

LSAC and the LSAT:

# A Proven Track Record of Supporting Legal Education



## About the LSAT®

The **Law School Admission Test® (LSAT)** is developed and administered by LSAC, a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to advance law and justice by promoting access, equity, and fairness in law school admission and supporting the learning journey from prelaw through practice. LSAC has served as a trusted partner to law schools in inclusive excellence and evidence-based innovation for 75 years, providing the LSAT and other legal education products and services.

- ✓ Demonstrated to be fair, valid, and reliable, the LSAT measures the reasoning, reading, and writing skills that are essential for success in law school and the legal profession. The LSAT **is designed specifically for law school admission**.
- ✓ As part of a holistic admission process, the LSAT **provides a way for schools to identify highly qualified candidates** who might be overlooked on the basis of undergraduate institution, GPA, lack of access to extracurricular activities, or other factors.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ LSAC conducts **correlation studies** and other research for individual schools on how LSAT scores and other applicant credentials correlate to student performance at their schools. Schools have a long history of using the LSAT and know how to use the test and other predictors in their holistic admission process.
- ✓ **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.



# LSAT Format

The LSAT consists of four 35-minute sections of multiple-choice questions and an unscored writing section. The multiple-choice sections measure the ability to think critically, analyze and evaluate the reasoning and arguments of others, and read complex texts with understanding and insight. Three of the multiple-choice sections are scored, while one section is unscored and used to evaluate new test questions and ensure they are free from any form of bias.

LSAT Argumentative Writing is administered separately from the multiple-choice portion of the test. Copies of test takers' writing samples are sent to all law schools to which they apply.



## Test Validity

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 admission professionals to use in crafting their successful incoming classes, as part of their holistic admission process.

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 admission are **construct validity** and **predictive validity**.



**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 admission 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 revalidated for this purpose.



**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.

# 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.



**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 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 admission 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.



# Access, Equity, and Fairness

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

All questions on the test undergo a lengthy multistep 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. Every 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 perspectives. 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 access, equity, and fairness in legal education and providing opportunity for students from underserved backgrounds or who otherwise face structural or systemic barriers to legal education, by measuring skill development without regard for where the student was educated.

To help ensure a level playing field, LSAC provides robust free and low-cost test prep and practice tests on LawHub. LSAC also has the most extensive fee waiver program of any standardized test provider.



LSAC offers a [wide range of options](#) for individuals with disabilities 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 LSAC's website as well as in each individual's online LSAC account. Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to submit all new requests for testing accommodations directly through their accounts in advance of the request deadlines.

Individuals 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 individual 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.

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.

## Contact Us

For more information, please call 215.968.1001 or 855.384.2253, or email us [LSACinfo@LSAC.org](mailto:LSACinfo@LSAC.org).



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