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**National Association of Law Students with Disabilities**

**LSAT Accommodation Tip Sheet for Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired**

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**National Association of Law Students with Disabilities**

**LSAT Accommodation Tip Sheet for Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired**

# 1) Introduction

**The LSAT is different than any test you have probably ever taken. It is a time-pressured exam requiring quick thinking and close readings. The exam consists of reading comprehension, logical reasoning questions, and logic games. For students who are blind and those with visual impairments, the test offers some unique challenges due to the nature of the logic games and the layout of the large print test booklet.**

**This tip sheet is meant to assist students who are blind or have visual impairments in assessing their needs for accommodations on the LSAT. We hope this tip sheet will assist you in preparing and requesting accommodations for the exam so that your test score will reflect your ability rather than your disability.**

**\*Disclaimer: This tip sheet is based on the experiences of law students who are blind and have visual impairments. These tips are only meant as suggestions and are by no means the only accommodation requests a student may make. We welcome any suggestions or corrections. Please feel free to contact us at** **nalswd.president@gmail.com****. For more information about the National Association of Law Students with Disabilities visit** [**www.nalswd.org**](http://www.nalswd.org)**.**

# 2) LSAT Challenges for Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired

# a) Students with Visual Impairments

# i. Logic Games

**The logic games section of the LSAT often requires students to draw charts or graphs to arrive at the correct answer. Without accommodations, sighted students must draw charts and graphs in the margins of the LSAT test booklet. No scratch paper or pens are allowed unless approved by an accommodation. The logic games are usually presented on one page with the questions immediately following. It is therefore easier for sighted students to scan back and forth from the logic game to the questions.**

**For a student with a visual impairment, drawing a graph or a chart under time pressure in the margins of the test booklet with a pencil is far from ideal. Trying to draw a graph or chart according to the logic game to a scale that is easily readable can be difficult without adequate space, time, and a bold pen.**

**For a student who requests a large print LSAT, the logic game and questions may also be presented over numerous pages. It is difficult for students to scan back and forth from the logic game to the questions. Flipping between the logic game, the questions, and the student’s hand-drawn chart or graph can take valuable time and focus away from answering the test questions.**

# ii. Reading Comprehension

**The reading comprehension section of the LSAT requires extremely close readings and sophisticated analysis of reading material. Without accommodations, the reading material is usually presented on one page with the question following on the opposite page. It is again easier for sighted students to scan back and forth from the reading material to the questions.**

**For a student with a visual impairment who requests a large print LSAT, however, the reading material is presented over numerous pages with the questions also presented over numerous pages. It is difficult for students to scan back and forth from the reading material to the questions. Flipping between questions and reading material can take valuable time and focus away from answering the test questions.**

# b) Students who are Blind

# i. Logic Games

**As students who are blind cannot usually draw charts or diagrams to help visualize the logic games, it becomes difficult to figure out the answer under time pressure. Students have been successful at using other aids to help visualize the games such as magnetic boards with magnetic Braille letters and numbers (as well as any other types of magnets that would be useful) that can be moved around to create a diagram. Students have also requested a Braille writer to be able to write out the problems and take general notes, and Microsoft Excel to create charts or tables to organize the games.**

**Although the LSAC has not historically permitted the use of laptops with screen readers for the LSAT, several students in the past three years have been able to justify, and have been granted such accommodations. Based on this we feel it is best to request the test in Braille and/or in electronic format to be read with a screen reader.**

# ii. Reading Comprehension

**This section of the exam contains long passages that need to be read quickly but closely, and usually need to be read at least twice. While having a reader read aloud the passages is one option, it is not the best option. Readers can stumble over difficult words, read too slowly or too quickly, may have an accent which is difficult to understand, etc. It is best to either request a Braille exam so students can have more control over what they are reading, or use a screen reader. This way, students can control the reading speed, understand clearly what they are reading, and can go back to any part of the text with ease. Because the questions are after each passage, it may be difficult to go back and forth between the passages and questions efficiently. So we feel it is best to request both a Braille copy of the exam and a screen reader especially for this portion of the LSAT. This way, students can read the questions with one format (Braille or electronic), and the passages with the other. The use of both a screen reader and Braille has been granted to at least one student in 2009.**

# 3) Accommodations to Consider to meet the Challenges of the LSAT

# a) Students with Visual Impairments

# i. Large Print/Electronic Exam

**Students with a visual impairment should request a large print and/or screen-reader accessible electronic exam. Students can also request large print and/or screen-reader accessible practice exams from the LSAC. Students should review the test layout carefully.**

# ii. Double Time

**Students with a visual impairment should seriously consider requesting double time. The LSAT is designed to be a time-pressured exam where every second counts. Every second that is taken away from focusing on the test questions to flip extra pages, draw large graphs, or review question layouts, will hurt your score. Requesting double time may help ensure your LSAT score will reflect your ability and not the challenges you faced navigating the LSAT test booklet.**

