LL.M. Admissions (Non-U.S. law school graduates)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE LAW SCHOOL

1.1. I did not receive the information packet I requested. What should I do?
It normally takes 2-4 weeks for an information packet to reach the recipient. If you do not receive it within this time period, please write to igpo@law.gwu.edu.

In addition, the same information that is in the packet is available at this link:
http://www.law.gwu.edu/Admissions/LLM/Pages/NonUSLLM.aspx

The latest issue of the Law School Bulletin can be accessed online at this link:
http://issuu.com/gwlawpubs/docs/2013-14_bulletin_web

1.2. I would like to visit the law school. What is the procedure?
The Graduate Programs Office is staffed Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. except holidays when the university is closed. Any staff member would be happy to assist you and no appointment is necessary.

2. ELIGIBILITY/TOEFL

2.1. What are the eligibility requirements for admission?
We require all applicants to have a first law degree in good standing and proof of English language skills as demonstrated by an eligible score on the TOEFL or IELTS tests.

2.2. Is there a minimum grade-point average (G.P.A.) required?
No minimum G.P.A. is required. Applications are viewed holistically but successful applicants must have a superior academic record.

2.3. What is your minimum TOEFL requirement?
All eligible applicants must obtain a TOEFL score that meets or exceeds our minimum requirement of 100 on the TOEFL internet-based test, 600 on the paper-based test or 250 on the computer-based test. We also accept the IELTS test with a minimum composite score of 7.0.

2.4. I am taking the TOEFL exam but the test date may be after the application deadline. Can I still apply?
To guarantee review of your application for the academic year for which you apply, we will need to receive your TOEFL score by our specified application deadlines.
2.5. I took the TOEFL and my score is slightly below the minimum requirement. Am I still eligible for admission?
If your TOEFL score is below the minimum requirement, we encourage you to re-take the test. You can send in your application and we are happy to hold it for review until you receive the required minimum score.

2.6. Does your program provide any English preparation courses?
No, we do not; however, there are English preparation courses outside the university, some of which include:

- The Institute for U.S. Law (IUSLAW) [http://www.iuslaw.org/](http://www.iuslaw.org/)
  Offers intensive legal English programs for foreign trained lawyers during the summer.

- Georgetown University, Center for Language Education and Development [http://cled.georgetown.edu/](http://cled.georgetown.edu/)
  Offers intensive English language programs during the fall, spring and summer.

- LADO International College [https://www.lado.edu/english/](https://www.lado.edu/english/)
  Offers year-round English language courses, ranging from basic to advanced.

2.7. I can take an English preparation course in the summer before beginning the program. Can I be granted conditional admission if my TOEFL score is below the minimum required score?
We do not offer conditional admission. Admission is based on the credentials presented at the time of application. Strong applicants will meet or exceed eligibility requirements.

2.8. I have a first law degree from a non-English speaking university but I’ve been working at an English speaking company for several years. Am I exempt from taking the TOEFL?
No, the TOEFL is required for all applicants who did not receive their law degrees from a university or college where English is the sole medium of instruction.

2.9. I am from a country where English is the only official language. Can I be waived from the TOEFL requirement?
If you have a first law degree from a country where English is the only official language and the medium of instruction, you are automatically exempt from the TOEFL requirement.

2.10. I am not from an English-speaking country but I went to law school in a country that is. Can I be waived from the TOEFL requirement?
If you have a first law degree from a country where English is the only official language and the medium of instruction, you are automatically exempt from the TOEFL
2.11. Although my country is not officially only English-speaking, my university is, with English as the medium of instruction. Can I be waived from the TOEFL requirement?
If you have a law degree from an English-speaking institution but not a country where English is the official language, you may be considered for a waiver if you request so in your application. If “English is the medium of instruction” is not found on your university transcript, please submit to us an original letter from your university dean or registrar stating that “English is the sole medium of instruction.”

2.12. I will graduate from my law school this summer. Am I eligible to apply for this coming fall?
If you will have completed all your coursework by early summer, you may be eligible to apply for this fall; however, once you graduate, you will need to submit proof that you have been granted your degree either by providing an official transcript or official letter from your dean or registrar. If you will not complete your coursework by early summer, please apply for the following fall.

