

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

ADMISSION STANDARDS AND ELIGIBILITY

In evaluating applications for admission to our Graduate Legal Studies programs, we strive to select a student body of diverse backgrounds and interests that shares a discernible commitment to excellence. We place primary emphasis on demonstrated qualities and proven skills we regard as necessary for academic success and intellectual engagement at Columbia Law School, and also highly value personal strengths that we believe predict professional distinction and public service. We endeavor to identify how and to what extent candidates have forged their values and achieved their goals—how they have actually chosen to commit their time, energies, and talents, and how they have made use of their opportunities. Applicants are evaluated, therefore, not only on their potential but also by their demonstrated motivation, self-discipline and industry.

Candidates for the LL.M. and J.S.D. degrees are required to spend one academic year (two terms) of full-time study and research in residence at the school. J.S.D. candidates have the option of spending an additional year in residence. Degree candidates are admitted for studies commencing only at the beginning of the academic year, in late August–early September (there is no summer term); Special Students may begin their studies in January. Degree candidates are not admitted on a part-time basis and may not accept or continue off-campus employment during their academic year of residence. An exception to the prohibition of part-time studies is made for students who for family reasons (the care of children or elderly parents) may spread their studies over a three-semester period, taking eight points per term. A disadvantage of this approach, however, is that since the points are charged on a per credit basis, the degree costs more than if obtained in one academic year. Moreover, this approach is also incompatible with the University's 10-point per semester minimum requirement to qualify as a full-time student for student visa purposes.

Eligibility

To be eligible for admission to the LL.M., the J.S.D. or the Special Student Program, applicants must hold a first degree in law. A degree in a field other than law, even if followed by a master's degree in law, generally does not suffice for admission. Applicants who have earned a law degree by correspondence course work or distance learning are not eligible for admission. Graduates of foreign law schools who have already had a year of residence in an American law school are generally ineligible for admission. As the LL.M. and J.S.D. programs are full-time programs of study, students are not permitted to accept or continue off-campus employment while enrolled in the program.

Admission Standards—LL.M. Program

Strong preference is given to applicants who have had at least one year of work experience *after* earning their first law degree. Only in exceptional circumstances are applications from candidates who are in the final year of their first law degree accepted. Applicants who have not yet graduated must demonstrate in their Personal Statement that their admission to the program would enable them to realize an immediate and specific career objective that would not otherwise be attainable.

A. Graduates of Law Schools in the United States

Admission to candidacy for the LL.M. degree is restricted, in the case of graduates of law schools in the U.S., to graduates of ABA-accredited law schools who achieved honor status in their undergraduate legal studies as evidenced by very high academic standing, by membership on their law reviews, or by outstanding work in research. Generally, preference is given to candidates who have acquired at least one year of significant professional legal experience subsequent to graduation.

B. Graduates of Law Schools in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom or English-speaking Caribbean Countries

Admission for these degree candidates is generally restricted to those who achieved honor status in their prior legal studies as evidenced by very high academic standing, by membership on their law reviews, or by outstanding work in research. As a general matter, applicants from law schools in these countries who have not completed at least five years of post-secondary undergraduate and legal education combined must have been admitted to the bar and practiced for at least one year after completing their legal education.

C. Graduates of All Other Law Schools

The purpose of the LL.M. Program for these degree candidates is to provide an introduction to new areas of interest to them as well as the opportunity to further specialize in their current areas of practice, and is generally restricted to those who achieved honor status in their prior legal studies.

International lawyers who intend to reside permanently and to practice law in the United States should apply for the J.D. degree, the first degree in law, rather than the LL.M. The J.D. program is normally three years of full-time study. Generally, a maximum of one year's advanced standing toward the J.D. degree at Columbia may be granted for graduate legal studies completed in the United States or another common law country. Such standing, however, is determined on an individual basis by request of the student after an offer of admission has been made. Completion of an LL.M. degree at Columbia Law School does not guarantee admission to the J.D. program.

