

LSDAS FAQs:

What is the LSDAS?

The Law School Data Assembly Service is the bureaucracy that acts as a clearinghouse for gathering certain basic information about you and passing it on to the law schools in a standardized format. All applicants to law school must use the LSDAS. No exceptions.

You must arrange to have your transcripts and letters of recommendation (“LOR”) sent to them. You (and your recommendation letter-writers) need to send them only one copy of each item—the LSDAS will make copies and send these items to each of the law schools to which you apply. Law Schools require that you use the LSDAS, *even if* you also have a letters file with the Health Professions and Prelaw Center (HPPLC). The LSDAS will not accept these documents directly from students, so the registrar (re: transcripts) and your letter writers (or HPPLC if you have a letters file there—see below) must send this material directly to the LSDAS.

All other documentation (e.g., personal statement, resume, addenda letters, etc.) should be sent by you directly and separately to each individual law school along with your other application material. In other words, the LSDAS only takes your transcripts and letters of recommendation. That’s it.

The LSDAS will get your LSAT score automatically. They will analyze and break-down your transcript into a standardized “report card” that is the same for all applicants regardless of the college attended or grading system used. They recompute your GPA (the main differences with IU’s system are that they include all credits and grades if a course is repeated—for example, if you “FX” a course the LSDAS will count the original “F” along with the new grade; and they will count an “A+” as 4.33.). The law schools request this file AFTER they receive an application from you.

Thus, you do not—and cannot—tell the LSDAS which schools you will be applying to. The law schools contact them directly.

Please note that it can also take the LSDAS up to 2 weeks to process your material (transcripts and letters) after they receive them. Occasionally, they are backed up even longer. Furthermore, the registrar can be backed up for a week or more in sending out your transcripts in the first place (see below), and at crunch time it can take HPPLC several days to process your letters as well. Be sure to figure in these delays when you are planning your timetable for applying. Late November and all of December are particularly busy periods. It is not until your LSDAS file gets together with your actual application at the law school that your case for admission will be considered. Do as much in advance as possible.

Remember: with applications, earlier is better. Ignore deadlines-- people are evaluated and admitted (or not) when applications are received-- admission standards get tougher as time goes on because there are

progressively fewer seats available. The absolute latest you should have all your material ready is early January; by Thanksgiving is much preferred.

WARNING: Some early decision plans require that all of your material be at the law school by a certain date. This can include the delivery of your LSDAS file to the law school—so make sure all material is submitted well ahead of time.

Can I contact the LSDAS?

Yes! In fact, it is often the case that you **MUST** call the LSDAS directly to get an answer to your question, to make sure a problem has been solved, or to verify that things are being done correctly. To reach a human being who can help you, call LSAC at 215-968-1001, options 5, and then 0 (zero).

Do I HAVE to use the LSDAS, even if I have a file with HPPLC?

Yes! The LSDAS is required by all law schools. The HPPLC recommendation service is optional and is IN ADDITION to the LSDAS. It does not replace it. Register for the LSDAS online at www.lsac.org. The LSDAS costs about \$100 and is good for 5 years. You are charged an additional \$12 for each school you apply to (their charge for sending the report to the school).

Why should I use HPPLC's service?

NB: you are not required to use the HPPLC service, and if you do, it is extra. You will still have to register and pay for the LSDAS. Questions? Contact a HPPLC prelaw advisor.

1. You can open a file at any point in your college career and have letters sent immediately after the class, internship, volunteer experience, whatever. Letters are usually stronger if they are written ASAP after the experience. We can hold them for you until you are ready to apply (even if you work for a few years after graduation) and then forward them to the LSDAS for you, or directly to the schools, or both, or to any other institution if you change your mind about law school.
2. With a HPPLC file, the recommendation secretary will not send out your letters unless and until all forms are received, and each contains the proper signature in the proper place. In other words, your letters will not be sent unless everything is correct.
3. We can read your letters even if you waive your right to do so. If you do waive this right, we cannot comment on the *quality* of the letter. However, we can tell you which would be most useful to the schools. Thus if you have more than the number requested by your law schools, we can help you decide which to send.

