

## Covid-19 and Law school- What's the latest?

Below is a list of questions about how the COVID-19 pandemic, and the responses to it, might affect various aspects of the law school admissions process. This post will be updated regularly, but remember that events are moving VERY quickly, and circumstances are changing all the time, and will most likely continue to do so. When in doubt, double-check the info to make sure it's up to date. If you have applications pending right now, don't hesitate to contact individual law schools for the most accurate information about their own admissions process. I will continue to update this as warranted.

*Updated September 1, 2020*

### **What is the latest news?**

On September 1, 2020, LSAC made the following important update to the October announcement, expanding it to the November exam as well. Please review this information carefully and contact Dr. Glennon or your specific law school with additional questions on the impact this can have your testing or application process. Biggest take away: October and November will be LSAT flex offerings.

### **OCTOBER EXAM**

**Given the continuing COVID-19 emergency, we have made the decision to offer the online, remotely proctored LSAT-Flex in October**, instead of the in-person LSAT scheduled for October 3 in the U.S. and Canada and instead of the in-person international LSAT scheduled for October 4 or October 10. As you know, the LSAT-Flex gives candidates the opportunity to earn an LSAT score and continue their law school journeys despite COVID-19 restrictions on travel or public gatherings. You can [learn more about the LSAT-Flex and see answers to frequently asked questions](#) on our website.

The October LSAT-Flex will be administered the week starting Saturday, October 3. Most test takers will test on Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday, or Thursday, with a small number of tests occurring Wednesday based on specific remote proctoring requirements. We expect international test takers will test on Thursday, October 8 (US Time), and we will try to provide extended testing hours that day so candidates in every time zone can find times that work for their schedules. Due to the demands of the LSAT-Flex administration, this will be an undisclosed test. The October LSAT-Flex will count toward the [annual, multi-year, and lifetime limits](#) on taking the LSAT. **We are targeting Friday, October 23, as the score release date.**

### **Key dates for October test takers**

Registration for the October LSAT-Flex is open through Friday, August 21. Candidates currently registered for the October LSAT may either take the October LSAT-Flex or opt out and receive a

coupon that can be applied to any future test between November 2020 and April 2021. **Candidates should visit their LSAC account and submit the online form with their choice. If we do not hear from them by August 21, they will be automatically registered for the October LSAT-Flex on or about August 24.** They may withdraw from the October LSAT-Flex by September 25, 2020, and receive the coupon. After the September 25 deadline, coupons are not available.

As with previous administrations of the LSAT-Flex, LSAC is working to help every test taker in the U.S. (including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands) and Canada have the equipment and other resources they need to take the online, remotely proctored exam and do their best work. **Any candidate who does not have the necessary equipment or an appropriate place to test should submit an online form in their LSAC account no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Sunday, September 13, 2020,** so that we can work with them to address their needs. Through the first three administrations of the LSAT Flex, we have shipped more than 650 free loaner devices to candidates who did not have a computer to take the online test, and guaranteed hotel reimbursements to hundreds more who needed reliable internet or a quiet place to test. We are committed to ensuring that COVID-19 does not create new barriers for students who want to pursue legal education.

To date, approximately 33,000 LSAT-Flex tests have been successfully delivered, and we expect well over 20,000 candidates to take the August LSAT-Flex at the end of this month. We will continue to do everything we can to help candidates and schools overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 emergency.

Because the October LSAT-Flex is an online, remotely proctored test, we are able to offer a variety of test start times for test takers to choose from. We will open the scheduling sign-up process about two weeks before the first day of testing in October, so test takers can select the available time that works best for them. Test takers will receive more information and instructions prior to that time. As you know, in response to requests from test takers, we've created a new score preview option for first-time test takers who wish to see their score before deciding whether or not to keep it. **For the October test, score preview will cost \$45 before 11:59 p.m. ET on October 2, or \$75 after testing has concluded.** First-time test takers who have an approved LSAT fee waiver will receive score preview free of charge. You can [learn more about the score preview option here](#). As a reminder, all test takers must have a completed LSAT Writing sample on file in order to see their score or have their score released to law schools. To help candidates complete the writing portion of their test, we now open LSAT Writing eight (8) days prior to every test administration. If a candidate already has a writing sample on file from a previous exam they do not need to complete a new LSAT Writing sample. For [more information about LSAT Writing, visit our website](#). We recommend test takers familiarize themselves with the format and content of the LSAT-Flex using the [free Official LSAT Prep practice tests available on LSAC's LawHub](#).

