to weight applicant credentials to customize admission to their specific law schools. LSAC conducts studies every cycle — free of charge to participating law schools — on the effectiveness of the LSAT as well as other predictors of law school performance used in the admission process. Thus, schools know how well the test and other predictors are performing within their own admission process.

Admission offices understand what LSAT scores and their schools' index mean for their schools. Other qualifications submitted by applicants vary widely and can be difficult to compare directly; even undergraduate GPAs can be very difficult to interpret and compare — depending on major, undergraduate institution, and so on. LSAT scores provide law schools with one measure by which all applicants can be compared directly.

In short, **LSAT scores and the index** provide information that can be very helpful to schools in making admissions decisions. But at the same time, it is important to bear in mind that test scores should always be considered in the context of a holistic review process, one that considers scores within a broader assessment of applicants' complete files.

Expanding the Pool of Students Pursuing Law

LSAC is best known for the Law School Admission Test, but **LSAC is far more than just the test**. LSAC invests enormous time and resources to help expand the pool of candidates interested in pursuing legal education, and LSAC offers a wide range of programs to support students and schools. LSAC's sole focus is legal education, so all of LSAC's energy and resources are devoted to advancing legal education.

- **Law School Forums** – every year, LSAC hosts **Law School Forums**, large innovative, interactive events that give prospective student the chance to meet directly with representatives of our member law schools, to get more information about the application process, financial aid, the LSAT, diversity in law school, and other topics. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, LSAC now offers both in-person and virtual Law School Forums, which both provide opportunities for one-on-one interactions between schools and prospective students. In the recently completed 2021-22 cycle, more than 11,000 prospective students registered for one or more forums.

- **Identifying potentially qualified candidates on behalf of member law schools** – through LSAC's exclusive focus on legal education, we are able to identify prospective students who register to participate in Law School Forums and the **Candidate Referral Service**. Adhering to all applicable privacy laws and individuals' preferences, LSAC shares contact information for these candidates with our member law schools with the students' permission, providing schools with an important source of potential applicants.

- **Online advertising to expand the pool of prospective candidates** – LSAC invests heavily in advertising campaigns to attract students who may not be considering law school to learn more about whether a career in law is right for them. It's important to note that these efforts are not focused on selling LSAC products and services, they are focused on expanding and diversifying the pool of law school applicants.

- **Ambassador Programs** – LSAC provides **experienced and knowledgeable** professionals to ensure prospective students have information about law school admission, test preparation, financial aid, and other topics, both in-person and virtually, upon request by prelaw advisors, admission professionals, and pipeline programs.

- **Khan Academy free LSAT Prep** – LSAC has worked extensively with Khan Academy, a leader in world-class online education, to provide free, personalized test prep with the equivalent of nearly 20 full-length LSAT tests. Our **free Khan Academy LSAT Prep** is now used by more than 60,000 students per month, and surveys show usage is highest among Black/African American and other underrepresented minoritized students, as well as women and economically disadvantaged students.

- **Pre-Law Undergraduate Scholars** – The **PLUS program** is designed to increase the number of lawyers from underrepresented groups by introducing first- and second-year college students to the skills important for success in law school and also making them aware of the wide variety of professional opportunities for lawyers. The program is funded by LSAC's Diversity Initiatives Fund, and all LSAC-member law schools are eligible to host programs. Since the program began in 2002, we have had more than 30 law schools host PLUS programs, with more than 2,700 students participating.

- **LawHub** – Initially launched in March 2020, **LSAC's LawHub** is evolving to become a destination for individuals at every stage of their legal career. LawHub has more than 180,000 active users who have access to LawHub's free services, including free LSAT prep tutorials and practice tests, and other content. LawHub's premium subscribers have access to more than 70 genuine LSAT practice tests as well as special live events and video content on how to navigate the law school admission process and succeed in law school. With LSAC's recent acquisition of Law School Transparency and the Institute for Law Practice (IFLP), LawHub will offer additional tools to prospective and current law students, and legal professionals to support their legal education and legal practice journeys.

- **Training and Development for Admission Professionals** – as part of LSAC's commitment to legal education, LSAC provides a variety of **training and professional development** opportunities for admission officers.

These initiatives are just the tip of the iceberg. LSAC provides a wide range of programs and services to support schools, students, and the legal education ecosystem.

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Diversity, Equity, and Fairness

LSAC invests in processes that ensure test questions are fair. In addition, LSAC invests in programs that encourage underrepresented students, making prospective law students aware of the skills tested on the LSAT.

Every question on the test undergoes a lengthy **multi-step process** to ensure they are free from any form of bias and fair to all relevant population subgroups.

