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## Chapter 4: Applying to Law School

### ■ Working With LSAC: Registering for the LSAT and the Credential Assembly Service (CAS)

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The Law School Admission Council (LSAC) administers the LSAT and serves as a liaison for much of the communication between you and the law schools. The LSAC Credential Assembly Service centralizes and standardizes undergraduate academic records to simplify the law school admission process. This service also prepares a report for each law school to which you apply. The registration fee includes law school report preparation, letter of recommendation and transcript processing, and access to electronic applications for all ABA-approved law schools.

Comprehensive information about the LSAT and the Credential Assembly Service can be found at the LSAC website, [LSAC.org](http://LSAC.org). The quickest and easiest way to register for both the LSAT and the Credential Assembly Service is online. If you need to obtain a paper registration form, call 215.968.1001.

#### Planning Ahead for Law School Deadlines

Most law schools have a variety of application requirements and deadlines that you must meet to be considered for admission. If you are applying to a number of schools, the various deadlines and requirements can be confusing. It probably will be helpful if you set up a detailed calendar that will remind you of when and what you must do to complete your applications.

In registering for the LSAT, be sure to give yourself enough time to select a convenient testing location and prepare for the test. You also should determine whether each law school in which you are interested will accept scores from the February LSAT administration, which is the last test date in each admission cycle.

Below is a chart listing all scheduled national test administrations, including alternate dates for Saturday Sabbath observers, along with corresponding deadlines and fees.

### ■ Basic LSAT Date and Deadline Information (2010–2011)

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All national test dates, both for regular test takers and test takers who are Saturday Sabbath observers, are listed below, along with corresponding regular registration deadlines. Dates shown represent receipt deadlines for mail, telephone, and online registration. The basic fee for the LSAT is \$136 (published test centers only). Actual test dates for administrations **outside** the US, Canada, and the Caribbean,

which are nondisclosed\* tests, will vary. That information, as well as complete information regarding other LSAT options—such as deadlines and fees for late registrations and nonpublished test centers (domestic and foreign), test date and test center changes, and partial refunds—is available at [www.LSAC.org](http://www.LSAC.org).

#### National Test Dates

■ Regular	Monday, June 7, 2010	Saturday, Oct. 9, 2010	Saturday, Dec. 11, 2010	Saturday, Feb. 12, 2011 Nondisclosed*
■ Saturday Sabbath Observers		Tuesday, Oct. 12, 2010 Nondisclosed*	Monday, Dec. 13, 2010 Nondisclosed*	Monday, Feb. 14, 2011 Nondisclosed*
■ Score by E-mail	June 28, 2010	Nov. 1, 2010	Jan. 10, 2011	March 7, 2011
■ Score Report mailed (approx.)	July 6, 2010	Nov. 9, 2010	Jan. 18, 2011	March 11, 2011

#### Regular Registration Deadlines (online, mail, and telephone)

■ United States, Canada, and the Caribbean	May 4, 2010	Sept. 7, 2010	Nov. 9, 2010	Jan. 11, 2011
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\*Persons who take a nondisclosed test receive only their scores. They do not receive their test questions, answer key, or individual responses.

### ■ The Credential Assembly Service

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The Credential Assembly Service collects the US and Canadian academic records of law school applicants and summarizes the undergraduate work according to a standard 4.0 system to simplify the admission process. Nearly all American Bar Association-approved law schools (and many non-ABA-approved schools) require that applicants use this service. Applicants who have studied for more than a year outside the US or Canada can use the Credential Assembly Service for transcript evaluation and authentication if required by the law schools to which they are applying.

The Credential Assembly Service prepares a report for each law school to which you apply. There is a registration fee for the service, as well as a fee for each law school report (go to [LSAC.org](http://LSAC.org) for current fees). Your registration includes law school

report preparation, letter of recommendation and transcript processing, and access to electronic applications for all ABA-approved law schools.

The Credential Assembly Service creates your law school report by combining:

- an academic summary report;
- copies of all undergraduate, graduate, and law/professional school transcripts; and
- copies of Letters of Recommendation, if applicable.

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Canadian law schools receive an LSAT Law School Report containing scores and writing sample copies.

