

Matriculant Certification  
Service and ABA Annual  
Questionnaire Calculations  
**REFERENCE GUIDE**



# Contents

1	Overview .....	1
	Matriculant Certification Service .....	1
	First-Year Class Verification .....	1
2	Verify Your Data .....	3
	Make Sure Your Matriculant Data is Accurate .....	3
3	LSAC Verifies Matriculant Data .....	4
	How LSAC Uses Your Data .....	4
4	Timeline .....	5
5	Calculating Percentiles .....	6
	Calculating Percentiles for UGPA and LSAT Score .....	6
	Appendix .....	9
	Matriculant Certification Process FAQs .....	9

## 1 Overview

### Matriculant Certification Service

The Matriculant Certification Service provided in the fall by LSAC and the ABA calculates your school's UGPA and LSAT percentile information based on the matriculants recorded in ACES<sup>2</sup>. This service is referred to in the ABA Annual Questionnaire as First-Year Class Verification. The accuracy of the data we use to create these percentiles is crucial to the process.

It is important to start each application cycle by collecting your data accurately in ACES<sup>2</sup> to ensure accurate applicant and matriculant data and accurate end-of-year reports (both in ACES<sup>2</sup> and in the members-only area of LSAC.org). The accuracy of our data and our reports starts with you.

### First-Year Class Verification

The ABA's Standard 509 requires that all information reported by a law school must be complete, accurate, and not misleading to a reasonable law school student or applicant. The ABA Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar and the Law School Admission Council (LSAC) have collaborated to establish a verification program to allow schools to obtain a certified report of their first-year class credentials.

This program is voluntary. Participation in the verification program is deemed to meet the requirement of the ABA's Standard 509. Law schools that choose not to participate in this service will be asked by the ABA to demonstrate the accuracy of the information provided.

You are no longer required to provide a file of your first-year class to the ABA. LSAC will provide each law school with a list of first-year enrollees from the data entered in ACES<sup>2</sup> beginning in October each year. This list will be available for you to download from ACES<sup>2</sup>.

Once you have verified the information provided by LSAC and have chosen to participate in the Matriculant Certification Service, the information will be shared with the ABA.

Your fall first-year class includes matriculants who enrolled as first-year students as of October 5. Your winter/spring class includes matriculants who enrolled as of February 2. Your summer class includes matriculants who enrolled as of June 15.

### Definitions

The instructions in the ABA 2018 Annual Questionnaire include the following definitions:

Your first-year class includes

- students who enroll, after applying and being accepted to begin law school, by October 5 of the current year (include in this category students who were admitted early—e.g., in their junior year of college—to begin law school between October 6 of the previous year and October 5 of the current year)
- deferred students—students who were admitted to begin law school in a prior year but deferred admission and are beginning law school between October 6 of the previous year and October 5 of the current year
- previously admitted students—students who may have started classes in a previous term or year, transferred with less than 15 credits accepted, withdrew or took a leave of absence before earning any credits, and then enrolled as first-year students between October 6 of the previous year and October 5 of the current year

Your first-year class does not include

- students who were readmitted and enrolled after being disqualified from your law school
- students who were admitted and enrolled after being disqualified from another law school
- transfer students—students admitted and enrolled with 15 credits or more for prior law study from law schools in the United States
- students admitted and enrolled with 15 or more credits for prior law study at law schools outside the United States
- students who completed a semester in an earlier year and are returning after a leave of absence to complete their 1L year
- visitors

Completed applications are applications that are ready to be reviewed for action. Applicants are only those individuals applying to begin law school between October 6 of the previous year and October 5 of the current year.

Your applicant pool is the number of students who submitted completed applications for admission to the JD program between October 6 of the previous year and October 5 of the current year.

*Do not include* applications from students admitted with credit for prior law study, such as transfers from other law schools with 15 credits or more in the United States and students admitted with 15 credits or more from foreign law schools.

*Include* applications from students applying without an LSAT score under Standard 503 and Interpretations 503-1 and 503-3. Scores on alternative tests for those students must be reported in the section on non-LSAT admissions.