4. If there is something wrong with a letter, the LSDAS will return it to HPPLC, where our secretary will immediately know how to proceed. With just the LSDAS, your letter would be returned to the writer, who may or may not know what to do.
5. Many law schools produce their own “waiver” forms. If you do not use HPPLC’s service, you will have to have your writers fill out and mail each of these forms separately as they are made available to you. This often happens only very late in the process, when you are actually filling out applications. If you have used HPPLC’s service, we have you submit a generic waiver form to the writer when you request that the letter be written. This form is accepted by every law school in lieu of their own, so you never have to go back to a writer at the last minute, and your application will not be delayed for this reason.
6. If you are applying late in the process, HPPLC can send your letters directly to your schools—thus bypassing the LSDAS processing delay. (Note that in such cases it is usually advisable to send them to the LSDAS as well.)
7. If a letter gets lost somewhere in the application process, you don’t have to go back to the writer for another copy. The HPPLC service retains all originals.
8. If you will be working after graduation, it is a great idea to get academic letters written while you are still on campus. Law schools want at least one (and sometimes two or more) academic letters even if you have been working for a while. Letters written long after the class are generally weak and lack detail, and are often less valuable—if they can be obtained at all.
9. If you will be getting only the minimum number of letters required by your schools (*i.e.*, no extras to choose from), and if you have confidence in the effort your recommenders will put into writing them, the HPPLC service might be less useful for you. Ask a prelaw advisor if you have questions.
10. **NOTE: HPPLC will not automatically send out your letters.** It cannot send them anywhere without your explicit authorization in the form of your signature. You must give us a signed release form (fax is fine--see below for details) before we can do this.

What do I need to send to the LSDAS?

1. Original transcripts from every undergraduate institution you have attended that is outside of the IU system, *EVEN IF* these grades transferred and appear on your IU transcript. For study abroad programs, you will only need the original from the domestic sponsoring institution, not the foreign university.

2. Letters of recommendation, either with, or without, the concomitant use of the HPPLC LOR service.

How do I send these items to the LSDAS?

In fact, you personally do not send these items. However, you must *make the arrangements* to have them sent by others, as follows:

I. Transcripts.

1. Access your LSDAS account and print out one Transcript Request Form for each school you have attended. To download the transcript request forms, [log on to your Online Services account](#), go to the My Docs tab, and select Forms. Your transcript request forms are only available after you register for the LSDAS and enter your school information. To download and print a transcript request form for a school, click on the school's name. Each form is prepopulated with your information and the school's information. The IUB College Code is 1324. *[If you have trouble accessing or finding this form, you may have not actually registered for the LSDAS. Remember, such registration is not automatic when you sign up for the LSAT and even though you have been assigned an account number. You still must register separately for the LSDAS. Note that on the other hand you can print out a LOR form without having registered for the LSDAS.]*

2. Take this form to the registrar, in Franklin Hall 100, and have them forward your transcripts to the LSDAS according to the instructions on the form. The LSDAS will not accept transcripts sent from applicants.

Note that it may take the registrar a few days to process your request. If the delay is too long, you can jump to the head of the line by paying for a FedEx mailing.

3. You will need to similarly arrange for original transcripts to be sent from every undergraduate institution you have attended that is outside of the IU system, *EVEN IF* these grades transferred and appear on your IU transcript. For study abroad programs, you will only need the original from the domestic sponsoring institution, not the foreign university.

4. If you are outside Bloomington, you can still arrange for transcripts to be sent to the LSDAS. Go to the IUB Registrar's website at <http://registrar.indiana.edu/transcript.shtml>.

If you need help, call the Registrar's Transcript Information Line at (812) 855-7505.

II. Letters of recommendation.

Have your LOR forwarded to the LSDAS - either directly from the writers, or, if you have a file with HPPLC, by that office.

The LSDAS requires that their LOR form (which you print out from your account, as described above for transcripts) accompany every letter. However, note that

you may obtain LOR forms from the LSDAS before you have registered for it. (This is not true for Transcript Request Forms).

If you do NOT have a LOR file with HPPLC, make sure you give an LSDAS LOR form to each of your writers, and make sure that the writers mail the form together with their letter directly to the LSDAS.

If you DO have a file with HPPLC, please bring in at least one LOR form to the recommendation secretary in Maxwell 010. Do not fill out the bottom portion; the secretary will make copies and fill out the bottom for you.

You will also need to come to the HPPLC office (Maxwell 010) and sign a very short form authorizing the service to send out your letters. It takes about 30 seconds to fill out this form and you don't need an appointment.

Usually HPPLC sends out letters within 72 hours, but later in the semester there is often a delay of several days or more. To be absolutely sure, please allow 10 business days' notice when requesting letters be sent.

Will HPPLC automatically send out my letters?

No! You will need to provide a signed "Request for Letters to be Sent" form. You can do this in person, or download, sign, and fax this request.

Can I have HPPLC send out my letters if I'm out of town?

Yes. If you have your letters with HPPLC and you are out of town, download the following form, fill it out, SIGN IT, and FAX it to us at 812.856.2770: http://www.iub.edu/~udivhpp/pdfs/reg_for_rec_to_be_sent.pdf. Then follow-up with a phone call to make sure the fax was received.

Note: it can take the LSDAS up to two weeks to process each of these items (I. and II. above)--longer is possible during the peak season. So plan ahead!

