

# Common Law Admission Test

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**Common Law Admission Test (CLAT)** is a centralised test for admission to prominent National Law Universities in India. The test is taken after the Higher Secondary Examination or the 12th grade for admission to integrated undergraduation programmes in Law and after Graduation in Law for Master of Laws(LL.M) programmes conducted by these law universities. This test was conducted for the first time on 11 May 2008 by NLSIU-Bangalore.<sup>[1]</sup> A total number of 1037 seats<sup>[2]</sup> from seven law schools were offered to be filled by the test. The results of the first CLAT were announced on May 19, 2008.<sup>[3]</sup> The two-hour admission test consists of objective type covering questions on English, general knowledge, basic mathematics, besides legal and logical reasoning.<sup>[4]</sup> The second CLAT, for the academic year 2009-10, was conducted on 17 May 2009 by Nalsar-hyderabad and subsequently by the preceding NLU(s) according to their establishment.<sup>[5]</sup>



Logo of Common Law Admission Test

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## Background

*See also: Legal education#India*

*See also: Autonomous law schools in India*

Before the introduction of CLAT, the autonomous law schools in India conducted their own separate entrance tests, requiring the candidates to prepare and appear separately for each of these tests. The schedule of the administration of these tests sometimes conflicted with the other or with other major entrance tests such as the Indian Institute of Technology Joint Entrance Examination and the All India Pre Medical Test. This caused students to miss tests and experience much stress.<sup>[6]</sup>

There are fifteen National Law Universities in India, the first of which is the National Law School of India University, which admitted its first batch of students in 1987. Out of the fifteen, the National Law University, Delhi conducts its own separate entrance test known as All India Law Entrance Test.<sup>[7]</sup> With the emergence of other law schools, which also sought to conduct their admission tests at around the same time, students faced a hard time preparing for them. From time to time this issue to conduct a common entrance exam to reduce the burden of the students to give multiple test was raised, but given the autonomous status of each law school, there was no nodal agency to co-ordinate an action to this regard.<sup>[8]</sup>

The matter drew national attention when a Public Interest Litigation was filed by one Varun Bhagat against the Union of India and various National Law Universities in the Supreme Court of India in 2006. The Chief Justice of India directed the Union of India to consult with the National Law Universities to formulate a common test. The move was strongly supported by the Bar Council of India.<sup>[9][10]</sup>

Given the lack of a central nodal authority to bring forth a consensus on the issue, the Ministry of Human Resources Development, (Government of India) and the University Grants Commission of India organized a meeting of the Vice-Chancellors of seven National Law Universities along with the Chairman of the Bar Council of India. After a few such meetings, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by the Vice Chancellors of the seven National Law Universities on 23 November 2007 to conduct a common admission test. The Common Law Admission Test was to be conducted each year by each of the law colleges and the responsibility of conducting the exam was to be rotated and given on the basis of seniority in establishment. Nonetheless, the matter has not been resolved completely as there are other national law universities which are not taking part in CLAT.<sup>[11]</sup>

## **Eligibility**

Only Indian nationals and NRIs can appear in the test. The foreign nationals desirous of taking admission to any course in any of the participating Law Universities may directly contact the concerned University having seats for foreign nationals.<sup>[12]</sup>

The eligibility requirements are as follows:

### **Under-Graduate Courses**

Senior Secondary School/Intermediate (10+2) or its equivalent certificate from a recognised Board with not less than 45% marks in aggregate (40% in case of SC and ST candidates) and an age below 20 years as on 1st July of the year of test (22 years in case of SC and ST candidates). Students whose results are awaited can also appear in the test.<sup>[13]</sup>

### **Post-Graduate Courses**

LL. B/B. L. Degree or an equivalent degree from a recognized University with not less than 55% marks in aggregate (50% in case of SC and ST candidates). The candidates who have passed the qualifying degree examination through supplementary/ compartment and repeat attempts are also eligible for appearing in the test and taking admission provided that such candidates will have to produce the proof of having passed the qualifying examination with fifty-five/fifty percent marks, as the case may be, on the date of their admission or within the time allowed by the respective universities.<sup>[13]</sup>

## Participating law schools

Name of the Institution	Location	Year of joining CLAT
National Law School of India University	Bangalore	2008
Nalsar University of Law	Hyderabad	2008
The West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences	Kolkata	2008
Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law	Patilala	2009
National Law Institute University	Bhopal	2008
National Law University, Jodhpur	Jodhpur	2008
Hidayatullah National Law University	Raipur	2008
Gujarat National Law University	Gandhinagar	2008
Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia National Law University	Lucknow	2009
Chanakya National Law University	Patna	2009
National University of Advanced Legal Studies	Kochi	2009
National University of Study and Research in Law	Ranchi	2012
National Law University, Orissa	Cuttack	2012
National Law University and Judicial Academy, Assam	Guwahati	2012
Pendaganti Law College	2013	

