

Law School Admission Council

Analysis of LSAT Taker Application Behavior: Testing Years 2009–2010 Through 2015–2016

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The following analysis is an update of an August 2013 report examining the application behavior of LSAT takers from the 2004–2005 through 2011–2012 testing years. This updated analysis covers the 2009–2010 through 2015–2016 testing years, examining both the number of LSATs taken by individuals in any testing year and the number of these individuals who applied to one or more ABA-accredited law schools (either during the same year or during a later testing year). A testing year is defined as LSAT administrations occurring from June through February. For example, the 2009–2010 testing year comprised four LSAT administrations from June 2009 through February 2010. Table 1 shows the number of individual test takers for each testing year, the number of LSATs administered per testing year, and the average number of tests taken per test taker.

TABLE 1
Individual test takers, tests administered and average number of tests per test taker

Testing Year	N	No. of LSATs Administered	Average No. of Tests Taken per Test Taker
2009–2010	138,466	171,514	1.2
2010–2011	124,314	155,050	1.2
2011–2012	105,767	129,958	1.2
2012–2013	91,394	112,515	1.2
2013–2014	84,654	105,532	1.2
2014–2015	82,325	101,689	1.2
2015–2016	84,771	105,883	1.2

As Figure 1 below shows, close to two thirds of the test takers in a given testing year eventually apply to law school. This result is consistent with findings for previous years. The steep drop in this trend for the most recent testing year can be attributed to lack of application data for future years. Approximately 50% of test takers applied to law school in the same year they tested, meaning they applied for the upcoming academic year. Typically 15–17% of test takers will wait and then apply to law school the year after the year in which they tested.

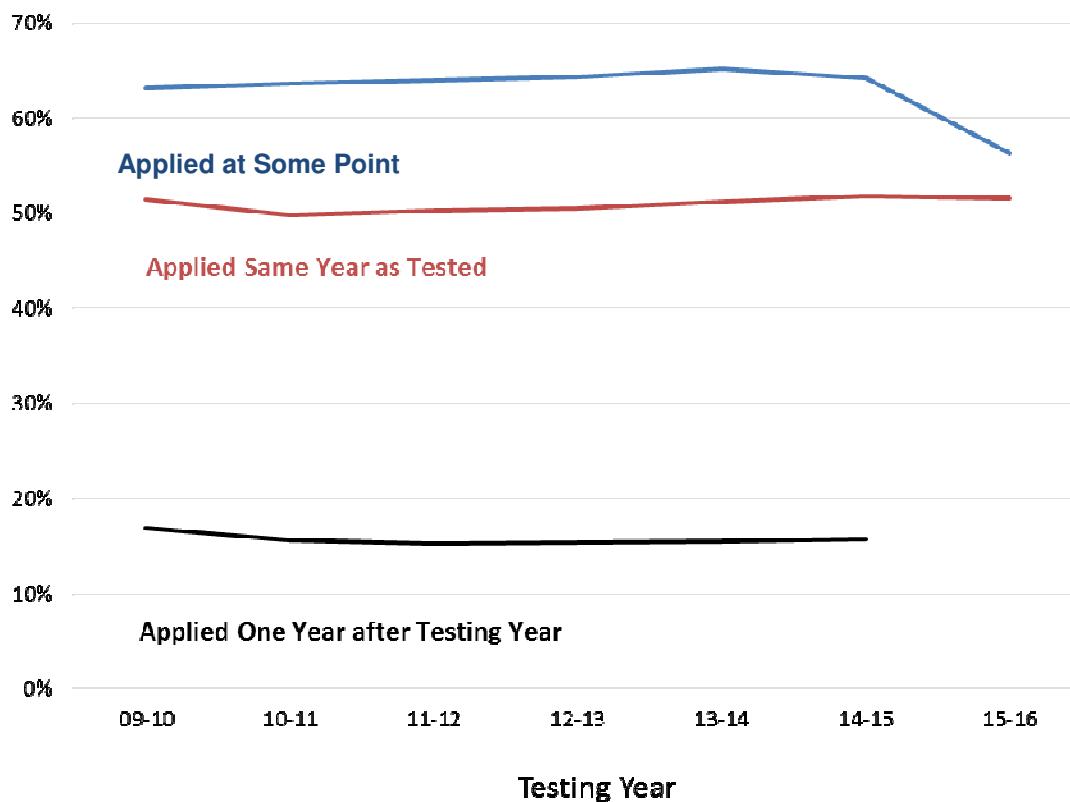


FIGURE 1. *Percentage of test takers by when they applied to law school and administration year*

Table 2 provides statistics by year for the timing of applications.

