

Keeping Up To Data – January 2019

Welcome to the January 2019 “Keeping Up to Data” podcast. I’m Josiah Evans, Director of Assessment Sciences at the Law School Admission Council. We have a lot to cover this time, so let’s jump right in to the data.

At this time last year, we had only 45% of the final *application* count, so the ABA numbers are still subject to some variation. As of today, year-over-year *application* volumes are **up by 2.6%**. Applications to US regions are up, except for Northwest, Midwest, and the Mountain West which were down only a small amount, around 1 to 3%. Currently, we’re seeing the largest application *increases* in the Midsouth and South Central regions.

Switching to *applicants*, overall we are up 6.2% over this time last year. US regions are showing gains between about 2 and 14%, except for one which is showing a 27% increase in applicants from the region known as “Other.” As a reminder, the “Other” category refers to applicants whose permanent residence is either unknown or is outside the United States. Only one region is currently showing a decrease and that’s the **Northwest** which is **down 3.9%**.

As expected from the overall increases, applicants from most ethnicity groups are either up or stayed the same. Some racial/ethnic groups are showing bigger increases than others, such as Asian and Hispanic/Latino applicants. Applicants from all gender groups are up, with the largest increase in the “Not Indicated” group, which is likely just an artifact of our new gender categories which we will begin reporting on this summer. As with last year, women are showing larger numbers than men.

Let's take a minute to talk about our Canadian members' data. At this time last year, we had about 88% of the final Canadian *application* count. *Applicants* to Canadian member law schools are down just over 1%, and *applications* are **down 4.8%**.

We have now completed four LSAT administrations during this cycle—June, July, September, and November. A fifth test administration is coming up soon on January 26 and a sixth administration will be held on March 30. As I've noted in previous podcasts, it's impossible to compare this year's test registration and final test-taker volumes to last year's numbers, given the difference in the number and timing of this year's testing schedule. Currently, our best year-to-date analysis shows that test registrations are down around 6%, and final test-takers are down around 3%, but we won't know the final patterns until test-taker numbers are finalized sometime in April.

In other LSAT-related news, we extended the deadline for existing January registrants to make changes to their test dates, test centers, and to request partial refunds, to January 11. Registration for the June and July tests is now open.

Speaking of the summer testing schedule, as you may have heard, beginning with the upcoming June administration, the LSAT writing sample will be separated from the main test administration. Candidates will complete their writing sample via secure proctoring software downloaded to the candidate's own computer. We will be calling this LSAT Writing.

This change in the writing component will have many benefits, such as the following:

- The LSAT testing day will be shortened.
- Candidates can provide their writing sample at a convenient time and place of their choosing.
- They need provide only one writing sample regardless of the number of times they take the LSAT.
- And, usability will increase for law school staff, who will receive *typed* writing samples.

For more information and FAQs about LSAT Writing, please visit [LSAC.org](https://lsac.org).

Switching to reports, I wanted to let you know about a new report available in ACES². In response to requests from member schools, you can now find a summary of the Credential Assembly Service coupons you may have issued to candidates. On the ACES² homepage, go to the **Statistical History Dashboard** link, click on **Coupons**, and you will see a list of applicants who have used a coupon you've issued, along with demographic and other information about those applicants.

During each podcast, I like to highlight an existing report that you may not have seen recently. This week, I'm encouraging you to review the report entitled **Diversity in the US Population & the Pipeline to Legal Careers**. You can find this report on our website, under **Data & Research**. Click on **Data Library** to find it. This report compares the percentages of men, women, and five racial/ethnic groups in the US population in 2016 to the percentages of those same groups in the population of bachelor's degree recipients in 2015–16, applicants to the 2017 law school entering class, matriculants to that entering class, law degrees conferred in 2016–17, and US

lawyers in 2017. The differences in the percentages among these groups are striking and demonstrate the critical importance of LSAC's commitment to diversity.

In closing, remember that we update the current volume data on our website every night. Go to www.LSAC.org, and look for **Data & Research** and then **Data Library**. The Current Volume Interactive Summary will show you numerous data visualizations and drill-downs. If you're an LSAC member and you log in, remember we have many additional data and research reports available to you. Let us know if you find these podcasts useful. We'd love to hear your questions or suggestions. Just write to us at podcast@LSAC.org. Thanks for listening. Until next time, this is Josiah Evans at LSAC.