The first entrance examination through CLAT took place to admit students for the academic year 2008-09 on 11 May 2008.<sup>[14]</sup> While, in the first CLAT seven law schools participated, 3 other NLUs; Chanakya National Law University, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia National Law University, (Lucknow) and Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law agreed in principle to utilise the CLAT score for admission. The second entrance examination through CLAT for admitting students for the academic year 2009-10 held on 31 May 2009. From seven last year, the list of participating law schools for this year has increased to eleven. Eleven previous NLU(s) participated in CLAT 2011, whereas National University of Study and Research in Law, Ranchi admitted students by utilised CLAT 2011 scores. NLU-D, NLU-O and NLSJA—ASSAM conducted their own admission test. The fifth edition of CLAT was organised by National Law University, Jodhpur on 13 May 2012. Also, National University of Study and Research in Law, Ranchi National Law University, Orissa, and National Law University and Judicial Academy, Assam are the three NLU(s) who joined CLAT 2012 this year making the total number of Universities to 14. However, National Law University, Delhi conducted its own admission test, and Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University, Vizag used the CLAT score for admission.

# Non-participating schools

*See also: List of law schools in India*

Despite the Supreme Court in the Public Interest Litigation and the efforts of the Ministry of Human Resources Development, not all law schools in the country could come to an agreement to be participants to CLAT. While the number of participating institutions has increased from seven to fourteen from 2008 to 2012, there are still a number of law schools which choose to continue with their exst system by conducting their own entrance examinations. Some of the main ones are;

1. Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak
2. Jindal Global Law School, Sonipat
3. Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra
4. Faculty of Law, Jamia Millia Islamia, (New Delhi)
5. National Law University, Delhi, (New Delhi)
6. Army Institute of Law, (Mohali)
7. Symbiosis Law School, (Pune)
8. ILS Law College, (Pune)
9. Indraprastha University, (New Delhi)
10. Amity Law School, (Delhi)
11. Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University, (Chennai)
12. KIIT Law School, (Bhubaneswar)
13. Lloyd Law College, (Greater Noida)
14. Government Law College, (Mumbai)
15. School of Law, University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, (Dehradun)
16. Baroda School of Legal Studies, Faculty of Law, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, Gujarat
17. Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University, (Visakhapatnam)

## Institutions utilising CLAT 2012 scores

The following institutions have been permitted to utilise CLAT 2011 scores for the purposes of admissions to their undergraduate and postgraduate courses:

1. Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University, Palace Layout, Pedawaltair, Viskhapatnam
2. Jodhpur National University, Narandi, Jahnwar Road, Jodhpur
3. Siddhartha Law College, Sahastradhara Road, Near IT Park, Dehradun
4. SOA National Institute of Law, Faculty of Legal Studies, Siksha O Anusandhan University, Khandagiri Square, Bhubaneswar

In addition to this, CLAT has also entered into a MOU with the Indian Oil Corporation, whereby IOC would be utilising CLAT scores as one of the selection criteria for recruitment of legal professionals to IOC.<sup>[15]</sup>

## Method of allocation

The CLAT form provides the students with a preference list. Each student fills the preference list, according to the colleges he/she desires. On the basis of these preferences and ranks obtained, students are allocated colleges. CLAT 2011 has seen a dramatic change. The previous system of asking applicants preferences of institution at the time of filing the application form has been done away with. In an attempt to allow for more informed choice, CLAT 2011 applicants would be asked to make a selection of institutions after the declaration of results.

## Formal structure

The first CLAT Core Committee consisting of Vice-Chancellors of the seven participating NLUs at that time decided that the test should be conducted by rotation in the order of their establishment. Accordingly, the first Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) was conducted in the year 2008 by the National Law School of India University, Bangalore. Subsequently, CLAT-2009, CLAT-2010, CLAT-2011 and CLAT-2012 have been conducted by NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad, National Law Institute University, Bhopal, The West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata and National Law University, Jodhpur respectively. The 2013 edition of CLAT is being organised by Hidayatullah National Law University, Raipur.<sup>[16]</sup>

## Controversies

The CLAT 2009, which was scheduled to be held on 17 May 2009 was rescheduled to 31 May 2009 due to leak of question papers.<sup>[17]</sup> The CLAT 2011 was organised by The West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences. The candidates went disappointed with the standard of paper as 12 questions in the various sections had underlined answers due to the oversight of the organisers and students also found the paper lengthy in comparison to the time limit provided (i.e. 2 hours).<sup>[18]</sup> The 2012 CLAT organised by NLU, Jodhpur was marred by number of controversies, which includes allegation of setting questions out of syllabus and out of the pre-declared pattern.<sup>[19]</sup> The declared rank list also contained error, due to which the first list was taken down and a fresh list was put up.<sup>[20]</sup> The declared question-answer keys contained several error, which resulted in petitions being filed by the aggrieved students in different High Courts.<sup>[21][22]</sup>

## CLAT 2013

CLAT 2013 was conducted by HNLU, Raipur saw the introduction of provision of negative marking. For every wrong answer, the candidate is now awarded negative of one-fourth awarded for the right answer i.e. -0.25.

## See also

- List of law schools in India
- Autonomous Law Schools in India
- Legal Education in India
- Law School Admission Test

## References

1. ^ "First CLAT on 11th May" (<http://www.rediff.com/getahead/2008/jan/30iycu.htm>).
2. ^ "CLAT Statistics" (<http://www.clat.ac.in/STATISTICS.pdf>) (PDF).