### Fee Waivers

Fee waivers are available for the LSAT, the Credential Assembly Service (CAS), and *The Official LSAT SuperPrep*. For US citizens, US nationals, or permanent resident aliens of the United States with an Alien Registration Receipt Card (I-151 or I-551), fee waivers can be authorized by LSAC or

ABA-approved law schools, which are listed on our website. Canadian citizens must submit their fee waiver request to a Canadian LSAC-member law school even if they plan to apply for admission to a US law school. Fee waivers cannot be granted by financial aid offices of undergraduate institutions, non-ABA-approved law schools, prelaw advisors, or any other individual or organization. Go to LSAC.org or any ABA-approved law school admission office for additional information about fee waivers.

## ■ The Admission Process

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Law school applicants can expect that the admission process will be competitive. Nationally, there are more applicants than spaces available in first-year classes, and this means that, at some law schools, there will be considerable competition for seats. However, it is probably true that, if you assess your credentials accurately, your likelihood of admission to an ABA-accredited law school is strong.

### The Importance of Complete Files

Remember that law schools require complete files before making their decisions. A law school will consider your file complete when it has received your application form, Credential Assembly Service (CAS) law school report (or LSAT law school report if the law school does not require the Credential Assembly Service), letters of recommendation (if required), personal statement, any requirements unique to the particular school, and application fee.

### Rolling Admission

Many law schools operate what is known as a rolling admission process: The school evaluates applications and informs candidates of admission decisions on a continuous basis over several months, usually beginning in late fall and extending to midsummer for waiting-list admissions.

Even if you have not yet taken the LSAT, it might be helpful to submit your application early so that your Credential Assembly Service file can be sent to law schools as soon as your test score is available. The earlier you apply, the more places the school is likely to have available. Most schools try to make comparable decisions throughout the admission season, even those that practice rolling admission. Still, it is disadvantageous to be one of the last applicants to complete a file. Furthermore, the more decisions you receive from law schools early in the process, the better able you will be to make your own decisions, such as whether to apply to more law schools or whether to accept a particular school's offer.

### Applying to More Than One School

Last year, about half of all applicants applied to five or fewer law schools. You should be sure to place your applications at schools representing a range of admission standards. Even if you have top qualifications, you should apply to a number of schools where you have an excellent chance of being admitted, based on your review of requirements and admissions standards. This is your insurance policy. If you apply to these schools in November, and are accepted to one or more in January or February, you may be disappointed but not panicked if you are later denied admission by your top

choices. You should not anticipate that you are assured of acceptance at any particular law school; there are no guarantees. Each year, law schools must choose from among many qualified candidates to create a first-year school class.

### The Preliminary Review of an Application

Applicants whose qualifications more than fulfill the school's admission standards are usually accepted by an admission committee during the first round of decisions. Candidates whose credentials fall below the school's standards are usually denied admission.

Most applications are not decided upon immediately. They are usually reviewed by a committee that bases its admission decision on many facets of each application (see "How Law Schools Determine Whom to Admit," page 9).

The length of time it takes the committee to review an application varies; consult the individual law schools to which you apply.

### Waiting Lists

If you have strong qualifications, but you do not quite match the competition of those currently being admitted at a particular law school, you may be placed on a waiting list for possible admission at a later date. The law school will send you a letter notifying you of its final decision as early as April or as late as July.

Many schools rank students who are on the waiting list. Some law schools will tell you your rank. If a law school doesn't rank its waiting list, you might ask the admission office how many students have been placed on the waiting list.

### Seat Deposits

Many law schools use seat deposits to help keep track of their new classes. For example, a typical fee might be \$200, which is credited to your first-term tuition if you actually register at the school; if you don't register, the deposit may be forfeited or partially returned. A school may require a larger deposit around July 1, which is also credited to tuition. If you decline the offer of admission after you've paid your deposit, a portion of the money may be refunded, depending on the date you actually decline the offer. At some schools, you may not be refunded any of the deposit.

The official position of the Law School Admission Council is:

Except under binding early decision plans, or for academic terms beginning in the spring or summer, no law school should require an enrollment commitment of any kind, binding or nonbinding, to an offer of admission or scholarship

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prior to April 1. Admitted applicants who have submitted a timely financial aid application should not be required to commit to enroll by having to make a nonrefundable financial commitment until notified of financial aid awards that are within the control of the law school.

### Multiple Deposit Notification

Each year, LSAC provides participating law schools with periodic reports detailing the number of applicants who have submitted seat deposits or commitments at other participating schools, along with identification of those other schools. These reports now also include the names and LSAC account numbers for all candidates who have deposits/commitments at multiple participating schools.

### Ethical Conduct in Applying to Law School

The practice of law is an honorable, noble calling. Lawyers play an important role in society by serving both their clients' needs and the public good.