Why can't I print out my Transcript Request Form?

If you cannot print out this form, you are likely NOT REGISTERED with the LSDAS. If you have questions about this, call them at 215-968-1001 (options 5, then 0 for a human being). Note that you *can* print out a LOR form even if you are not registered with the LSDAS—not so with the Transcript Request Form.

If I do NOT have a HPPLC Recommendation file, what do my recommendation writers send to the LSDAS?

1. Their SIGNED letter of recommendation ("LOR"). Unsigned letters will be returned to the address indicated at the bottom of the LSDAS LOR Form (below).
2. An LSDAS Letter of Recommendation Form. You'll need to access your LSDAS account and print out a LOR form for each writer. You will need to

- give each writer their form, which they must mail to the LSDAS with the letter itself. This form should be signed by you ONLY IF you want to waive your right to read the letter. If the writer does not include the LSDAS form, the letter will be returned.
3. Any additional LOR form required by the law school, usually included with the application material they send you (unless you have a file with HPPLC—then the law schools accept the generic HPPLC form. See below) Note that not all schools have additional forms.
 4. You may wish to include the following “guidelines” to assist writers in knowing what to say, and how to say it:
 - a. Evaluation Preparation Memo:
http://www.iub.edu/~udivhpp/pdfs/eval_preparation_memo.pdf.
 - b. Dean’s Suggestions to Faculty for Reference Letters for Law School:
http://www.iub.edu/~udivhpp/pdfs/deans_sugg_for_recom_ltrs.pdf.

If I DO have a LOR file with HPPLC, what should I give my writers?

1. A HPPLC “waiver form”.
 - a. If the writer is a professor (or AI) who has had you in class, use this form (a “faculty waiver”):
http://www.indiana.edu/~udivhpp/fac_eval_law_school_waiver_form.pdf. You fill out the information in the box on top, and the writer does the rest.
 - b. If the writer has not had you in class, use this form (a “personal waiver”):
http://www.iub.edu/~udivhpp/pdfs/personal_rec_waiver.pdf.
2. You may wish to include the following “guidelines” to assist writers in knowing what to say, and how to say it:
 - a. Evaluation Preparation Memo:
http://www.iub.edu/~udivhpp/pdfs/eval_preparation_memo.pdf.
 - b. Dean’s Suggestions to Faculty for Reference Letters for Law School:
http://www.iub.edu/~udivhpp/pdfs/deans_sugg_for_recom_ltrs.pdf.

NOTE: As discussed above, if you have your letters sent to HPPLC first, then you bring the LSDAS LOR forms to us—not to the writer.

FAQs:

What if my letter writers need help in writing a letter for me?

Here are some guidelines for letter-writers:

1. A checklist of information for the writer to include:
http://www.indiana.edu/~udivhpp/eval_preparation_memo.pdf

2. Guide for writing an effective letter to law schools:
http://www.indiana.edu/~udivhpp/deans_sugg_for_recom_ltrs.pdf.

3. Also you can give them a resume, a draft of your personal statement or short autobiographical statement, and a copy of any work you have done for them.

Besides letters of recommendation and transcripts, what do I send to the LSDAS?

Nothing. Personal statements, resumes, addenda, and applications themselves are sent by you directly to each individual law school--NOT to the LSDAS, NOT to HPPLC. And don't forget the application fee.

How do I tell the LSDAS which schools I'm applying to?

How do I arrange to send my LSAT score to the schools?

Once my LSDAS file is complete, how do I send it to the law schools?

You don't! And, in fact, you can't! The LSDAS will be contacted by the law school(s) directly. This will only happen AFTER the school receives your application.

Can I send in my applications before all my letters are in? before my LSDAS is complete? Before my LSAT score arrives?

Yes. There is no rule preventing you from sending in applications, personal statements, etc., to the law schools, before your LSAT score arrives, before all of your letters are in (but see below), or, generally, before your LSDAS file is complete.

If you are sending in more letters than will be requested by every law school to which you will be applying, you will want to put them in order of their effectiveness (they are sent out by the LSDAS in the order received, unless you go into your account and change the order yourself). You will need to do this re-arranging BEFORE the law schools request your file. Thus, if you want to arrange your letters, you should not submit applications until AFTER you have put your letters in the proper order. Bottom line: Plan way ahead!

Do I have to pester my professors for letters of recommendation?

In a word, yes. A friendly email from you asking if they need more information, have any questions, or would like the HPPLC guidelines for writers, etc., can jog their memories and hopefully motivate them to draft a letter. Mention any (self-imposed or otherwise) deadlines. Unfortunately, some writers prove to be unreliable.

If you have any questions about the LSDAS or letters of recommendation, please contact a HPPLC Prelaw Advisor.