2.13. I have a law degree from an online university. Am I eligible to apply?
An eligible applicant must have a first law degree that was earned from a recognized institution outside the U.S. with classroom instruction. Generally, degrees from other kinds of universities do not meet our eligibility requirements.

2.14. I don’t have a law degree but have worked in a law firm for several years. Am I eligible to apply?
An applicant must have a law degree to be eligible for admission.

2.15. I am a licensed lawyer. Am I eligible to apply?
Yes, you are eligible to apply.

2.16. Will significant work experience enhance my eligibility for admission?
It may increase an applicant’s admission possibilities but only if the person already meets our minimum eligibility requirements; however, work experience alone does not qualify one for admission.

3. APPLYING
3.1. How do I apply?
The following materials are required for applying:

   a) Application form with application fee of US$80
   b) Personal statement
   c) Two (2) letters of recommendation. *Recommendation letters may either be enclosed with the application form in sealed and signed envelopes or mailed separately by the recommenders.*
   d) Official transcript. *The transcripts may be included in sealed envelopes or mailed*
directly from the institutions.

f) Resume (strongly suggested, but not required)
g) TOEFL please arrange for ETS to send your score to us. Our institution and department code is 5246-03.
h) Scholarship application and essay (if you would like to be considered for a scholarship)

If you are submitting your documents via mail or courier service, please use the address below. Please make sure that your application fee is in US dollars in the form of a check money order or bank draft. You may also submit an international money order, a traveler’s check or a Western Union check. Your fee must be in the correct denomination as we cannot provide change. We do not accept bank transfers. Do not send cash.

Graduate Programs Office
International Students Division
The George Washington University Law School
2000 H Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20052
U.S.A.

3.2. Can I apply online?
You can apply online through LSAC.

3.3. Can I pay the application fee with a credit card?
If you apply through LSAC, you pay the Law School application fee by credit card. Please note that applying through LSAC requires paying additional fees for LSAC services.

3.4. How do I apply through LSAC?
Applying through LSAC now allows you to send all your application material, including your letters of recommendations to LSAC for compilation. It is not obligatory to apply through LSAC, and it makes no difference to the review of your application, but doing so allows you to send the entirety of your credentials, including your letters of recommendations and transcripts, for compilation by LSAC. Please note that if you apply through LSAC, you are required to register for the Document Assembly Service. If you apply through LSAC, you do not have to send any of your supporting documents directly to us.

3.5. When is the application deadline?
March 15 for regular consideration for fall admission (All application materials must be submitted by this deadline.)
March 1 for scholarship consideration for fall admission (All application materials along with the scholarship application and essay must be submitted by this deadline.)

3.6. Do you have spring admission?
We do not offer spring admission; we only accept students for fall intake.

3.7. Does the LL.M. (Graduate Programs Office, International Students Division) have an early decision/early action process?
No early decision or early action process is available; however, we do admit on a rolling basis.

3.8. When may I submit my application?
Applicants may start submitting their applications in September of each year for entry the following fall.

3.9. I am unable to pay the application fee. Do you grant application fee waivers?
Although it is not guaranteed, we may consider you for a fee waiver if you include with your application a brief letter stating your reasons for seeking a fee waiver.

3.10. If I decide to withdraw my application after submission, can my application fee be refunded?
No, application fees are nonrefundable.

3.11. Do I need to include transcripts from all the schools I attended? What about certificate programs or high school diplomas?
We require original or notarized copies of transcripts from all post-secondary institutions of study (law schools), whether or not a degree was received. The transcripts must be accompanied by certified English translations. In addition, we also need verification of any post-secondary certificate programs you have completed. We do not require transcripts from secondary or primary institutions.

3.12. Who should provide the recommendations?
We prefer to have at least one recommendation from a professor or personnel from your previous law school who is able to evaluate your academic abilities. If you have been out of school for several years, it is acceptable for both of your recommendations to be from supervisors in employment, preferably in the law field. Do not submit recommendations from relatives or friends.

3.13. Can I submit more than two letters of recommendation?
We require two letters of recommendation. You may submit additional recommendations if you feel strongly that doing so will enhance the quality of your application.