Once you have reviewed your data and made corrections in ACES<sup>2</sup>, LSAC will create a report for your matriculants, listing the 25th, 50th, and 75th LSAT and undergraduate GPA (UGPA) percentiles, sorted by “part-time,” “full-time,” and “all” matriculants. The report will also include the high LSAT score and UGPA for each matriculant.

This report will be available for you to review in ACES<sup>2</sup>. Once you have reviewed this data, you can authorize LSAC to transmit your percentile information to the ABA. LSAC only provides percentile information to the ABA. Neither specific identifying information nor individual LSAT scores and UGPAs will be provided to the ABA by LSAC.

## 2 Verify Your Data

### Make Sure Your Applicant Data is Accurate

To make sure your applicant data is categorized properly and processed accurately by LSAC, please review the list below and make the necessary changes to your settings for Applicant Type in ACES<sup>2</sup> before you begin a new application cycle. This will ensure that your data at LSAC properly reflects the status of your applicant records in ACES<sup>2</sup>.

1. In the Utilities section, under ACES<sup>2</sup> Setup/Fields, under Applicant Type, choose the correct codes to identify your applicants:
  - For your transfer students, choose the LSAC Code **Transfer**.
  - For visitors, choose the LSAC Code **Visitor**.
  - For those applicants with advanced standing, choose **Advanced Standing**.
2. Make sure that you identify your transfers, visitors, and advanced standing applicants properly by using the Applicant Type field in the Program section of the applicant record in ACES<sup>2</sup>.
3. Remember to promote deferrals from the previous year or term into the current year if the applicant plans to attend. Do not change the year on the original record—this will categorize the applicant record incorrectly.
4. Request new CAS reports for applicants who were promoted from prior years. This will ensure that the LSAT scores and/or GPAs reflect the most recent information on record at LSAC, which is used in the percentile calculations provided to the ABA.
5. Instruct your direct admits/Standard 503 students to create an account at LSAC.org and submit their final undergraduate transcripts to LSAC by **August 1**. This will ensure that LSAC has received and processed the final transcript to verify their UGPAs. The ABA Standard 502-1 Interpretation provides for the use of electronic transcripts as official transcripts.
6. You must resolve your applicant match problems *before* you archive applicant data.
7. Non-JD degrees should be mapped to **None Listed** under Degree Applied in Utilities/ACES<sup>2</sup> Setup/Fields.
8. Do not change the report condition associated with the decision report that sends your decisions to LSAC. This condition must allow all necessary information to flow to LSAC. Please talk to a member of your support team if you feel a change to this condition is necessary.

### Make Sure Your Matriculant Data is Accurate

The following information will help you maintain accurate matriculant data in ACES<sup>2</sup>.

1. The matriculant certification feature in ACES<sup>2</sup> displays applicants whom you have identified as matriculants for the current application cycle in ACES<sup>2</sup>. This feature is called Matric Verification. It can be found under Data Submission, and it displays your data in a grid.

Use the grid to confirm the accuracy of the data in ACES<sup>2</sup>. If you traditionally used a file from your registrar's office to send a list of matriculants to the ABA, remember that you will no longer be submitting a file to the ABA; LSAC will now be using the data you maintain in ACES<sup>2</sup> for this service. If the data from your registrar's office is more up-to-date, be sure to amend that data in ACES<sup>2</sup>.

2. While verifying your matriculants in the matriculant certification grid, also confirm the following:
  - the correct time code (Full-Time/Part-Time) is selected,
  - the correct applicant type (i.e., First Time, Transfer, Visitor, Advanced Standing) is selected, and
  - applicants who withdrew prior to the ABA deadlines are excluded from the Qualified list.
3. If a registered applicant withdraws on or before the term deadline, be sure to change that applicant's current status or decision status so that the export decision in ACES<sup>2</sup> indicates that the student withdrew prior to the ABA term deadline.

Term deadlines are as follows:

- February 2 for winter/spring terms
  - June 15 for summer terms
  - October 5 for fall terms
4. Use the Applicant Decision Difference report in the Reports section of ACES<sup>2</sup> to verify that all decision data has been properly sent to LSAC.

Contact a member of your support team to help you through the process.

