

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS

(1st law degree earned outside of the United States)

1. **What LL.M. programs are offered at the Law Center?**

- Energy, Environment & Natural Resources Law
- Health Law
- Intellectual Property & Information Law
- International Law
- Tax Law
- LL.M. in U.S. Law

2. **Can I apply to any of these programs?**

Yes.

3. **Are there required courses?**

Any student who earned a law degree outside of the United States is required to take Introduction to American Law (5319) and Legal Writing(5397)* during their first semester, August-December. Students in a concentration, such as International Law, are also required to complete a certain number of concentration-specific credits.

| Program | Required Courses | Total Credits | Required Grade Point Average |
|--|--|---------------|------------------------------|
| LL.M. in U.S. Law | Introduction to American Law (3 credits) Legal Writing (3 credits) 18 credits of other coursework | 24 | 2.00 |
| Energy, Environment & Natural Resources (EENR) | Introduction to American Law (3 credits) Legal Writing (3 credits) 15 credits of EENR coursework | 24 | 2.50 |
| Health Law | Introduction to American Law (3 credits) Legal Writing (3 credits) 18 credits of health coursework including Advanced Health Law (5108) | 24 | 2.50 |
| Intellectual Property & Information Law (IPIL) | Introduction to American Law (3 credits) Legal Writing (3 credits) 15 credits of IPIL coursework | 24 | 2.50 |
| International Law (INTL) | Introduction to American Law (3 credits) Legal Writing (3 credits) 15 credits of INTL coursework | 24 | 2.50 |
| Tax Law | Introduction to American Law (3 credits) Legal Writing (3 credits) 18 credits of tax coursework including Tax Ethics (5288), Tax Research (5151) & Federal Income Tax (5459) | 24 | 2.50 |

4. **When can I begin the LL.M. program?**

Lawyers who earned their law degree outside of the United States can only begin their studies in early August, the Fall semester entry.

5. **What is the length of the program?**

The LL.M. degree is a 24-credit hour program. Most students attend full time and complete the program in one academic year, August-May.

6. ***I'm working and cannot complete the program in two semesters. What are my options?***
Students have the option of taking up to three years to meet all program requirements. Students must take the two required courses the first semester of enrollment. Students must, however, meet applicable visa restrictions that may require completion of the program in a shorter period of time.
7. ***When do classes begin?***
Classes begin immediately after orientation, which is the first week of August.
8. ***When are classes scheduled?***
Classes are typically scheduled Monday-Thursday throughout the day and early evening hours. The current schedule is available at <https://www.law.uh.edu/schedule/>
9. ***How do I select courses?***
Each student is assigned an advisor. Working with the advisor, students select courses to meet their professional and program requirements.
10. ***What are the admission requirements?***
Lawyers who earned their law degree outside of the United States must have earned the degree from an accredited university in the country in which the university is located or be eligible to practice before the highest jurisdiction in their country. Applicants must present evidence of a high grade point average or superior class standing at the school where they obtained their law degree.
11. ***Am I required to take the LSAT exam?***
No.
12. ***How do I apply?***
The application and all supporting documents should be submitted through the Law School Admission Council, LSAC, at <https://www.lsac.org/> . We do not offer a direct application process.
13. ***Am I required to take the TOEFL, IELTS, or Duolingo exam?***
All graduate applicants, regardless of citizenship status must demonstrate proficiency in English to obtain admission to the university. This requirement cannot be waived. This requirement can be fulfilled in the following manner:
 1. Baccalaureate degree (or higher) earned from a regionally accredited U.S. institution or at an institution at which English is the medium of instruction in the following countries: American Samoa, Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Canada (except the Province of Quebec), Cayman Islands, Dominica, Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas), Ghana, Gibraltar, Grenada, Guan, Guyana, Ireland, Jamaica, Liberia, Micronesia Islands, Federated States of, Montserrat, New Zealand, Nigeria, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Helena, South Africa, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, Turks & Caicos Islands, United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Ireland, & Wales), Virgin Islands and Zimbabwe
 2. TOEFL-ibt score of 79 or higher
 3. IELTS-academic score of 6.5 or higher
 4. Duolingo English Test -105 score or higherThe Law Center typically admits students with a TOEFL IBT score in the range of 86-100, IELTS academic score in the range of 7.0-8.5, or the Duolingo score in the range of 110-160. Additional information is available at <https://uh.edu/graduate-school/international-students/english-proficiency/>
14. ***Do you offer conditional admission to applicants who do not meet the University's minimum TOEFL, IELTS, or Duolingo English score requirement?***
No.
15. ***Should my transcript and other academic documents be evaluated before submitted them to LSAC?***
No. Transcripts are evaluated through LSAC's International Transcript Authentication and Evaluation Service (ITAES).
16. ***How are applications evaluated?***
Academic performance, work and professional experience, the personal statement, reference letters and the English proficiency report (if applicable) are all considered in making admission decisions.