3.14. Do I have to submit the recommendation waiver forms?
Yes, you are required to submit the recommendation waiver form for each recommendation that you submit. It indicates whether you choose to waive your rights to see the recommendation letter or not.

3.15. What should my personal statement be about?
It should include any information that may be helpful to the admissions committee in their evaluation of your application, such as reasons you wish to pursue graduate study, a
discussion of your background, or an explanation of any unusual aspects of your academic record.

3.16. How long should my personal statement be?
The personal statement should be 2-3 pages.

3.17. Do you require a curriculum vitae or resume?
Although it is not required, we strongly encourage applicants to include their curriculum vitae or resume that highlights their professional, academic and extracurricular experiences.

3.18. Do you require any additional application material?
No additional application material is required for admission consideration. Additional material is considered supplemental and will be reviewed after first reviewing your required application documents but they do not guarantee admission.

3.19. Do you require an interview?
An interview is not required to review your application although you may schedule one if you feel it may help further explain some aspects of your application. Please e-mail igpo@law.gwu.edu with a requested appointment time.

3.20. Do I have to disclose information about prior or pending criminal, disciplinary and/or academic problems in my application?
Yes, failure to disclose such information may cause your admission to be rescinded.

4. ADMISSION
4.1. How can I check my application status?
After we receive your application, you will be given access to the Application Status Online checker. You will be given a login and password that you can use to check your status online by following the link on this page: http://www.law.gwu.edu/Admissions/apply/Pages/Non-USLawSchoolGraduates.aspx

4.2. How long after I submit my application should I expect to receive a decision?
All applications are reviewed on a rolling basis, meaning, the earlier we receive an application that is complete with all required supporting documentation, the sooner you will receive a decision. It typically takes admissions 2-4 weeks to issue a decision. We will notify you via e-mail and then mail you your decision letter.

4.3. Do I have a better chance of gaining admission if I apply early in the process?
Admission is granted solely on the strength of your application record. Although we do not have an early decision deadline, the earlier you apply, the sooner you will receive a decision but this does not guarantee a better chance of admission.

4.4. Are my chances of gaining admission better if I apply to attend part-time rather than full-time?
It is important to know that those requesting an F-1 or J-1 student visa cannot apply to attend part-time because of visa restrictions. We use the same admission standards for both part-time and full-time study so applicants’ chances of admission are the same regardless of whether they attend part-time or full-time.

4.5. If I am on the wait list, when can I expect to receive a final decision?
If you have been placed on the wait list, we will try our best to issue you a response as soon as possible, but no later than May or June.

4.6. If I previously applied and was denied, can I reapply?
Yes, you may reapply, but we will require a new application with any new information on how your candidacy has changed.

4.7. If I am admitted to the LL.M. program, how long do I have to decide whether I will attend?
When you receive your admissions letter, you will be given an acceptance deadline date for you to confirm your attendance with a $500 tuition deposit, after which date your seat in the program will no longer be held.

4.8. What does the tuition deposit go towards?
Tuition deposits are credited towards your first semester of tuition.

4.9. If I send in my tuition deposit and then change my mind, will my deposit be refunded?
No, tuition deposits are nonrefundable.

4.10. Can I defer?
You may defer your admission to the following academic year if you provide written notice to our office of your intention to defer and the reason for the request.

5. FINANCIAL AID
5.1. What forms of financial aid are offered?
The only aid our program offers is scholarships based on merit and need: the Thomas Buergenthal Scholarship, which is open to all candidates and the Momsen, Leonhardos Scholarship for Brazilian Graduate Law Students who wish to study intellectual property or Constitutional law. These scholarships cover tuition only.

5.2. What forms must I submit to be considered for a scholarship?
To apply for these scholarships, applicants must submit their entire application with the statement of purpose, scholarship application with a separate essay and all supporting documentation no later than March 1.

5.3. Are there any other forms of financial aid?
No other forms of aid are offered through our program.
You can look for outside sources of aid for international students at:

- Iranian applicants may apply for scholarships offered by the Iranian American Bar Association:
  http://www.iaba.us/iaba-scholarship/

- Applicants from China, India, Japan, Korea or Taiwan may apply for the TOEFL Scholarship Program:
  http://www.ets.org/toefl/scholarships?WT.dcsvid=MzgwMjQxMTAwOTQS1

- If you are a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, you are eligible for federal financial aid. Please contact the Law School financial aid office at finaid@law.gwu.edu or visit this web site for details:
  http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/

6. COST OF STUDY
6.1. What is the tuition for the LL.M. program?
   Tuition is based on credit hour. The LL.M. program requires 24 credits. For the 2014-2015 year, the cost per credit was $1,830 for a total program cost of $43,920.

