

First-time bar pass performance of California law schools, controlling for 25%ile LSATs

In a recent TaxProf blog [post](#), Paul Caron ranked all law schools by their 2022 first-time bar passage rates, based on ABA data. Based on that same 2022 data, [I then explored](#) the extent to which California law schools over- or under-performed in first-time bar passage after controlling for the median LSATs of their students. After posting my analysis, Paul asked me to replicate that analysis using law schools' 25%ile LSATs – in effect, to measure the extent to which California law schools add value to their students most at risk, the bottom quarter of their classes by LSAT.

Because US News uses median LSATs in ranking law schools, schools have the flexibility to take other criteria into account in admitting the bottom half of their classes (by LSAT) without directly affecting their US News ranking (*e.g.*, admitting diverse or first generation students). To the extent LSATs are predictive of bar passage, however, doing so may negatively affect bar passage rates. Schools can manage this problem in at least two ways: (1) by keeping their 25%ile LSATs as high as possible, or (2) admitting lower-LSAT students (typically diverse or first generation students) and devoting resources to maximizing the likelihood that they too will pass the bar. This follow-up analysis therefore looks at the extent to which California law schools are successful in preparing the bottom of their classes for the bar – that is, the value they add to their students most at risk.

Here are the relevant raw data from 2022. The first column is 25%ile LSATs, the second is distance of the school's bar passage rate above or below the state average. Schools are listed in the order of 25%ile LSATs, high to low:

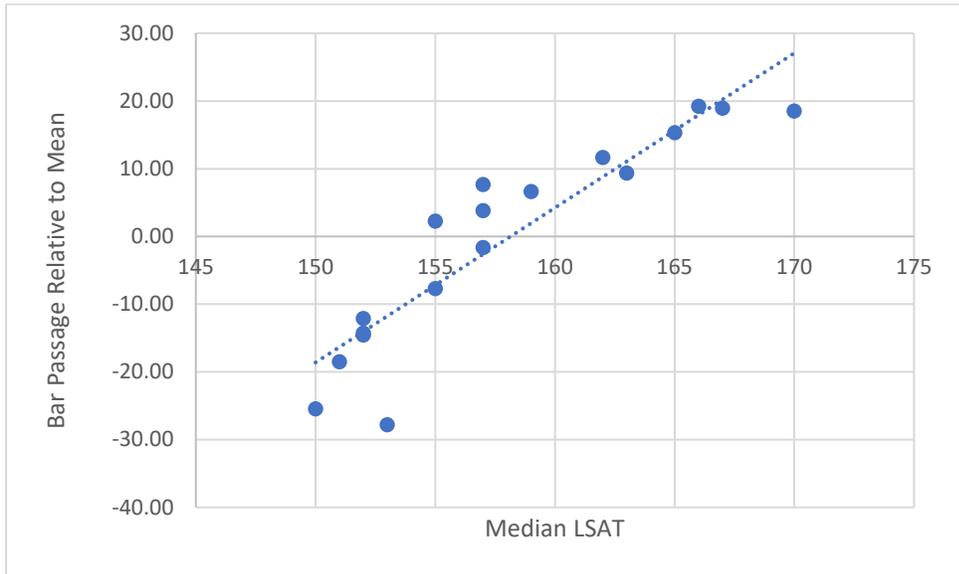
Stanford	170	18.55
UC Berkeley	167	18.94
UCLA	166	19.24
USC	165	15.35
UC Davis	163	9.38
UC Irvine	162	11.67
Pepperdine	159	6.66
Loyola LA	157	7.66
San Diego	157	3.84
UC San Francisco	157	-1.60
Chapman	155	2.28
Santa Clara	155	-7.67
Golden Gate	153	-27.78
Southwestern	152	-12.09
San Francisco	152	-14.28
Pacific	152	-14.52
Cal Western	151	-18.50
Western State	150	-25.44

From this data, we can generate a least squares regression line, captured by the equation:

$$Y = 2.284181 X - 361.24,$$

where X is 25%ile LSAT and Y is the distance by which each school's bar passage rate is above or below the California average.

Here are the same data on a scatter plot, with the least squares regression line added. Bar passage is very strongly correlated with a school's 25%ile LSAT ($r = 0.914576$).



And here are how California law schools over- or under-performed in first time bar passage in 2022, based on 25%ile LSAT, listed in the order in which they over- or under-performed:

2022	LSAT	Actual Bar Pass	Predicted Bar Pass	Value Added
Loyola LA	157	7.66	-2.62	10.28
Chapman	155	2.28	-7.19	9.47
San Diego	157	3.84	-2.62	6.46
Pepperdine	159	6.66	1.95	4.71
UC Irvine	162	11.67	8.80	2.87
Southwestern	152	-12.09	-14.04	1.95
UCLA	166	19.24	17.94	1.30
UC San Francisco	157	-1.60	-2.62	1.02
San Francisco	152	-14.28	-14.04	-0.24
USC	165	15.35	15.65	-0.30
Pacific	152	-14.52	-14.04	-0.48
Santa Clara	155	-7.67	-7.19	-0.48
UC Berkeley	167	18.94	20.22	-1.28
UC Davis	163	9.38	11.09	-1.71
Cal Western	151	-18.50	-16.32	-2.18
Western State	150	-25.44	-18.61	-6.83

Stanford	170	18.55	27.08	-8.53
Golden Gate	153	-27.78	-11.76	-16.02

In other words, Loyola LA students passed the California bar at a rate 10.28 percentage points higher than their incoming 25%ile LSATs would have predicted. Conversely, Stanford students passed the bar at a rate 8.53 percentage points lower than their incoming 25%ile LSATs would have predicted.