

In this article, the authors examine the existence and interpretation of any so-called mismatch effect in law school. After an introduction to affirmative action and its legality, the efficiency and meritocracy arguments used by opponents of affirmative action are briefly reviewed. The authors consider how the mismatch hypothesis fits into this context. Next, they examine the role of race in discussions of this hypothesis, and we describe how match effects can be modeled and analyzed. After linking academic mismatch to the more general research about the effects of learning environments that are diverse in terms of prior measured achievement, the authors reflect on the various perceptions and interpretations of mismatch and their potential policy and practice significance. Finally, they evaluate the conceptual implications of mismatch for debates on affirmative action and for instruction and academic supports in law school for entering students.