Master of Laws, LL.M.

The Master of Laws (LL.M.) is designed for two types of students:

Legal Practice Track: For foreign-trained jurists who seek a comparative introduction to, and specific training, in aspects of United States law and legal institutions, and a path to state bar admission. Students benefit from the College of Law’s legal analysis, writing, and research course, and core courses including contracts, property, torts, and professional responsibility. An extended orientation provides an introduction to United States law.

Research Track: For foreign-trained jurists or graduates of J.D. programs in the United States who wish to deepen their understanding of law and are interested in research. The program encourages close collaboration with renowned experts in comparative law; anti-competition law; law and economics; law and society; international law, including the law pertaining to international business transactions and/or human rights; and business and innovation.

The LL.M. program admits fewer applicants so that students receive substantial attention from the faculty. Admission is competitive. All applicants must present evidence of high academic potential and strong recommendations, especially from law professors who supervised their work in classes or seminars.

Requirements

The Master of Laws program requires that students successfully complete a minimum of 24 s.h. of credit, as approved by their faculty advisor. Coursework is selected from the College of Law’s general course offerings and from LL.M.-specific courses.

Legal Practice Track

This track is open to foreign-trained lawyers who do not have a J.D. earned in the United States. Students enroll in the LL.M. orientation to the U.S. legal system course in two parts (2 s.h.); a course in professional legal writing (2 s.h.); a course in professional responsibility (3 s.h.); and at least 6 s.h. of basic bar exam courses, such as contracts, torts, or constitutional law. This track is designed to qualify students to take the bar exam in states that allow graduates of LL.M. programs to complete the bar exam.

Research Track

This track is open to both foreign-trained students and students who hold a J.D. degree earned in the United States. LL.M. students without a J.D. degree must take the LL.M. orientation to the U.S. legal system course in August before the start of the fall semester (1 s.h.). Students take the LL.M. seminar, a research and writing course in which they write a research paper on a topic chosen with the approval of their advisor (for at least 1 s.h.). This track is especially suitable for those seeking to enter into an academic career or one that primarily involves policy formulation or research.

Students who earned a J.D. in the United States and international students who have been trained in another common-law jurisdiction, whose English competence is sufficiently high, and who choose the research track are required to undertake a more ambitious research project (4 s.h.) intended to lead to the production of a publishable paper. Others suitably qualified also may attempt the longer research paper with their advisor’s approval.

With the exception of the LL.M. orientation course and the LL.M. seminar, courses are taken with other J.D. students from law course offerings, especially offerings on U.S., international, and comparative law. This method of instruction ensures a very effective comparative experience through broad contact with U.S. law students and professors, and U.S.-trained students similarly benefit from close contact with foreign-trained lawyers.