**Your submission of an application for admission to law school is your first step in the process of becoming a lawyer.** Now is the time, as you take this first, important step, to dedicate yourself to a personal standard for your conduct that consists of the highest levels of honesty and ethical behavior.

**The legal profession requires its members to behave ethically in the practice of law at all times, in order to protect the interests of clients and the public.** You must understand that those who aspire to join the legal profession will be held to the same high standards for truth, full disclosure, and accuracy that are applied to those who practice law. The legal profession has set standards for ethical conduct by lawyers. Similarly, law schools have set standards for ethical conduct by law school applicants through the Law School Admission Council (LSAC). These standards are known as the *LSAC Rules Governing Misconduct and Irregularities in the Admission Process*. Just as lawyers are required to study, understand, and comply with the ABA's ethical standards, law school applicants are expected to read, understand, and comply with LSAC's ethical standards.

**If you fail to comply with LSAC's ethical standards, you may be barred from admission to law school.** If you fail to disclose required information on your law school application, or if you engage in misconduct during the admission process that is discovered after you enroll in law school or start to practice law, you may face more serious sanctions. In appropriate cases, state and national bar authorities and other affected persons and institutions may also receive notification. Individual law schools and bar authorities determine what action, if any, they will take in response to a finding of misconduct or irregularity. Such action may include the closing of an admission file, revocation of an offer of admission, dismissal from law school through a school's internal disciplinary channels, or disbarment. Thus, a finding of misconduct or irregularity is a very serious matter.

Take the time, right now, to read LSAC's statement on misconduct and irregularities in the admission process presented below.

### Misconduct and Irregularities in the Admission Process

The Law School Admission Council has established procedures for dealing with instances of possible candidate misconduct or irregularities on the LSAT or in the law school admission process. Misconduct or irregularity in the admission process is a serious offense with serious consequences. Intent is not an element of a finding of misconduct or irregularity. This means that an "honest mistake" is not a defense to a charge of misconduct or irregularity. Misconduct or irregularity is defined as the submission, as part of the law school admission process, including, but not limited to, regular, transfer, and visiting applications, of any information that is false, inconsistent, or misleading, or the omission of information that may result in a false or misleading conclusion, or the violation of any regulation governing the law school admission process, including any violation of LSAT test center regulations.

Examples of misconduct and irregularities include, but are not limited to:

- submission of false, inconsistent, or misleading statements or omission of information requested online or on forms as part of registering for the LSAT or using LSAC's credential assembly services, or on individual law school application forms;
- submission of an altered or a nonauthentic transcript;
- submission of an application containing false, inconsistent, or misleading information;
- submission of an altered, nonauthentic, or unauthorized letter of recommendation;
- falsification of records;
- impersonation of another in taking the LSAT;
- switching of LSAT answer sheets with another;
- taking the LSAT for purposes other than applying to law school;
- copying on, or other forms of cheating on, the LSAT;
- obtaining advance access to test materials;
- theft of test materials;
- working on, marking, erasing, reading, or turning pages on sections of the LSAT during unauthorized times;
- bringing prohibited items into the test room;
- falsification of transcript information, school attendance, honors, awards, or employment;
- providing false, inconsistent, or misleading information in the admission and financial aid/scholarship application process; or
- attempt at any of the above.

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A charge of misconduct or irregularity may be made prior to a candidate's admission to law school, after matriculation at a law school, or after admission to practice.

When alleged misconduct or irregularity brings into question the validity of the LSAC data about a candidate, the school may be notified of possible data error, and transmission of LSAT scores and academic summary reports will be withheld until the matter has been resolved by the Law School Admission Council's Misconduct and Irregularities in the Admission Process Subcommittee. The Council will investigate all instances of alleged misconduct or irregularities in the admission process in accordance with the *LSAC Rules Governing Misconduct and Irregularities in the Admission Process*. A subcommittee representative will determine

whether misconduct or an irregularity has occurred. If the subcommittee representative determines that a preponderance of the evidence shows misconduct or irregularity, then a report of the determination is sent to all law schools to which the individual has applied, subsequently applies, or has matriculated. Notation that a misconduct or irregularity report is on file is also included on LSAT and credential assembly service reports to law schools. Such reports are retained indefinitely. More information regarding misconduct and irregularity procedures may be obtained by writing to LSAC, Misconduct and Irregularities in the Admission Process Subcommittee, 662 Penn Street, Newtown, PA 18940-0040, USA.