## **NOVEMBER EXAM**

**Given the continuing COVID-19 emergency, we have made the decision to offer the online, remotely proctored LSAT-Flex in November**, instead of the in-person LSAT scheduled for November 14 in the U.S. and Canada. As you know, the LSAT-Flex gives candidates the opportunity to earn an LSAT score and continue their law school journeys despite COVID-19 restrictions on travel or public gatherings. You can [learn more about the LSAT-Flex and see answers to frequently asked questions](#) on our website.

Based on scheduling considerations related to remote education and remote testing at colleges and universities due to COVID-19, we are adjusting the date of the November test. We recognize that different schools have different class and testing schedules, but we are hopeful that this date change will make it easier and more convenient for most test takers, and we are sharing this date change as far in advance as possible so test takers have the opportunity to plan.

The November LSAT-Flex will be administered the week starting Saturday, November 7. Most test takers will test on Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday, or Wednesday, with a small number of tests occurring later in the week based on specific remote proctoring requirements. Due to the demands of the LSAT-Flex administration, this will be an undisclosed test. The November LSAT-Flex will count toward the [annual, multi-year, and lifetime limits](#) on taking the LSAT. We are targeting Tuesday, November 24, as the score release date.

### **Key dates for November test takers**

Registration for the November LSAT-Flex is open through Wednesday, September 23. Candidates currently registered for the November LSAT may either take the November LSAT-Flex or opt out and receive a coupon that can be applied to any future test between January and April 2021. **Candidates should visit their LSAC account and submit the online form with their choice. If we do not hear from them by September 23, they will be automatically registered for the October LSAT-Flex on or about September 26.** They may withdraw from the November LSAT-Flex by October 30 and receive the coupon. After the October 30 deadline, coupons are not available.

As with previous administrations of the LSAT-Flex, LSAC is working to help every test taker in the U.S. (including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands) and Canada have the equipment and other resources they need to take the online, remotely proctored exam and do their best work. **Any candidate who does not have the necessary equipment or an appropriate place to test should submit an online form in their LSAC account no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Sunday, October 18, 2020**, so that we can work with them to address their needs. For the first four administrations of the LSAT Flex, we have shipped **nearly 1,100 free loaner devices** to candidates who did not have a computer to take the online test, and guaranteed hotel reimbursements to hundreds more who needed reliable internet or a quiet place to test. We are committed to ensuring that COVID-19 does not create new barriers for students who want to pursue legal education.

To date, approximately 33,000 LSAT-Flex tests have been successfully delivered, and we expect 20,000+ candidates to take the August LSAT-Flex and another 20,000+ to take the October LSAT-Flex. We will continue to do everything we can to help candidates and schools overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 emergency.

Because the November LSAT-Flex is an online, remotely proctored test, we are able to offer a variety of test start times for test takers to choose from. We will open the scheduling sign-up process about two weeks before the first day of testing in November, so test takers can select the available time that works best for them. Test takers will receive more information and instructions prior to that time.

As you know, in response to requests from test takers, we've created a new score preview option for first-time test takers who wish to see their score before deciding whether or not to keep it. **For the November test, score preview will cost \$45 before 11:59 p.m. ET on November 6, or \$75 after testing has concluded.** First-time test takers who have an approved LSAT fee waiver will receive score preview free of charge. You can [learn more about the score preview option here](#).

As a reminder, all test takers must have a completed LSAT Writing sample on file in order to see their score or have their score released to law schools. To help candidates complete the writing portion of their test, we now open LSAT Writing eight (8) days prior to every test administration. If a candidate already has a writing sample on file from a previous exam they do not need to complete a new LSAT Writing sample. For [more information about LSAT Writing, visit our website](#).

We recommend test takers familiarize themselves with the format and content of the LSAT-Flex using the [free Official LSAT Prep practice tests available on LSAC's LawHub](#).

### **Big Picture Things to be Aware of in the Process.**

What to consider as you decide whether to take the online Flex LSAT test or reschedule to a future test date:

First, we don't know when LSAC will be able to resume in-person testing. Later Fall testing may also be impacted if colleges and universities remain online in the fall (robbing LSAC of testing locations) or if a second wave of infections necessitates another round of social distancing measures. In short, there is no certainty that a future LSAT will be in-person.