### 3 LSAC Verifies Matriculant Data

#### How LSAC Uses Your Data

LSAC will provide you with a list of matriculants using the data you keep in ACES<sup>2</sup>. LSAC calculates your percentiles and creates a file containing your percentile calculations. You can find your file in ACES<sup>2</sup> to download and review. Once you have reviewed and verified your data, you can choose **Release** in the Matric Certification section of ACES<sup>2</sup>.

This file will contain all the applicant data you keep in ACES<sup>2</sup> along with each applicant's high LSAT score and UGPA. There is information that may be excluded, and you will see the following in the Comments column:

- Exclude
  - if the record has been included in error or was a duplicate matriculant (Neither the high LSAT nor the UGPA will be included in the percentiles.)
- Exclude LSAT
  - if there is no test data at LSAC
  - if there are no reportable scores for the application cycle
- Exclude UGPA
  - if there is no UGPA because no documentation was given to LSAC
  - if there are less than 60 credit hours

The LSAT and UGPA percentiles are included in the file along with a count of the number of student records.

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Once you have reviewed and verified your data, choose **Release** in Matric Certification/Matric Release page in ACES<sup>2</sup>.

The ABA Standard 509 requires that all information reported by a law school must be complete, accurate, and not misleading to a reasonable law school student or applicant. The Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar and LSAC have collaborated to establish a verification program to allow schools to obtain a certified report of their first-year class credentials.

The program is voluntary. Participation in the verification program is deemed to meet the requirement of Standard 509. Law schools that choose not to participate will be asked by the ABA to demonstrate the accuracy of the information provided.

Contact your school account manager or go to our support site for [help](#) with the process.

LSAC collects data for all schools that have chosen to participate and sends the data to the ABA for inclusion in their 509 report.

LSAC continues collecting and verifying data so that it can be included in our end-of-year reports. This data is included in, but not limited to, the following reports:

- US National Decision Profile reports (available in the members-only area of LSAC.org)
- reports available in ACES<sup>2</sup> on the Reports tab with the subject “LSAC Data” (Once data is finalized, the updated data are reflected on these reports.)
- updates to applicants’ CAS reports to show prior matriculation

## 4 Timeline

**July**—Make sure your applicant types are recorded correctly in ACES<sup>2</sup>. It is important to start a new application cycle by collecting your data accurately. This is important to you because accurate data in ACES<sup>2</sup> results in accurate end-of-year reports that are available in ACES<sup>2</sup> and in the members-only area of LSAC.org.

To help you identify your applicants—and matriculants—more accurately, select **Applicant Type** in Utilities/Fields. When you add or edit, expand the LSAC Code field and you will see Advanced Standing and Visitor.

**August–September**—Check your matriculant data using the data grid in ACES<sup>2</sup>.

Your data in ACES<sup>2</sup> must be accurate. If the data from your registrar’s office is more up-to-date than the data in ACES<sup>2</sup>, be sure to correct the data in ACES<sup>2</sup>.

You can use the feature in ACES<sup>2</sup> to verify your list of matriculants. This feature is called Matric Verification and is found on the Data Submission tab. Contact a member of your support team or go to our support site for [help](#) with the process.

**October–mid-November**—Files containing your percentile calculations are created by LSAC and placed in ACES<sup>2</sup> for you to download and review. Once you have reviewed and verified the data in your file, you can release your data by selecting **Release** in the Matriculant Certification section of ACES<sup>2</sup>.

Your [support team](#) will work with you to resolve any discrepancies. Once your data is accurate and complete, you can authorize LSAC to send your data to the ABA by selecting **Release** in the Matriculant Certification section of ACES<sup>2</sup>.

**October 15**—Deadline for submission of your ABA annual questionnaire.

**December 15**—The ABA publishes their 509 report.

**November 15–December 31**—LSAC continues compiling and verifying data to include in our end-of-year reports.

## 5 Calculating Percentiles

The methodology for calculating percentiles described in this document is what the ABA has instructed LSAC to use in its calculations of percentiles to report law school first-year class credentials. Note that the results of percentile calculations made using Excel or other popular statistical tools may not yield the same results as those in this calculation.