17. **Does the application process include a personal interview?**
No. Applicants can use the Personal Statement to write about circumstances, goals, etc. that would be discussed in an interview.
18. **Can I submit my application to LSAC before I've taken the TOEFL, IELTS or Duolingo tests?**
Yes.
19. **How many students are admitted each year?**
The size of an entering class varies from year to year and is not predetermined. Classes typically include recent graduates and practicing lawyers.
20. **Is there an early admissions/decision process?**
Applications are reviewed upon receipt of all required application materials, but not before January 1 (for fall admission). Applicants are encouraged to submit applications, especially academic documents, to LSAC as early as possible.
21. **Once admitted, can I change from one program to another?**
No. Applications and offers of admission are program-specific. Carefully review programs descriptions and requirements prior to submitting an application. This is especially important for applicants interested in taking a bar examination that requires completion of specific courses within the student's LL.M. program.
22. **I'm a permanent U.S. resident. Am I still considered a foreign lawyer?**
For purposes of admission to the LL.M. program, a foreign lawyer is anyone, regardless of immigration status, whose law degree was earned outside of the United States.
23. **I'm a permanent U.S. resident. Does that qualify me as a Texas resident for tuition purposes?**
U.S. residency and Texas residency are not the same. It is possible to be a permanent U.S. resident but not a Texas resident for tuition purposes. Details on determining Texas residency are available at www.thecb.state.tx.us or <http://www.collegeforalltexas.com/index.cfm?ObjectID=6D1466D9-AEA5-DE00-C12F3F75E7367718>
24. **What are my housing options?**
Houston is a very large metropolitan city with limited public transportation. Students who will not have their own transportation are encouraged to consider campus housing such as the University Lofts, which is adjacent to the Law Center. Campus housing fills up very quickly and arrangements should be made upon admission to the program. Additional information about campus housing can be found here: <https://www.uh.edu/housing/> There are also apartment locator services that assist students in finding accessible and affordable off-campus apartments and rentals.
25. **What is the cost of the program?**
Based on the 2023-2024 academic year, tuition and fees for a Texas resident are approximately \$32,745 and \$44,505 for a non-resident. (Amounts are estimates based on the current year and are subject to change.)
26. **What expenses should I plan for in addition to tuition and fees?**
Expenses, such as housing, personal, and transportation vary depending upon individual preferences. For example, books can be purchased new or used, online or in Houston and there is a wide variety of on and off-campus housing options.
Students typically budget approximately \$2900 for books, \$22,006 for living expenses, and parking (\$100-934/annually). Health insurance is required of all F-1 visa holders and cost is \$2,774 - \$4,761 for the academic year, August-August. It can be waived for students who already have health insurance approved by the University of Houston. Insurance information and waiver requirements can be found here: <https://uh.edu/healthcenter/international/#requirements>
Student health insurance coverage may NOT be in effect during orientation or the early weeks before the official start date of the fall semester. Students need to ensure that their current insurance remains in effect until the effective coverage date of student health insurance.

27. Do I qualify for in-state (Texas resident) tuition?

U.S. and Texas Residency are not the same. Go to

<http://publications.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=45&navoid=16503> for information on qualifying as a Texas resident.

28. Are scholarships or other financial assistance options available to foreign LL.M. students?

Foreign educated students who are U.S. permanent residents may qualify for student loans. Contact our financial aid advisor at: lawfinaid@uh.edu. There are a limited number of Dean merit-based scholarships awarded to non-US lawyers admitted to the LL.M. program. There is no separate application required, all admitted students are considered.

Visit the following websites for information on scholarships, funding and financial assistance available for studying in the United States. Many of these have a lengthy application and review process. Interested students should begin their research as early as possible.

Fulbright International: <https://eca.state.gov/fulbright>

Rotary International: <https://www.rotary.org/en>

Ford Foundation International Fellowship Program: <https://www.fordfoundation.org/work/investing-in-individuals/international-fellowships-program/>

LASPAU (Latin America, Caribbean): <https://www.laspau.harvard.edu/>

Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation, <https://www.rmmlf.org/>

Association of International Energy Negotiators, <https://www.aien.org/networking/student-outreach/scholarship-program/>

American-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Inc. (AMIDEAST), <https://www.amideast.org/>

General information on financial assistance and funding resources for study in the

United States is available at: <http://www.edupass.org/finaid/>, <https://www.nafsa.org/about/about-international-education/students> and <https://www.amideast.org/our-work/study-in-the-usa/us-study-advantage>

29. After completion of the LL.M. program, am I eligible to take a bar examination?

Each state determines eligibility requirements for their bar examination, not law schools. In October 2014, the Supreme Court of Texas published revisions to the Rules Governing Admission to the Bar of Texas. Licensed, foreign-trained lawyers may now take the Texas Bar Exam after completing a U.S. LL.M. program, such as that offered by the University of Houston Law Center. Law schools cannot confirm bar eligibility, and students planning to take a bar examination upon the completion of the LL.M. program (or for whom this may be a possibility), should research a state bar's eligibility requirements **before** beginning any program. Eligibility in some states, such as Texas, requires completion of specific courses during a student's LL.M. studies.

Students who are admitted to a specialty program, such as intellectual property, must complete more than 24 credits to meet both bar eligibility (Texas and New York) and LL.M. program requirements. Students admitted to the LL.M. in U.S. Law can meet both LL.M. program and bar eligibility (Texas and New York) requirements in 24 credits.

Visit the National Conference of Bar Examiners website, <https://www.ncbex.org/jurisdictions> for a survey of state bar eligibility requirements for foreign-trained lawyers. Information on eligibility requirements for the Texas bar exam is available at <https://ble.texas.gov/home>

30. Are there any changes to the application process with LSAC during the current COVID19 pandemic?

Applications will remain available for submission on the LSAC website until May 1, 2024. (Transcripts, letters or recommendation, and English proficiency test scores do not have to be submitted with the application on the LSAC website.) Applications received by the deadline date will continue to be processed until mid-July 2024. Any changes to the official academic records submission process will be managed by LSAC; if you are having problems obtaining transcripts as a result of a school closure, please reach out to LSAC for assistance as we do not have a direct application process and cannot accept academic documents directly from candidates.