

## **Policy and Information for Students Requesting Accommodations for Disabilities on the LSAT**

From: The Brigham Young University Accessibility Center, 1520 WSC

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Brigham Young University and the Law School Admission Council (LSAC) recognize the needs of students with disabilities, particularly their possible need for accommodations on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). Students preparing for the LSAT sometimes encounter difficulty with the examination (either during practice exams or after receiving their test results), and they may believe such difficulties indicate the presence of undiagnosed learning disorders or Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The following information is provided to help educate potential law students about learning disorders and ADHD to help them better understand whether to seek formal assessment and (possibly) accommodations on the LSAT.

### Learning Disorders:

Learning Disorders are diagnosed when an individual's achievement in reading, mathematics, or written expression is substantially below that expected for age, schooling, and level of intelligence. Such disorders generally become apparent by fourth grade (and often earlier). While some learning disorders are not diagnosed until adulthood, this is the exception. Additionally, individuals who perform well academically in high school and undergraduate courses (and whom have not received accommodations) generally will not qualify for a diagnosis, as the learning deficits must substantially interfere with academic success for a diagnosis to be given.

### Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):

ADHD is a condition marked by several symptoms of inattention (e.g., carelessness, difficulty sustaining attention, forgetfulness, being distracted easily, etc.), hyperactivity/impulsivity (e.g., being fidgety, displaying difficulty waiting one's turn, blurting out answers before questions are finished, etc.), or both. While everyone displays some of these symptoms at times, individuals with ADHD display these symptoms prior to age seven, and such symptoms interfere significantly with academic, social, and/or occupational functioning. Again, a history of superior academic performance would argue against the presence of this condition.

Thus, if a pre-law student has earned a superior G.P.A. but does relatively poorly on the LSAT, it is likely that other factors (test-anxiety, relative weaknesses in those areas assessed by the LSAT, poor preparation, etc.) are responsible for the LSAT score, as opposed to a learning disorder or ADHD. Additionally, courts have analyzed students' prior academic performance and looked at past academic success as being incompatible with the need for accommodations both for standardized tests (e.g., LSAT, GRE) and for regular academic activities.

If you believe you may qualify for a diagnosis of either a learning disorder or ADHD, you will need to receive a comprehensive psychological evaluation to document the condition(s) and to provide a rationale for both academic accommodations as well as accommodations provided for the LSAT. The University Accessibility Center (UAC)

provides psychological evaluations at no (or very nominal) cost. An initial, brief assessment is conducted to determine whether a student qualifies for an expanded evaluation of these disorders. Because our evaluations are provided at (essentially) no cost, the demand can be great and the wait times somewhat long (depending on factors such as the time of year). Thus, it is recommended that students seeking testing contact our office well in advance of the need for assessment results (a lead-time of up to six months is ideal). Students can also contact private psychologists in the area, although such private evaluations typically cost several hundred dollars. If you are seeking a private evaluation for possible accommodations on the LSAT, you may want to consult the LSAC website ([www.lsac.org](http://www.lsac.org)) under the "Accommodated Testing" link to determine what LSAC requires in their evaluations. The LSAC website also provides information regarding how your score and accommodations are reported to law schools.

If you would like to set up an evaluation appointment, please call the University Accessibility Center at 801-422-2767.