Second, LSAT-Flex is different from the in-person test. The online version has just three equally weighted sections (instead of the usual five, with four graded)—one each of Reading Comprehension, Logical Reasoning (arguments), and Analytical Reasoning (logic games). That means that the reading comprehension and logic games sections are weighted more relative to the in-person test, and the arguments weighted less (because each section type represents one-third of your score, rather than one-quarter or one-half, respectively). This may affect how you would want to prepare for the test. The online version is also only two hours, while the in-person test is much longer.

Third, LSAT-Flex requires particular equipment and operating systems, a stable internet connection, and an interruption-free environment for two hours. You should assess whether your current computing systems and environment can meet these requirements. You should also keep an eye on how the first online tests in May go—the success (or not) of that testing experience may prove instructive to you as you make your decision.

Finally, there is no indication that law schools will view the LSAT-Flex any differently from the in-person LSAT. However, LSAT-Flex scores will certainly be flagged as such.

For more information about the online, remotely proctored LSAT called the LSAT-Flex, including technical requirements, see the LSAT-Flex page here:

<https://www.lsac.org/update-coronavirus-and-lsat>

### **Will law schools consider how the pandemic has impacted test prep and might impact test experiences going forward?**

It is nearly certain that they will. The admissions process is never *just* a numbers game, even as the LSAT and GPA weigh heavily in decision-making, and admissions committees really do engage in holistic reviews of applications, taking into account all the many factors that have gone into shaping applicants and their experiences, perspectives, and so on. Without question, the pandemic and the challenges it is presenting to all of us will play a role in the admissions process from here on out.

UPDATE: LSAC confirmed that all candidates who apply to law school, at any point, with a 2020 spring term on their transcript will have a “Dear Colleague” letter attached to their profile that will serve as a reminder that many students will have an altered spring 2020 transcript.

### **Are law schools extending their application deadlines?**

Many application deadlines had passed before the anti-COVID19 measures went into effect and are therefore not impacted by the epidemic. For those with late March or April deadlines we may see schools extending those dates either with a blanket deadline-change or on a case-by-case basis. If your ability to complete your application has been negatively affected by the current crisis, you should absolutely reach out to the particular law school to ask about their own accommodations for late submissions.

### **Are law schools extending their seat deposit deadlines?**

If you’ve already been admitted to one or more law schools and are still trying to decide which offer to accept, you may face a more difficult situation with regard to the seat deposit deadlines. The earliest of these are coming up in April. Thus far no law schools appear to be issuing global extensions of these deadlines, but admissions officials are always open to considering extensions on a case-by-case basis. If there are specific reasons your decision has been impacted by the crisis (apart from inability to visit schools—see below), then definitely contact the schools to inquire about their flexibility.

**How can I make a decision when I can't visit the law schools?**

It's of course true that law school visits are critical to the decision-making process. Getting that "feel" for a school can be so important to your experience over the subsequent three years. Now that visits to most schools are impossible, how do you research that "feel"? Many schools are offering virtual tours and making faculty and current students available for video chats. You can also ask admissions offices to put you in touch with current students, especially those that match your interests or background in ways that might make their perspectives particularly useful to you. And you can also still reach out directly to Career/Placement offices at individual law schools, and to faculty—all should be available via email and/or phone. But don't expect law schools to extend their seat deposit deadlines just because you haven't had a chance to visit. Since that situation won't change before you need to deposit, an extension wouldn't help too much.

**One or more of my Spring 2020 classes was converted to Pass/Fail—will that count against me in the law school admissions process?**

No. Again, the law school admissions committees are looking at the whole picture, not just one grade or set of grades. Recall that law schools welcome addenda explaining anomalies in your academic record. A brief explanation of the circumstances will suffice to allay any concerns they might have. This is true whether you are applying this year or several years from now with perhaps an odd-looking Spring 2020. And of course, it is likely that in different ways many applicants in the future will have "odd-looking" Spring 2020 semesters on their transcripts. Everyone on the admissions side will be aware of what has happened.

**Is ETSU still offering Pre-Law advising?**

Of course!! You are free to email me with any questions or to make an appointment for a phone/Zoom meeting as well, feel free to reach out at [glennon@etsu.edu](mailto:glennon@etsu.edu)

*Special thanks to Diane Curtis, Director of Pre-Law advising at Umass-Amherst for providing the template for this update to all Pre-Law advisors.*