TABLE 2
When test takers applied to law school by testing year

Testing Year	Applied at Some Time	Applied Same Year as Tested	Applied 1 Year After Testing	Applied 2 Years After Testing	Applied 3 Years After Testing
2009–2010	63%	51%	17%	6%	3%
2010–2011	64%	50%	16%	6%	3%
2011–2012	64%	50%	15%	6%	3%
2012–2013	64%	51%	15%	5%	3%
2013–2014	65%	51%	16%	6%	
2014–2015	64%	52%	16%		
2015–2016	56%	52%			

Figure 2 displays median LSAT scores for test takers who applied and those who did not. In instances where an individual tested more than once during a testing year, an average score for that year was calculated for that individual. Generally, those who take the LSAT and apply to law school have higher scores than do those who never apply. However, there is considerable overlap between those who apply and those who never apply when considering the interquartile range of scores (i.e., 25th–75th percentile). The gap between median scores for those who never applied and the median for those admitted to law school has decreased over the last several years.

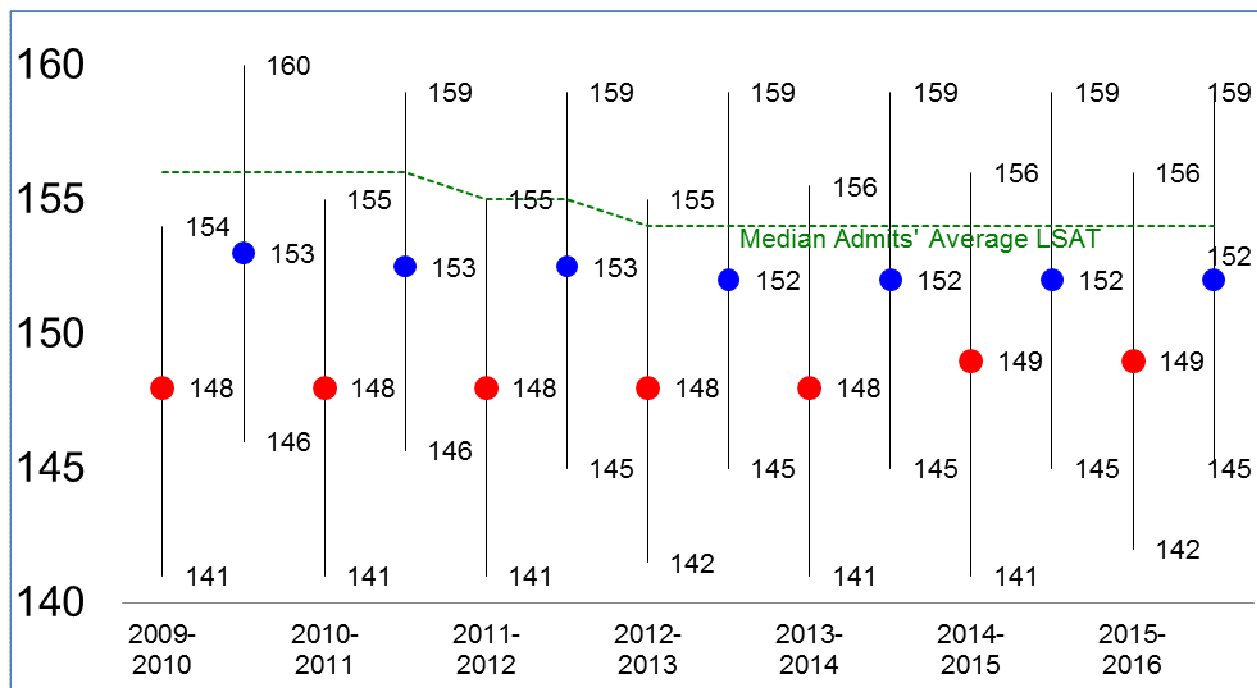


FIGURE 2. Percentile (25th, median, and 75th) of LSAT scores by whether applied to law school (blue dot) or never applied (red dot) and LSAT administration year

No meaningful demographic differences were found in application behaviors by age, race/ethnicity, or sex.