**If you receive additional time, your LSAT scores will be flagged. The LSAC will send a statement with your scores to any school you apply advising the school that your score should be interpreted with great sensitivity and flexibility. You also can request that your accommodation request be sent to schools along with your score. While you can never know what effect a flag will actually have on a law school admissions committee, you do know the effect that a low LSAT score will have on an admissions committee. You can review the LSAC’s policy at the following URL: http://www.lsac.org/JD/LSAT/accommodated-testing.asp.**

# iii. Off-The-Clock Break, Snack, and Water

**A student who receives double time will spend at least six hours in the testing room. Students should request that they be allowed to bring in snacks and water to be eaten during an off-the-clock break at some point during the exam. Students also need to request the off-the-clock break; one will not be automatically given. There is usually one short 10-15 minute break between the third and fourth sections of the test, but it is advisable for students to specify the length and timing of breaks needed in their accommodation request.**

# iv. Testing over Multiple Days

**A student who receives double time will spend at least six hours in the testing room to complete the test. Students with visual impairments should think hard about how much intensive reading they can handle without causing eye strain. Students who feel their eyes would be strained after less than six hours, should consider requesting testing over multiple days. Although we have not heard of any students who have been granted such a request, if you feel you will need this accommodation, you should strongly consider making the request. Request for testing over multiple days will likely require detailed medical documentation.**

# v. Private Room

**A student who receives double time may also want to request a private room to avoid distractions.**

# vi. Computer with Screen Reader

**Several students have been successful in requesting and being permitted the use of a laptop with a screen reader. For these students, LSAC has required the students to bring their own laptops with the screen reader. In the past, the LSAC has provided a test that may be navigated with hot keys, and has place maker functionality. Students who do not have difficulty processing information auditorily, should strongly consider requesting the use of a screen reader. Students should note that LSAC may require you to bring your own printer to print out the essay portion of the exam.**

# vii. Bold Pen

**Students with a visual impairment should consider requesting to use a bold felt tip pen to prevent eye fatigue.**

# viii. Tools for Diagram-Making

**Students with a visual impairment should consider requesting scratch paper. Scratch paper will be useful during the logic section of the LSAT to draw graphs and charts to a scale that is easily readable. Without scratch paper you will have to draw your graphs and charts in the margins of the LSAT test booklet, and there will likely not be enough room to draw to a scale that is comfortably readable.**

**If drawing is difficult, students may want to consider requesting use of Excel for taking notes to complete the logic games. Some students have found the Excel option to be vastly superior to other logic game note taking solutions.**

**Students who are not comfortable drawing or using Excel to create graphs and charts should consider what other tools would help them construct the charts and diagrams. Some tools that have been used in the past are a Braille Note, magnetic boards with magnetic pieces, or any other tactile drawing kit or device.**

# ix. Large Desk

**If you request a large print test booklet, you will receive a test printed on 11x17 inch paper. You will need a desk large enough to accommodate your test booklet. The testing center will likely have a desk large enough to accommodate the test booklet, but you can never be too careful; it’s best to expressly request a large desk.**

# x. Time Device

**Students with a visual impairment should also consider requesting a time device (a clock or timer). A time device will let you know how much time has passed and will ensure that you are able to tell the time regardless of the layout of the testing center.**

# xi. Reading Lamp

**Students with a visual impairment should also consider requesting a reading lamp. A reading lamp will assist in preventing eye fatigue and will ensure that you have adequate light to read regardless of the lighting and layout of the testing center.**

# xii. Alternate Non-Scantron

**Students with a visual impairment should also consider requesting an alternate non-scantron answer sheet.**

# b) Students who are blind

# i. Braille/Electronic Exam

**Students who are blind should consider requesting a Braille exam or electronic exam to be read with a screen reader, or both. LSAC provides brailed practice LSAT exams upon request and they are usually mailed to the student’s home. However, they only send a few at a time and will not send more until the student mails the received practice exams back. Screen-reader accessible practice exams are also available upon request from the LSAC.**

# ii. Double Time

**Students who are blind should seriously consider requesting double time. The LSAT is designed to be a time-pressured exam where every second counts. Every second that is taken away from focusing on the test questions to navigate the exam with a screen reader or in Braille, compile charts and graphs, etc will hurt your score. Requesting double time may help ensure your LSAT score will reflect your ability and not the challenges you faced navigating the LSAT.**

**If you receive additional time, your LSAT scores will be flagged. The LSAC will send a statement with your scores to any school you apply advising the school that your score should be interpreted with great sensitivity and flexibility. You also can request that your accommodation request be sent to schools along with your score. While you can never know what effect a flag will actually have on a law school admissions committee, you do know the effect that a low LSAT score will have on an admissions committee. You can review the LSAC’s policy at the following URL: http://www.lsac.org/JD/LSAT/accommodated-testing.asp.**

