

To: Northwestern Pritzker Law Community

From: Dean Daniel B. Rodriguez

Re: GRE Acceptance for Law School Admission

Date: Monday, August 7, 2017

At Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, we are firmly committed to meeting the evolving needs of the profession, and this means constantly evaluating the law school experience. This includes our curriculum, where we have established relevant new programs, concentrations and courses, our student support infrastructure, including financial aid, and also student admissions and recruitment. With this in mind, starting in Fall 2018, Northwestern Law will allow JD applicants to submit either the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) for admission the following year (Fall 2019).

The GRE is a holistic exam that comprehensively evaluates qualitative and quantitative skills and is broadly accepted by thousands of graduate and professional degree programs, from biochemistry to public policy to philosophy. Gaining access to GRE test-takers, many of whom are engineers, scientists, and mathematicians, could benefit Northwestern Law and the legal profession at large by diversifying the applicant pool. Additionally, the GRE is offered a number of times throughout the year and in locations worldwide, making it easily accessible for prospective students.

This decision was made after careful evaluation, including a study conducted in conjunction with the Educational Testing Service (ETS), the organization that administers the GRE. In accordance with the American Bar Association (ABA) Standards for Legal Education, the study assessed whether the GRE is a valid predictor of first-year academic performance at Northwestern Law. Results showed that the GRE is in fact a strong predictor of first-year performance at Northwestern.

The ABA Council is currently reviewing its standards in regards to mandatory standardized tests required for law school admissions. Waiting until the following academic year to implement this change will give this process an opportunity to unfold in a more deliberative way and therefore will ultimately provide more clear guidance about what is or is not permitted under the Standards. In the end, we are optimistic that they will allow law schools greater flexibility in the admissions process, to the benefit of students, schools, and the profession alike. Pending the ABA's decision, we may accelerate our acceptance of the GRE to the upcoming admissions cycle.

As always, test scores will be only one factor in our evaluation of law school candidates. We will continue to consider a range of factors, including academic ability, work experience, public service, leadership, interviews, career goals, writing skills, and letters of recommendation, when making admissions decisions.