

AS STUDENTS PREPARE TO FACE LSAT CHANGES IN JUNE, KAPLAN SURVEY OF LSAT-TAKERS SHOWS THAT CHOICE OF TEST SITE MAY IMPACT TEST EXPERIENCE

Aspiring Lawyers Rate Sites: Ivies and Big Ten Schools Seed Poorly; Top Ranked Options Available at Smaller Schools and Community Colleges

New York, NY, March 29, 2007 – Feedback from students who have recently taken the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), the high stakes test that can count for up to 50 percent of the law school admissions decision, reveals that test day experiences can vary widely depending on the test site – a fact that June LSAT takers should be aware of before committing to a test site. According to newly released results from Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions' annual "Test Site Rater" survey, the quality of LSAT test sites across the country varies dramatically. – a factor that can have an impact on test day performance. Test Site Rater (<http://kaplansurveys.com/rater>), offers insight that can help minimize the unexpected for students preparing for the upcoming LSAT, as they will already be facing changes to the test content and administrative security regulations.

"Students should know that while the overall quality of their preparation for the LSAT is the paramount factor in determining their success on the exam, that some variables they have not considered may also influence their performance," said Steven Marietti, director of pre-law programs, Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions. "Factors such as annoying background noise, small desk sizes, proctors who don't enforce or understand test site rules and even an uncomfortable room climate can all lead to a situation where the student is not in optimal test-taking mode. This inside insight from students who have already taken the LSAT can help them consider their options if perhaps site quality is at odds with location convenience."

This year's Test Site Rater is based on feedback from 10,939 LSAT test takers at 349 LSAT testing sites. The survey asked test takers to rate several key criteria including: desk space, proctors, quiet and comfort and overall experience. Additionally, the survey solicited students' reviews and comments. The rankings only include sites with five reviews or more. Kaplan has been publishing student ratings of test sites since 2002.

From Perfection to the Pits: In Students' Own Words

The survey revealed a range of factors both positively and negatively impacting students' testing experience – from size of the desks: (at UCLA, the desks were so small that test booklets themselves had to be held with students' hands, according to some); to proctor behavior: (New York University proctors had points deducted for fighting among themselves, with one student noting "The proctors of the exam were squabbling loudly in front of us before the test about issues of passing out materials and timing the test...it was sort of distracting."); to environmental factors: (an Arizona State University student noted that even though it was 100 degrees outside by early afternoon, the room was freezing); to site location: (Some sites were difficult to find, with one student at the University of Florida saying, "It was extremely difficult to find my way to check in and to find the actual room I was assigned to. I was not the only person who had this difficulty, as everyone wandered the test site as a herd."); to overall experience, with a student at the Ave Maria School of Law stating, "'I think this site was as perfect as it could be. Only about 23 people, plenty of room, good temperature ... nice proctor."

Rankings are based on total point values earned by a site's scores in four criteria: test proctors, level of quiet and comfort, amount of desk space, and overall site experience. Test takers were asked to assign a score of 1-5 to each of the criteria. Kaplan then calculated an overall score for each site, weighing the overall site experience most heavily (50%), and all other scores equally. Only testing sites that have 5 or more reviews are rated.

The best overall LSAT sites, as ranked by Test Site Rater student responders:

1. Ave Maria School of Law (Ann Arbor, Michigan)
2. Chapman University (Orange, California)
3. Colby College (Waterville, Maine)
4. Hagerstown Community College (Hagerstown, Maryland)
5. Hope College (Holland, Michigan)

The worst overall LSAT sites, as ranked by Test Site Rater student responders:

1. Portland State University (Portland, Oregon)
2. Connecticut College (New London, Connecticut)
3. Oakland University (Rochester, Michigan)
4. Brooklyn College (Brooklyn, New York)
5. California State University (Fresno, California)

Schools with Fewer Enrolled Students May Provide Better Options; No Improvement at Some “Worst” Schools

Two sites in Michigan – Ave Maria School of Law and Hope College – garnered LSAT student honors. And for the second year in row, Ave Maria School of Law was ranked number one out of the 349 school surveyed; Hope College was in the top five last year as well. Unfortunately for some LSAT students in New York and New England, Brooklyn College and Connecticut College are repeat offenders, having been on Kaplan’s “worst” list in 2006. All of the schools ranked in the top five (minus Hagerstown Community College) have fewer than 6,000 enrolled students; all of the bottom ranked schools (minus Connecticut College) have enrollments of between 11,000 and 18,000 students.

From 4.0 to Failure for Ivies: Top Schools Don’t All Get High Marks

According to test takers, test sites at the Ivies are all over the map. LSAT students give Cornell (ranked 51) and Dartmouth (ranked 107) rave reviews, focusing on excellent proctors and a quiet environment. For the second year in a row, Yale and Brown come in at the bottom of the LSAT test site list with Brown ranked at 302 and Yale at 321. Complaints about both prestigious schools’ sites focused on logistical issues, with students at Brown blaming proctors for bungling room assignments.

But how do the Big Ten Schools Score as Test Sites?

Nearly every Big Ten school included in the Test Site Rater, with the exceptions of the University of Minnesota (28) and the University of Illinois (56) fared poorly, falling well below the 100 mark: The University of Michigan (114), Indiana University (174), Northwestern University (196), Purdue University (216), Ohio State University (239), the University of Iowa (256), University of Wisconsin – Madison (261), Michigan State University (284), and Pennsylvania State University (327).

Approximately 140,000 students took the LSAT in 2006, a slight increase over the previous year.

Full rankings and reviews can be found at: <http://kaplansurveys.com/rater>. For more information or to arrange an interview with an expert on the Test Site Rater, changes to the LSAT’s content and new test day security regulations, please contact Russell Schaffer, russell.schaffer@kaplan.com, 212.453.7538.

About Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions

Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions (www.kaptest.com), a division of Kaplan, Inc., is a premier provider of educational and career services for individuals, schools and businesses. Established in 1938, Kaplan is the world leader in the test prep industry. With 4,000 classroom locations worldwide, a comprehensive menu of online offerings and a complete array of books and software, Kaplan offers preparation for more than 80 standardized tests, including entrance exams for secondary school, college and graduate school, as well as English language and professional licensing exams. Kaplan also provides private tutoring and college and graduate admissions consulting services.

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