### Calculating Percentiles for UGPA and LSAT Score

To determine the UGPA and LSAT score 25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles of your first-year class:

1. Prepare two lists of matriculants, one list for UGPA and one for LSAT score. There should be no zero or blank UGPAs or LSAT scores on the list. If they occur on your original matriculant list, delete them for purposes of calculating the percentiles.
2. Sort each list from low to high.
3. Count the number of items on each list. Note that the number of items can be different on each list because of any records you may have deleted. Also note that there may be more than one person with the same UGPA and LSAT score on your lists. The resulting counts can be described as YU (for UGPA) and YL (for LSAT score).
4. Determine the percentile cut point (Z) by multiplying the percentile value by the number of matriculants (Y) on each list.
  - $.25 \times YU = ZU_{25}$
  - $.50 \times YU = ZU_{50}$
  - $.75 \times YU = ZU_{75}$
  - $.25 \times YL = ZL_{25}$
  - $.50 \times YL = ZL_{50}$
  - $.75 \times YL = ZL_{75}$
5. For the Z values that have a decimal after the percentile multiplication:
  - Increment the Z value to the next highest whole number. Note that this is different from standard rounding rules so that *a result with a decimal of less than .5 would still round up to the next highest whole number.*



**Examples:**

To calculate the 25th percentile of UGPA (ZU25) when the list has 103 items:

- $.25 \times 103 = \text{ZU25}$  (25th percentile of UGPA) = 25.75
- Since the result has a decimal, round up the result (ZU) to 26.

To calculate the 50th percentile of LSAT score (ZL50) when the list has 255 items:

- $.50 \times 255 = \text{ZL50} = 127.50$
- Since the result has a decimal, round up the result (ZL) to 128.

6. For the Z values that yield a whole number, use the whole number.

**Examples:**

To calculate the 25th percentile of UGPA (ZU25) when the list has 160 items:

- $.25 \times 160 = \text{ZU25}$  (25th percentile of UGPA) = 40
- Since this is a whole number, the 25th percentile UGPA is 40.

To calculate the 50th percentile of LSAT score (ZL50) when the list has 140 items:

- $.50 \times 140 = \text{ZL50}$  (50th percentile of LSAT) = 70
- Since this is a whole number, the 50th percentile LSAT is 70.

7. For all Z values from step 5, count from lowest to highest, and the number of positions calculated in step 5, then choose the UGPA or LSAT score from that position.

**Examples:**

The ordered list of UGPAs for the 25th percentile might look like:

Position #	UGPA
24	3.45
25	3.47
26	3.48
27	3.50
28	3.50

In the calculation from the first example in step 5, the 25th percentile UGPA is in position 26 and the UGPA for the 25th percentile is 3.48.

The ordered list of LSAT scores for the 50th percentile might look like:

Position #	LSAT Score
126	154
127	155
128	156
129	156
130	157

In the calculation from the second example in step 5, the 50th percentile LSAT is in position 128 and the LSAT score for the 50th percentile is 156. Note that it does not make a difference that the next score (position 129) is also a 156.

8. If the calculation in step 4 yields a whole number and the UGPA/LSAT score is the same for both the Z and Z+1 position, then use that UGPA/LSAT score.

**Examples:**

The ordered list of UGPAs for the 25th percentile might look like:

Position #	UGPA
38	2.76
39	2.78
40	2.90
41	2.90
42	2.90

In the calculation from the first example in step 6, the 25th percentile of the UGPA (ZU25) is 40. The 40th and 41st positions have the same UGPA—2.90. So, the 25th percentile UGPA is 2.90.

If the result of the calculation in step 4 above yields a whole number and the Z and Z+1 positions are different, then add .01 to the Zth UGPA or add 1 to the Zth LSAT.

The ordered list of UGPAs for the 25th percentile might look like:

Position #	UGPA
38	2.76
39	2.78
40	2.90
41	2.91
42	2.92

In the calculation above, the UGPA (ZU25) is 40. The UGPAs in the 40th and 41st positions are different, so add .01 to the 40th UGPA, resulting in the 25th percentile UGPA of 2.91.