Internally, all LSAC test developers are trained in professional standards of fairness and anti-bias best practices. Ever test question is reviewed for appropriate content and fairness to all groups and backgrounds at three separate stages: initial writing/development, pretest, and final operational test section review. Every item is also reviewed for fairness by external experts representing all relevant subgroups, applying rigorous professional standards and their external perspective. Finally, every item is field tested as part of an unscored section in an actual LSAT administration, then subjected to a detailed statistical check for impact on subgroups; items that show any unfair impact at the unscored stage are rejected and never used on a scored test.

LSAC strongly believes that standardized assessments should be only one important element in a holistic admission process; LSAC has published **guidelines** and **policies** on how the LSAT should and should not be used. Properly used, the LSAT can be a **tool for enhancing diversity** in legal education and providing opportunity for students from diverse backgrounds as well as those from different social and economic statuses by measuring skill development without regard for where the student was educated.

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Ensuring Access

LSAC is committed to promoting access and equity in legal education and the legal profession.
To pursue its mission, LSAC is dedicated to ensuring that all individuals have the opportunity take the LSAT and demonstrate their skills on a level playing field. From test design through implementation and delivery, LSAC works to address all aspects of accessibility in testing to reduce barriers and foster a pipeline of law school candidates from widely diverse backgrounds.

While the onset of the pandemic in early 2020 created many challenges for students, schools, and the delivery of standardized tests, LSAC took action to create an online testing program and practices that minimize impediments to taking the LSAT. The LSAT's online testing platform includes many **built-in accessibility features**, such a text size enlargement, line spacing, three different colors for highlighting and an underlining function, all as recommended by accessibility experts. Further, the testing platform features color settings to address a wide range of needs including color blindness, light sensitivity, and color preference.

Additionally, LSAC has worked to ensure that online testing, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, does not create barriers for students. LSAC recognizes that some students do not have access to a suitable computer, or reliable internet service, or a quiet place to test.

- To address these needs, LSAC sends a **free loaner device** to any test taker who requests one to take the LSAT; since online testing began in May 2020, LSAC has provided more than 7,500 free loaner devices to test takers.

- Similarly, LSAC offers **hotel reimbursement** for any test taker who does not have reliable internet or a quiet place to test; since May 2020, LSAC has provided more than 3,500 hotel reimbursements to test takers.

- This assistance is important to **LSAC's diversity, equity, and access efforts**. More than 70% of the test takers who have requested and received loaner devices and/or hotel reimbursement are students of color.

- **The fall 2021 matriculation reports** underscore the importance of this assistance – nearly 1,000 fall 2021 matriculants made use of LSAC's free loaner devices or hotel reimbursement or both, as part of their application process.

Moreover, LSAC remains steadfastly committed to assisting candidates who have documented disabilities and request **testing accommodations** to take the LSAT. LSAC offers a **wide range of options** for candidates who require accommodations for taking the test including additional testing time, additional break time, and alternate testing formats such as paper-and-pencil or braille printed tests. Information about the availability of testing accommodations can be found on the LSAC's website as well as in each candidate's online LSAC account. Candidates with disabilities are encouraged to submit all new requests for testing accommodations directly through their accounts in advance of the request deadlines.

Candidates with a history of prior accommodation(s) on certain other standardized postsecondary admission tests may demonstrate eligibility for LSAT accommodation(s) through a streamlined documentation process, provided they meet the eligibility criteria. Any candidate who has previously received testing accommodations for the LSAT will be automatically approved to receive the same accommodations if they register to retake the test, without having to submit a new request for accommodations or any new supporting documentation.

Our goal is to ensure that every test taker has the accommodations and resources they need to do their best work on the LSAT to demonstrate their true skills and abilities.

LSAT Preparation

LSAC provides a wide array of free and low-cost LSAT test preparation resources, to help ensure that every test taker has access to high quality preparation and can demonstrate their true skills.

LSAC has worked extensively with Khan Academy, a leader in world-class online education, to provide free, personalized test prep with the equivalent of nearly 20 full-length LSAT tests. Our **free Khan Academy LSAT Prep** is now used by more than 60,000 students per month, and surveys show usage is highest among Black/African American and other underrepresented minoritized students, as well as women and economically disadvantaged students.

We are also seeing strong interest in our **free and low-cost LSAT prep resources on LSAC's LawHub**, which has had more than 180,000 free and paid subscribers since launching in March 2020. LSAC also provides a vast array of test prep materials via our extensive library of disclosed tests.

Ensuring access to test preparation is a great step forward in leveling the playing field for everyone who wants to take the LSAT, continuing LSAC's efforts in building the future of justice.

About LSAC

LSAC's mission is to advance law and justice by encouraging diverse, talented individuals to study law and by supporting their enrollment and learning journeys from prelaw through practice.

Contact Us

LSAC is here to answer your questions.
P: 215.968.1001 or 855.384.2253
Email: **LSACinfo@LSAC.org**

Law School Admission Council
662 Penn Street
Newtown PA 18940

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