Admission Standards—J.S.D. Program

Admission to candidacy for the J.S.D. degree is normally restricted to applicants who desire a career in law teaching and who can present evidence of impressive achievement in undergraduate law study or in subsequent scholarly or professional activities, with special emphasis on demonstrated capacity for effective legal research and writing. Applicants with experience in government service or law practice before admission are eligible for admission; those who have already begun a career in teaching law are generally preferred. As substantial experience beyond earning the law degree is generally seen as a prerequisite for pursuit of this degree, applications from very recent law school graduates are discouraged. Applicants from the United States and international jurisdictions are given equal consideration in the admission process. Equal consideration is given to applicants completing or having completed the LL.M. at Columbia and outside applicants.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE LEGAL STUDIES

Due to the large volume of applications we receive, it is not possible for the Graduate Legal Studies staff to report on the progress of applications. We will send each applicant, by email, the following information regarding her or his application:

1. An automatic confirmation that you have created an online application;
2. An automatic confirmation that we have received your online application (after you click "Submit Application");
3. Notification of missing items, if applicable; and
4. Notification that your application is complete.

We aim to send the completion notification email to all applicants by the end of January. Regrettably, we cannot provide information regarding the receipt of specific documents as such requests slow the processing time of applications.

We send all admission decisions by email. Offers of admission are also sent in writing, via courier. Please be sure to provide us with a valid email address and a physical address for the courier delivery (we do not deliver admission materials to post office boxes), and to update that information as necessary. Many companies have put up firewalls which block our email messages. Therefore, we recommend that you use a personal email account (such as gmail, hotmail, or yahoo) or speak with your employer's IT department to make sure that messages from Columbia Law School will not be blocked. All decisions are sent from gls@law.columbia.edu.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

LL.M. Program—Early Review Deadline

Applicants for admission to our 2013–2014 LL.M. Program, except those who are in their final year of law school and reapplicants who were not granted admission, have the option of applying through the Early Review Program. The advantage of applying early is that if you have identified Columbia Law School as your first choice, you will most likely have a decision by late December. We encourage early applications for those who feel they have compiled their strongest possible application by November 1. If you wish to be considered under the Early Review Program you must:

1. Submit your online application and all supporting documents by the early review deadline, and
2. Specify that you wish to be considered for early review by checking the appropriate box on the online application form.

All application materials, including supporting documents and TOEFL scores, **must be received by November 1, 2012**. If we do not receive all required materials by November 1, 2012, we will automatically defer your application for consideration as part of the regular admission cycle.

We will provide a decision for early applicants by the end of December. Applicants will be admitted, rejected, or deferred to the regular admission cycle. If you are admitted through the Early Review Program, you will not be required to withdraw your applications to other LL.M. programs. Admitted candidates will be required to notify us in early March of their intention to matriculate.

Regular Application Deadline

Applications and all supporting documents for the 2013–2014 academic year **must be postmarked no later than December 15, 2012**. Application materials postmarked after this date will not be processed. Admission decisions are made on a rolling basis, in most cases no later than late April.

J.S.D. Program

The J.S.D. application deadline is in two parts. **By December 15, 2012**, all J.S.D. applicants must submit:

- GLS Online Application Form
- Application Fee (U.S. \$80)
- Personal Statement (can be submitted online)
- Résumé or Curriculum Vitae (can be submitted online)
- Official Transcripts (in sealed envelopes)
- TOEFL Score, if applicable

By February 1, 2013, all J.S.D. applicants must submit the following supporting documents:

- Two Letters of Recommendation
- Dissertation Proposal and Bibliography (can be submitted online until December 15; thereafter, must be mailed to the Office of Graduate Legal Studies)
- Writing Sample
- Official Transcripts for the Fall 2012 term, if applicable

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

Online Application

All applicants must complete and submit Columbia Law School's online Application for Admission to Graduate Legal Studies. Carefully follow the instructions on the online application.

