

Frequently Asked Questions About the GRE[®] Comparison Tool for Law Schools (March 2018)

Why use the GRE[®] Comparison Tool for Law Schools?

Many law schools now accept both the *Graduate Record Examinations*[®] (GRE[®]) General Test and the Law School Admission Test[®] (LSAT[®]) exam as part of the admissions process. The purpose of the Comparison Tool is to provide a way for institutions to appropriately compare results from the two exams.

The GRE Comparison Tool for Law Schools allows score users to predict a test taker's LSAT score using the test taker's GRE Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning scores from the GRE General Test. The GRE Analytical Writing score is not used in the prediction because the LSAT Writing Sample is unscored and does not contribute to the LSAT score.

Why use a prediction model to compare GRE and LSAT scores?

The GRE General Test provides separate GRE Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning scores while the LSAT exam provides a total score, making direct comparisons difficult. Since a one-to-one linking of scores is not possible, a prediction model found in the GRE Comparison Tool for Law Schools provides an LSAT score that is derived from the optimal statistical weighting of the separate GRE Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning scores. This predicted score effectively allows the two GRE scores to be compared to the single LSAT score appropriately. While the GRE and LSAT exams use many similar question types and cover similar skills, each uses a unique framework that specifies the sub-skills covered in the test content, as well as the difficulty level and proportion of question types used on the test.

Why not compare the reported percentiles for the GRE and LSAT?

Percentiles represent how a test taker performed relative to other test takers who recently took the same test. The current test taker populations for the GRE General Test and LSAT exam are likely different in terms of background and ability, so the percentiles calculated for each test based on those different populations are not directly comparable. Additionally, reported percentiles for any test vary over time as the test taking population changes. Both GRE and LSAT scores are meant to be consistent across time and changes in test taking populations, so the most consistent and accurate comparisons are based on the statistical relationship between the reported scores, as provided by the Comparison Tool.

How are the predicted LSAT scores calculated?

The Comparison Tool's predicted LSAT scores were calculated using statistical analyses of the test scores of 1,587 admitted law school students from 21 law schools who took both the GRE General Test and the LSAT exam¹.

There were two steps in the process to produce the predicted LSAT scores.

The first step used the statistical procedure of multiple linear regression. With this procedure, the sample's GRE Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning scores were statistically weighted to optimize the prediction of their LSAT scores. The resulting prediction equation, which summarizes the empirical relationship of the GRE and LSAT scores into a simple algebraic equation, was used to create predicted LSAT scores for all records. This predicted score is weighted so that approximately 60% is based on the GRE Verbal Reasoning score and 40% is based on the GRE Quantitative Reasoning score². The regression analysis indicates that GRE Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning section scores are significantly able to predict LSAT Total scores. The correlation between the GRE scores and the LSAT score is quite high at .85. Correlations of about .85 are often reported when predicting how well a test taker will perform if they repeat a test.

The second step linked the predicted LSAT scores and the observed LSAT scores for the sample via a single group equipercentile equating method. Equipercentile equating is an appropriate linking method when the two sets of scores being linked are provided by the same subjects, as was the case with these data. This additional step adjusts for the potential compression of the score range that occurs when one score is predicted from another via multiple linear regression.

The result is that the Comparison Tool can take all combinations of GRE Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning scores and identify an LSAT score that represents the same relative performance as if an applicant had taken the LSAT.

It is important to note that while the scale for the LSAT ranges from 120-180, scores of 178 and above are uncommon and represent only 0.1% of all LSAT reported scores. Based on the sample used for this analysis, the maximum predicted LSAT is 178. For this reason, test takers with maximum scores of 170 on each GRE section are assigned a predicted LSAT score range of 178-180. Additionally, the minimum predicted LSAT score is 131. The lowest observed LSAT score in the sample is 134, and the highest observed LSAT score is 180.

¹ For more information on the sample and the reliability and validity of the GRE General test for Law Schools, refer to *The Validity of GRE Scores for Predicting Academic Performance at U.S. Law Schools*. (Klieger et al, 2018)

² For reference, the complete optimal-weighting regression equation is:
Predicted LSAT Score = 2.704 + (0.622*GRE Verbal) + (0.388*GRE Quantitative). However, using this equation will not match the Comparison Tool results due to the later equating step.

What is a predicted score range?

The predicted LSAT score may not be perfectly equivalent to an applicant's actual performance on the LSAT exam due to the measurement error inherent in both tests. Measurement "error" is the statistical term to describe the unavoidable lack of perfect precision found with the individual scores provided by any test. It is not error in terms of being a mistake, but simply reflects the fact that a test taker would not score exactly the same each time they take a test or on every version of the test. For this reason, there is a score range associated with the predicted LSAT score, which is approximately +/- 5 points on the 120-180 LSAT scale. This value is calculated using the correlation between the GRE Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning scores and the LSAT Total score.