The ordered list of LSAT scores for the 25th percentile might look like:

Position #	LSAT
38	147
39	148
40	150
41	152
42	152

In the calculation above, the 25th percentile for the LSAT (ZL25) is 40. The 40th and 41st positions have different LSAT scores, so add 1 to the 40th LSAT score, resulting in the 25th percentile LSAT score of 151. Note that it does not make a difference what the spread might be between the two positions; *a value of .01 of the UGPA and 1 of the LSAT score is always added.*

## Appendix

### Matriculant Certification Process FAQs

Does this process eliminate our need to complete the ABA's Annual Questionnaire?

*No, the matriculant certification process does not replace the Annual Questionnaire. By participating in the matriculant certification process, you are satisfying one of the ABA's requirements as outlined in the Annual Questionnaire. The remainder of the data requested by the ABA must be submitted through the Annual Questionnaire.*

Do I need to wait until after October 5 to archive my previous year's data?

*No, you do not need to wait, but you must resolve all match problems before archiving. Unresolved match problems could result in data missing from your file.*

Can I have the matric certification email sent to multiple email addresses?

*Only one email address can be entered into the notification area within ACES<sup>2</sup>.*

### Matriculant Data

Are transfers included in my matriculant data?

*Transfer students are not included in matriculant data. For a complete list of who should be counted as a matriculant, please refer to the Matriculant Certification Reference Guide. For specific questions regarding applicants or applicant groups and whether they should be counted as matriculants, please contact the ABA for assistance.*

Are deferrals included in my matriculant data?

*Students who have deferred their enrollment are included in matriculant data. For a complete list of who should be counted as a matriculant, please refer to the Matriculant Certification Reference Guide. For specific questions regarding applicants or applicant groups and whether they should be counted as matriculants, please contact the ABA for assistance.*

Applicants who have been dismissed from another law school should not be counted as matriculants at a new school in which they enroll. How will these applicants be removed from the report?

*LSAC has no way to identify applicants who have been dismissed from another law school. When reviewing the data, it is the school's responsibility to communicate to LSAC that these applicants should be removed from its data.*

### Transcripts and Credential Assembly Service (CAS)

I have an applicant who is applying only to my school and I don't want them to pay the CAS fees to have transcripts coded for the matric cert process. What can I do?

*You have the option to issue coupon codes for both the CAS subscription and CAS report fees through ACES<sup>2</sup>. You can provide these coupon codes to your applicants to use at checkout when they create their LSAC account. LSAC will invoice you monthly for any redeemed coupon codes. For a full list of fees related to CAS, please see LSAC.org.*

An applicant had their transcripts sent directly to us. Is there anything else we need to do?

*Encourage the applicant to also have the final transcripts sent to LSAC as soon as possible so we can process the data before October 5. LSAC uses any transcripts on file as of October 5 to calculate GPA and percentages.*

Are there any limitations to the number of CAS subscription or CAS report coupons a school can give to applicants?

*You can produce and distribute as many of the CAS subscription and CAS report coupons as you wish. LSAC will invoice you monthly for any redeemed coupon codes.*

How long are the CAS coupons valid for an applicant to use? How long is a CAS subscription valid?

*Coupons for the CAS subscription and CAS reports are valid for one year from the date of creation by default, but each time you generate a coupon code, you can choose a specific expiration date. An applicant's CAS subscription is valid for five years.*

How does LSAC calculate GPA data if a final transcript is not on an applicant's record?

*If LSAC has not received a final transcript by October 5, we will use the most recent transcript we have on file for calculating the applicant's GPA.*

## Percentages

What happens if I have a matriculant who graduated from a foreign undergraduate school or does not have a GPA for some other reason?

*If a GPA cannot be calculated for a matriculant, they are excluded from the percentage calculation. For example, if you have 10 matriculants and one does not have a GPA, your school's GPA data will be calculated using 9 applicants.*

What if my matriculants have taken the GRE?

*If there is a valid LSAT score on the applicant's record, we will still include it in your school's LSAT data, even if you admit the applicant based on another test score or other criteria. If the applicant does not have a valid LSAT score, they are excluded from the percentage calculation. Please contact the ABA with any questions related to the process of reporting GRE scores through the Annual Questionnaire.*

Does LSAC use the same formulas as the ABA when calculating the GPA and LSAT percentage data?

*Yes, LSAC and the ABA use the same calculations to derive the GPA and LSAT data. This calculation is explained in greater detail in the Matriculant Certification Reference Guide.*