Provide as much information as possible on the online application. To avoid any confusion or delay in the processing of your application, please make sure to consistently use the same form of your proper name on all supporting documents and to keep us informed of any changes to your contact information (including mailing address, email address and telephone number). When mailing your supporting documents, please do not place each sheet in a separate folder or sleeve. Clearly mark your name on each supporting document, and we will match it to your online application. Do not include a printed copy of your completed online application form with your supporting documents; doing so will significantly delay the processing of your application and the timing of your admission decision.

Application Fee

You must submit an application fee of U.S. \$80 with your application. This fee is non-refundable and will not be credited against your tuition. The fee must be paid in U.S. dollars, and may be paid by credit card (Visa, MasterCard, or American Express), a check drawn on a bank located in the U.S., traveler's checks, or a U.S. bank or postal money order. You will be able to pay the fee by credit card after you click "Submit Application" on the online application. Checks must have officially printed mica numbers and fraction numbers (the numbers at the bottom of the check—they may not be typed or entered by hand) and must be made payable to "Columbia University." Traveler's checks must be countersigned in both places and made payable to "Columbia University." We do not accept checks drawn on foreign banks (even if in U.S. dollars), wire/bank transfers, or cash.

Application for Financial Assistance

To apply for financial assistance, check the appropriate box in the Questionnaire section of the online application, complete the Financial Aid section, and check “I agree” on the Financial Aid line of the electronic Certification Form. List all scholarships and loans to which you have already applied or to which you intend to apply. It is your obligation to notify the Office of Graduate Legal Studies within seven (7) days should other funds become available to you. Since Columbia Law School awards financial assistance primarily on the basis of need, the Law School reserves the right to reduce the amount of any financial aid it has awarded if other funds become available to you.

If you do not submit an application for financial assistance with your application for admission, you will not be considered for financial aid, even if you request it after the admission deadline. If you think you may need financial assistance you must complete the Financial Aid section of the online application.

Supporting Documents

Applicants have the option of submitting certain supporting documents as attachments to their online application rather than through the mail. Submitting documents electronically rather than through the mail will expedite the processing of your application. The following documents will be accepted as attachments:

- Personal Statement
- Résumé/Curriculum Vitae
- Appel Fellowship Application (if applicable)—LL.M. applicants only
- Human Rights Fellowship Application (if applicable)—LL.M. applicants only
- Dissertation Proposal and Bibliography (until December 15)—J.S.D. applicants only

All remaining supporting documents, including letters of recommendation, transcripts, diplomas (unless you are using the LSAC LL.M. Credential Assembly Service—see below), writing samples (J.S.D. applicants only), and the Dissertation Proposal, if submitted after December 15, must be submitted by mail to the Office of Graduate Legal Studies.

All documents submitted should be double-spaced with a 12-point font and standard margins (one inch on all sides). Your name should be listed at the top of each page of each document (in the format of “Surname, First name”) and in the document title when it is saved (i.e., Surname, First name, Personal Statement). Attachments must be in .pdf format. A free version of .pdf conversion software can be downloaded from www.cutepdf.com/Products/CutePDF/writer.asp.

1. Personal Statement

You must submit a detailed Personal Statement describing your background, academic and professional interests, teaching experience (J.S.D. applicants only), the program of study you wish to follow and your reasons for doing so, and any other information you think will be helpful to the Committee’s deliberations. You should prepare this statement without assistance from others. The statement should not exceed three double-spaced pages using a 12-point font.

2. Résumé or Curriculum Vitae

While résumés are not required, we strongly encourage you to upload one to the online application for consideration as part of your application.

3. Transcripts and Diplomas

(Columbia Law School does not require or provide a form to accompany your transcripts and diplomas.)

