

## Law Schools See Fewer Applicants with High LSAT Scores



**Summary:** Data from the Law School Admission Council shows that the number of applicants with high LSAT scores has dropped while the number of applicants with low LSAT scores has increased.

The Law School Admission Council has news that may not be very nice to hear for law schools. Law schools are seeing fewer applicants with Law School Admission Test scores of 160 and above. Since 2010, the number of applicants who scored 160 or higher has dropped 35 percent.

However, according to the editor of TaxProf Blog and Pepperdine University School of Law Dean Paul Caron, law schools are seeing more applicants in the 140 and 159 range. Caron's data notes that last year there were nearly 13,996 applicants with scores between 160 and 180. This year there were 13,345 applicants with that range of score. This is a reduction of 4.65 percent.

Break that range up even further and there is a surprising trend. Those applications with the highest score of 175 to 180 fell by 23 percent. The 165 to 169 range only fell by 12.4 percent. Caron reported to the ABA Journal that "The story could be that better-credentialed college graduates are turning away from going to law school, because they feel they have other opportunities that they feel are more attractive. For several years, legal education has taken a pounding. It's not providing the kinds of opportunities it provided to students in the past."

What exactly does this data mean? Students with lower LSAT scores are the ones applying to law school. Law schools are faced with an ever-increasing challenge to keep their enrollment numbers up as well as their academic standards.

Starting June 2, there have been 52,853 applicants turning in applications to ABA-accredited law schools. This is a drop of .5 percent from last year. Of these applications, the number of those with LSAT scores of 150 or less has increased by 146 percent over the past decade.

Caron told Law.com, "It's not a great thing for the profession or for law schools when the best and the brightest are not going to law schools in the same proportion that they have gone in the past. It's not a ringing endorsement for the profession."

The trend of applications with lower LSAT scores translates directly to the downward number of graduates passing the bar exam. In California, bar exam passage rates are sinking. The results from the February exam posted a 34.5 percent passing rate. This is the lowest passage rate in eight years for the spring bar exam. The July 2016 results were similarly low with a 32-year low of 43 percent.

With students applying with lower LSAT scores, law schools are becoming desperate for a way to keep their enrollment numbers up. A number of schools have turned to the Graduate Record Exam as another source of applicants. Harvard Law School is the second school to accept the test but many are conducting their own studies to determine if the GRE is a valid representation of who well applicants will do in law school.

The LSAT sets scores between 120 and 180. There is no set failing grade but generally, schools do not have a median LSAT score for their entering class of under 145.

Do you think the brightest students are exploring careers in other fields like technology and science? Tell us in the comments below.

**To learn more about the GRE, read these articles:**

- [GRE Trend May Be Catching on at Law Schools](#)
- [Harvard Law Will Accept GRE Scores](#)
- [Kaplan Test Prep Finds Out What Law Schools Really Think in GRE vs. LSAT Debate](#)

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