# iii. Computer with Screen Reader

**Several students have been successful in requesting and being permitted the use of a laptop with a screen reader. For these students, LSAC has required the students to bring their own laptops with the screen reader installed. In the past, the LSAC has provided a test that may be navigated with hot keys, and has place maker functionality. Students who do not have difficulty processing information auditorialy should strongly consider requesting the use of a screen reader. Students should also note that LSAC may require you to bring your own printer to print out the essay portion of the exam.**

# iv. Braille Writer with Braille Paper and/or Braille Note

**Students who are blind should request being allowed to bring in a Braille writer and Braille paper with which to take notes, especially for logic games, and/or a Braille Note machine. Students will need something to take notes with for all the sections of the exam. Students who are blind have requested these items in the past and have been able to bring them into the testing room.**

# v. Tools for Diagram-Making

**Students who are blind should consider requesting use of Excel for taking notes and/or charts to complete the logic games. Some students have found the Excel option to be vastly superior to other logic game note taking solutions.**

**If a student does not wish to use Excel to make diagrams and charts for the logic games, students should consider what other tools would help them construct the charts and diagrams. Some tools that have been used in the past are a Braille Note, magnetic boards with magnetic pieces, or any other tactile drawing kit or device.**

# vi. Time-Taking Device

**Students who are blind should also consider requesting the use of a time device (a talking watch or timer). A time device will let you know how much time has passed and can warn you when you are nearing the end of a section. You will have to bring your own time device; LSAC will not provide a time device for you.**

# vii. Scribe to Record Answers

**Students who are blind should request a scribe to record answers on a scantron. It is best that students tell the scribe their answer after each question, rather than at the end of each section, to ensure that enough time is available to record all answers. If your request for a scribe is granted, you will likely have only a limited time period to give direction to the scribe, so it is best to decide how you want to work with the scribe beforehand and be prepared to give the scribe directions.**

# viii. Off-The-Clock Break, Snack, and Water

**As Students who are blind will spend at least six hours in the testing room (if double time is granted), students should request that they be allowed to bring in snacks and water to be eaten during an off-the-clock break at some point during the exam. Students also need to request the off-the-clock break; one will not be automatically given. There is usually one short 10-15 minute break between the third and fourth sections of the test, but it is advisable for students to specify the length and timing of breaks needed in their accommodation request.**

# 4) Accommodation Request Considerations

**If you receive any accommodations, percentile ranks of nonstandard-time scores will not be available and will not be reported to the schools that you request your score be sent to.**

**If you receive additional time, your LSAT scores will be flagged. The LSAC will send a statement with your scores to any school you apply to advising the school that it should be interpreted with great sensitivity and flexibility. You also can request that your accommodation request be sent to schools along with your score. While you can never know what effect a flag will actually have on a law school admissions committee, you do know the effect that a low LSAT score will have on an admissions committee. You can review the LSAC’s policy at the following URL: http://www.lsac.org/JD/LSAT/accommodated-testing.asp.**

# 5) Words of Advice

**Preparing for the LSAT and requesting accommodations can seem like a daunting process, but don’t let it deter you from achieving your goals. You can do it!**

**The National Association of Law Students with Disabilities (NALSWD) has many resources available online to assist you in applying for schools and beyond. NALSWD members and alumni are also available to answer any questions you have. Visit www.nalswd.org.**

# 6) Helpful Links

# a) LSAT Practice Exams

**Students may be able to request a large print, Braille, or screen reader accessible-practice exam on CDROM, by calling the LSAC at 215-968-1001.**

**The LSAC website also provides a link to one practice exam that appears to be accessible to screen readers.**

**Below is the direct link.**

[**http://www.lsac.org/jd/pdfs/SamplePTJune.pdf**](http://www.lsac.org/jd/pdfs/SamplePTJune.pdf)

**If the above link does not work, click on the below link and look for the link that says LSAT Printer Friendly Version (PDF).**

[**http://www.lsac.org/jd/LSAT/lsat-prep-materials.asp**](http://www.lsac.org/jd/LSAT/lsat-prep-materials.asp)

# b) LSAC Booklet: Testing Accommodations for Candidates with Disabilities

[**http://www.lsac.org/JD/pdfs/accommodatebrochure.pdf**](http://www.lsac.org/JD/pdfs/accommodatebrochure.pdf)

# c) LSAT Accommodation Form for Students with Disabilities

[**http://www.lsac.org/jd/PDFs/AccommodationsForm.pdf**](http://www.lsac.org/jd/PDFs/AccommodationsForm.pdf)