You must submit an official transcript and, where applicable, a diploma or proof of degree from all postsecondary educational institutions you have attended, whether or not you earned a degree. If you are unable to submit original documents, you may submit certified copies. If the originals are not in English, you must submit an official, certified translation of each document in addition to the original document. If you are in school at the time you submit your application, please send us your most recent transcript with your application, and send us an updated one once your fall grades are available. If your rank does not appear on your transcript, we must receive a separate, official statement of rank from your law school. If your law school does not rank its graduates, we must receive an official statement from the law school to this effect. Transcripts and diplomas cannot be uploaded to the online application; submit them in sealed envelopes issued by your University. Please note that we do not accept evaluations of transcripts from companies other than LSAC (see “LSAC LL.M. Credential Assembly Service,” below).

LSAC LL.M. Credential Assembly Service—LL.M. Applicants Only *For submission of transcripts, diplomas, and TOEFL scores.*

We strongly recommend that LL.M. applicants who graduated from law schools outside of the U.S. or Canada register with the Law School Admission Council’s (LSAC) LL.M. Credential Assembly Service. This service is designed to save you time and money, especially if you intend to apply to a number of U.S. or Canadian graduate law degree programs.

For a registration fee, LSAC will collect and authenticate your university records and TOEFL iBT or TOEFL/TWE scores, and will distribute them to the schools to which you are applying. You will therefore need to obtain only one set of transcripts and other required academic credentials. Further information about this service, including relevant fees, is available at www.lsac.org. We prefer but do not require the AACRAO evaluation; it is up to you whether you select this service.

Please note that all applicants for admission to the LL.M. Program, including those who register with LSAC, must complete Columbia Law School’s online application and submit it directly to Columbia Law School, together with their other supporting documents. LSAC will not collect these materials for Columbia. We strongly prefer that letters of recommendation be mailed directly to us rather than through LSAC (see *Letters of Recommendation*, below).

4. TOEFL iBT or TOEFL/TWE

(Test of English as a Foreign Language/Test of Written English)

Columbia University’s institution code is 2163; the Law School’s code is 03.

All applicants except those who earned their first law degree entirely in English in an English-speaking country must take the TOEFL iBT or the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the Test of Written English (TWE). (No other examination is required.) We do not accept the IELTS or any other exam in place of the TOEFL. The minimum scores required for admission are:

- TOEFL iBT: 105 overall score, with 26 on Reading and Listening sections and 24 on the Speaking and Writing sections;
- Paper-based exam: 620 overall score, with 59/60 on the Structure/Writing and Reading sections, 60/61 on the Listening section, and 5.0 on the TWE.

If your scores fall below these levels, your chances of admission could be adversely impacted even if other factors in your application are strong. You must decide whether to repeat the test based on how far below these scores your results fall; we cannot make this decision for you.

If you are applying for Early Review, we must receive your scores by November 1. Otherwise, you should register for and take the TOEFL by the December 15 deadline. Although you may include a copy of your student score report with your application, Columbia must receive the official test results directly from ETS. If you register with LSAC, you do not need to send an official report to Columbia Law School; LSAC will send it. Waivers of the TOEFL requirement are rarely granted, and are granted at the sole discretion of the Office of Graduate Legal Studies. If you request a waiver, you should assume the request will be denied and make arrangements to take the test by the deadline. Requests for waivers on the grounds that you have run out of time to take the exam or work primarily in the English language will not be granted.

5. Letters of Recommendation

(Columbia Law School does not require or provide a form to accompany your letters of recommendation.)

We require two original letters of recommendation from your law school professors, employers, supervisors, or other persons qualified to appraise your academic potential for graduate legal studies. At least one letter should come from a law school professor. If you have work experience, one letter should also come from a work supervisor. "To Whom It May Concern" letters (which tend to be very general), letters from family friends, and letters from prominent persons who have not taught you or supervised your work are not helpful.