6.2. What other expenses do I need to take into account?
   Living expenses for the duration of the one-year program based on 2014-2015 costs are estimated to be a minimum of $20,742. Students should also plan to take into account $500 for books and $2,258 per academic year on health insurance. Students who plan to request an F-1 or J-1 visa from The George Washington University will need to show the ability to pay for the total cost of their study and living of $67,420, based on 2014-2015 costs.

6.3. What is the tuition for part-time students?
   The tuition for part-time students is the same as that for full-time students: $1,830 per credit, with 24 credits required to complete the program for a total tuition of $43,920. Students who attend part-time must complete the program within two years. Students who require an F-1 or J-1 visa are not permitted to attend school part-time due to visa restrictions.

6.4. Am I eligible to work while I attend the LL.M. program?
   Students on an F-1 or J-1 visa may only work on campus and for no more than 20 hours per week. U.S. citizens or permanent residents, or those with legal permits to work in the U.S. are allowed to work either part-time or full-time with no restrictions.

7. ATTENDANCE
7.1. If I start the LL.M. program part-time, may I later change to full-time status? Or if I start full-time, can I later change to part-time?
Only students who do not require an F-1 or J-1 visa may apply to attend part-time. Some part-time students may switch to full-time although it may take additional time to complete the program. Similarly, students who begin full-time may drop down to part-time status after having received permission from the director. Students who attend part-time have a limit of two years to complete the program.

7.2. I would like to transfer to the J.D. program after completing the LL.M. How is this done?
Although highly competitive, it is possible to apply for a transfer to the J.D. program. An applicant must notify the J.D. admissions office in writing by November 1, successfully complete at least one course from the required J.D. curriculum during their first semester of LL.M. enrollment and take the LSAT no later than December. The applicant must also request that the Graduate Programs Office, International Students Division send all previous academic records and TOEFL scores to the J.D. admissions office by February 1. For information, please ask the Graduate Programs Office.

7.3. Can I enter as a non-degree student?
A limited number of law school graduates may be admitted on a case-by-case basis in non-degree status to take up to 6 hours of credit. Applicants should contact the Graduate Programs Office for application materials and instructions. Entrance requirements for non-degree students are the same as those for degree candidates.

7.4. If I enter as a non-degree candidate, can I then transfer to the LL.M. program?
Non-degree students who subsequently apply for and are granted admission to on the graduate programs as a degree candidate may have the credits earned at the Law School applied toward degree requirements; however, admission as a degree candidate is not guaranteed. Enrollment in individual courses as a non-degree student will depend on space availability.

7.5. How long does it take to complete the LL.M. program?
The LL.M. program takes one academic year to complete, that is, two semesters, fall and spring, if you attend full-time. If you attend part-time, you have a limit of two years to complete the program.

7.6. If I begin the LL.M. at another school, may I transfer to GW’s LL.M. program?
No, we do not accept transfer credits from any other LL.M. program.

8. STUDENT LIFE
8.1. What types of housing options are available?
The university housing office offers accommodations for graduate law students in two buildings, Columbia Plaza and the Hall on Virginia Avenue (HOVA). (The Aston is reserved for JD students.) Most students find and/or share off-campus apartments in the Foggy Bottom or nearby areas. In addition, the subway system makes it easy to live in Arlington, Virginia, or the Maryland suburbs and ride into campus. More information on on-campus housing options can be found here:
http://www.law.gwu.edu/Admissions/Housing/Pages/GWHousing.aspx
Information on off-campus housing can be found here:
http://gwired.gwu.edu/offcampus/find/

8.2. Are there student organizations I may join?
Yes, there are numerous student organizations available at the law school throughout the university. Please visit these two sites:

Law School http://www.law.gwu.edu/Students/Organizations/Pages/default.aspx
University http://studentorgs.gwu.edu/directory