LSAT Org 'Deeply Sorry' For Testing Problems, Offers Retakes

By Emily Sawicki · Listen to article

Law360 (August 14, 2023, 8:33 PM EDT) -- Acknowledging issues with staffing, systems and technology that caused lengthy delays for hundreds of people who were set to take the Law School Admission Test — better known as the LSAT — remotely over the weekend, the organization that administers the test has announced the last-minute addition of two retesting days for this coming weekend.

The Law School Admission Council, or LSAC, gave test-takers who faced delays during their regularly scheduled tests on Aug. 11 and 12 through the end of the day on Monday, Aug. 14, to register for a retake, to occur either in person or online.

"To accommodate test takers who were affected by delays during the August LSAT administration, LSAC will open retest dates on Saturday, August 19, and Sunday, August 20," an announcement banner on LSAC's website read. "In-person and remote test sessions will be available. If your test session was affected by delays, please file a complaint through your LSAC.org account by 11:59 p.m. ET on Monday, August 14."

LSAC spokesperson Mark Murray told Law360 on Monday that last weekend was the first time the LSAT was offered in what Murray called "dual mode" — simultaneously in-person and online — testing, including the first in-person testing since the exam went fully remote in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Maryland-based testing and assessment company Prometric was selected to proctor the exam. Murray said LSAC and Prometric "conducted large-scale tests" in recent months to ensure the program would run smoothly, but issues began soon after testing started on Friday. While Murray could not immediately confirm the full scope of the issues, he estimated they affected "hundreds of people on Friday, and a smaller but a still significant number on Saturday."

"There wasn't any one big thing — it was several smaller problems that added up to a really big problem that had not surfaced in all of our planning and pre-testing and mock tests and the other preparatory work that we'd done over many months with Prometric," Murray said.

The problems primarily affected remote test-takers, with virtually no hiccups reported for in-person testing, he added.

A representative for Prometric could not be reached for comment Monday.

On Saturday afternoon, LSAC posted on X, the site formerly known as Twitter, that "as of 4pm today, 5,700 people had already started their exams, and 3,500 people had already finished," adding, "We expect 8,000+ people to test today."

In response to the post, one user wrote, "I started an hour and a half late and I was crying."

Murray said several times during his Monday conversation with Law360 that LSAC considers the testing issues "unacceptable."

"We are deeply, deeply sorry that this happened, and we apologize to every test-taker that was affected," Murray said. "We are committed to doing everything to make it right and to fix these problems for this weekend and for all future tests."
As of late afternoon on Monday, LSAC had already received hundreds of retest requests, Murray said.

On Sunday, LSAC sent an email to everyone who had been scheduled for a remote test Aug. 11 and 12 notifying those who faced technical issues and delays of several options. Those included signing on for the last-minute retests this weekend; requesting a refund; registering for upcoming regularly scheduled testing that will occur from September through June; or just accepting the score they earned if they were able to complete the test.

LSAC had previously announced that it would begin capping the total number of LSAT attempts individuals may make, but Murray said a test-taker who experienced problems with their remote testing this weekend will be able to retest down the line without it counting against their total number of test slots.

"If they had significant issues through no fault of their own in August and they decide to move to September, that should not affect their cumulative total of testing," Murray said.

For the time being, testing is still being conducted by Prometric, which has been working "round the clock" with LSAC to fix problems, Murray said. As for the longer term, Murray said it was "just too soon to talk about" Prometric's future as an LSAT proctor.

"We're focused 100% on the needs of these test-takers," Murray added.

--Editing by Alanna Weissman.

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1 Comment

Susan Macaulay August 15th, 2023, 6:26PM

With all due respect to both, I believe Mr. Murray and/or Prometric have seriously understated what occurred last weekend. My daughter was one of the affected test-takers during Friday's exam. Based on her experience, those of others in her LSAT-prep course, and online accounts from those who also took the LSAT on Friday, the problems my daughter had were experienced by far more than "hundreds" of test-takers - more likely several thousand.

In my daughter's case, the test started almost an hour late, after which her proctor completely disappeared. She sat waiting for almost 2 hours after her break before finishing the test, submitting it, and signing off, all without any proctor participation. The testing requirements are so strict that virtually any deviation results in the student's test being disqualified (one woman was required to remove a potted plant from the room before the proctor would let her begin). She couldn't leave the room, use her cellphone to call anyone, or try to go online to find out what was going on, for fear of having her test thrown out. Needless to say, she, as well as thousands of others, was completely freaked out by the end, and certain that her scores would be cancelled because she couldn't follow the iron-clad procedures imposed by LSAC.

LSAC holds the only key to the only door to apply to law school. This should never have happened - and should never happen again.

donald eriksen
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