Letters of recommendation must be written by the recommender on official letterhead and addressed to the Office of Graduate Legal Studies. If your recommenders are unable to print the letters on official letterhead, ask them to include an explanation as to why they are unable to do so. You must also include a work email address for each recommender so we can contact her/him should we have questions about the letter or your candidacy. (If your recommenders cannot write in English, please submit certified translations together with the original letters.) We reserve the right to disqualify letters written or translated, in part or whole, by the applicant. Letters of recommendation cannot be uploaded to the online application; submit both letters in sealed envelopes with the recommender's signature across the back flap. *Please note that Columbia strongly prefers that letters of recommendation be mailed directly to us rather than through LSAC.*

Please do not submit more than two letters. Part of compiling a strong application for admission is determining which two recommenders are best able to evaluate your ability to pursue and succeed in graduate legal studies. Even if you indicate that you are submitting more than two letters of recommendation, we will consider your application complete once we have received two letters of recommendation and all other required supporting documentation.

6. Human Rights or Appel Fellowship Essays (Optional)—

LL.M. Applicants Only

For additional information on the Human Rights and Appel Fellowships, please visit www.law.columbia.edu/llm_jsd/tuition_fees/fin_aid. Fellowship essays should be uploaded to the online application. Be sure to write your name exactly as it appears on your online application for admission (in the format of Surname, First name) on your fellowship essay(s).

7. Writing Sample (due February 1, 2013)—J.S.D. Applicants Only

You must submit a writing sample originally written in English; translations of works originally written in another language do not qualify. Writing samples will not be returned.

8. Dissertation Proposal and Bibliography

(due February 1, 2013)—J.S.D. Applicants Only

You must submit a dissertation proposal and bibliography. Your dissertation proposal must be written in English and be in the range of 2,500 words (ten double-spaced pages), with a meaningful working title, and include a two-page bibliography that lists relevant works that proved significant in the formulation of your thinking about your project. The proposal can be uploaded to the online application until December 15; thereafter, it must be mailed to the Office of Graduate Legal Studies.

The substance of the proposal should:

1. Demonstrate the originality of the research project, taking into account existing work and scholarly directions;
2. Indicate the importance of the project within the applicant's larger field of study;
3. Indicate the building blocks or units of consideration that the applicant expects to create as organizational and structural controls in the development of the dissertation, and the methodologies that he or she expects to employ; and
4. Acknowledge whatever problems or difficulties the applicant foresees in formulating and completing the project. (Every project has its difficulties, and part of every good scholar's equipment is a clear awareness of them.)

In sum, the application should convey the applicant's current level of mastery and control for an effort that will demand a great deal of time, independent research, and further study.

MAILING ADDRESS FOR SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

You must submit all supporting documents that cannot be uploaded to the online application by courier or mail, including transcripts, diplomas, letters of recommendation and writing samples (J.S.D. applicants only) by the appropriate application deadline. Please mail these in one package, if possible, and include the Application Checklist, available for download after you submit your online application. Send all required materials to:

Office of Graduate Legal Studies
Columbia University School of Law
435 West 116th Street, MC 4036
New York, NY 10027-7297

Tel.: +1 212-854-2655
Email: gls@law.columbia.edu

Faxed or emailed application materials will not be accepted. If you plan to send your application by courier, please note that Columbia University does not accept courier deliveries on holidays, Saturdays or Sundays.

All application materials become the property of the Graduate Legal Studies program and as such will not be returned to you under any circumstances. Applications postmarked after the application deadlines will not be considered for admission.

Please do not include a printed copy of your completed online application with your supporting documents, as doing so will significantly delay the processing of your application and the timing of your admission decision.

ADMISSION DECISIONS

We send all admission decisions by email. Offers of admission are sent in writing also, via courier. Please make sure that you provide us with a valid email address and a physical address for the courier delivery (we do not deliver admission materials to post office boxes), and that you update that information as necessary. Many companies have put up firewalls and email messages get returned to us. Therefore, we recommend that you use a personal email account (such as gmail, hotmail or yahoo) or speak with your employer's IT department to make sure that messages from Columbia Law School will not be blocked. All decisions are mailed from glsl@law.columbia.edu.

LL.M. Program

Admission decisions for the Early Review Program are made by the end of December. Applicants will be accepted, rejected or deferred to the regular admission cycle. All other admission decisions are made on a rolling basis, in most cases no later than late April.

J.S.D. Program

Admission decisions for the J.S.D. Program are generally made by mid-May.

Reapplication

We retain application files for one year after the original year of application. To reapply, you must complete a new online application; submit a new Personal Statement updating your file on your academic and professional activities since you first applied; submit one additional letter of recommendation; and submit a reapplication fee of U.S. \$80. The reapplication fee will not be waived. J.S.D. reapplicants must submit two new letters of recommendation and a new dissertation proposal and bibliography. LL.M. reapplicants who were not originally granted admission are not eligible for the Early Review Program. **The LL.M. reapplication deadline is December 15, 2012.** J.S.D. reapplicants must meet the bifurcated deadlines.

DEFERRALS

LL.M. Program

Deferrals of admission to the LL.M. Program are not granted automatically. Deferrals that are granted are for one year only. Each request for a deferral must be made in writing after payment of the tuition deposit, and will be decided on a case-by-case basis at the sole discretion of the Office of Graduate Legal Studies. If granted a deferral, you will be required to make a second tuition deposit and to confirm your intention to enroll by contacting the Office of Graduate Legal Studies between October 1 and December 15. At that time, you will be informed of the steps needed to update your application, including submitting an additional tuition deposit of \$500 and pledging not to apply for admission to other LL.M. programs.

J.S.D. Program

Deferrals of admission to the J.S.D. program are *rarely* granted. Each request for a deferral must be made in writing and will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

GRADUATE LEGAL STUDIES

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Please use the checklist below to make sure that all components of your application are complete. All supporting documents must be received by November 1, 2012 for Early Review or postmarked by December 15, 2012 for regular admission. Applications received after December 15 will not be considered.

COMPONENTS TO BE SUBMITTED AS PART OF THE ONLINE APPLICATION:

- Completed Online Application**
Do not mail a printed copy of your completed online application. Doing so will significantly delay the processing of your application and the timing of your admission decision.
- Application Fee**
U.S. \$80, payable online by MasterCard, Visa, or American Express after you submit your online application, or by check drawn on a U.S. bank, U.S. traveler's checks, or a U.S. bank or postal money order sent directly to the Office of Graduate Legal Studies.
- Application for Financial Assistance**
If applicable, complete the Financial Aid section of the online application.

Uploaded Supporting Documents

- Personal Statement**
Make sure your name is clearly written on all pages in the format Surname, First Name.
- Résumé or Curriculum Vitae**
We strongly encourage all applicants to submit a résumé for consideration.
- Human Rights Fellowship Essay**
If applicable. Make sure your name is clearly written on all pages in the format Surname, First Name.
- Appel Fellowship Essay**
If applicable. Make sure your name is clearly written on all pages in the format Surname, First Name.
- Dissertation Proposal and Bibliography**
J.S.D. applicants only. If submitting after December 15, the proposal should be mailed to the Office of Graduate Legal Studies.

COMPONENTS TO BE MAILED TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE LEGAL STUDIES, PREFERABLY IN ONE PACKAGE:

- Transcripts and Diplomas, including a statement of law school rank**
Unless you are using the LSAC LL.M. Credential Assembly Service. Make sure they are in envelopes sealed by the issuing institution.
- Official TOEFL Scores, sent directly by ETS**
If applicable, unless you are using the LSAC LL.M. Credential Assembly Service. Columbia's institution code is 2163; the Law School's code is 03.
- Two (2) Letters of Recommendation**
On letterhead in sealed envelopes, with the recommender's signature across the back flap. We strongly prefer that letters of recommendation be mailed directly to us rather than through LSAC. Include a work email address for each recommender.
- Certification Form**
Only if submitting a paper application. Make sure you sign all parts of the form. Online applicants submit this electronically.
- Writing Sample**
J.S.D. applicants only.