



APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE S.J.D. PROGRAM (2024)

The information and instructions below are for applications to the Harvard Law School Doctor of Juridical Science (S.J.D.) program only. If you wish to apply to the LL.M. or Visitor program, please return to the [application home page](#) and select the appropriate program.

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1. APPLICATION DEADLINE

Your application and all supporting documents (other than recommendations) must be received by the Harvard Law School Graduate Program office no later than **April 1**.

IMPORTANT: Deadlines will be strictly observed. It is your responsibility to make certain that all application materials (e.g., official transcripts, TOEFL reports, and recommendations) reach the Graduate Program office by the applicable deadline.

Please do not call or email us about the possibility of submitting materials after the deadline. If you have completed and submitted your online application by the deadline, we will not disqualify your application if some of your supporting documents (e.g., official transcripts, recommendations, or TOEFL report) have not been received by the deadline. However, we will begin our review process after the deadline has passed, even if some of your supporting documents are missing. Therefore, you will be at a competitive disadvantage when compared to other applicants whose files are complete.

2. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants who have not received an LL.M. (or J.D.) degree from Harvard or another leading U.S. law school are virtually never admitted to S.J.D. candidacy at Harvard. Applicants who have received an LL.M. degree from another leading U.S. law school are only rarely admitted directly to S.J.D. candidacy. Applicants interested in the Harvard S.J.D. Program ordinarily must first apply to and successfully complete the Harvard Law School LL.M. Program. Successful completion of the Harvard Law School LL.M. Program does not, however, guarantee admission into the S.J.D. Program.

3. ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

Admission to the S.J.D. Program is highly competitive. In order to be admitted, an applicant must have obtained their previous degree or degrees in law with distinction. The successful applicant will have written the 50-page LL.M. Paper (or equivalent) and attained a very good academic record in their LL.M. studies.

In reviewing each application for admission, the Committee on Graduate Studies also will consider: the applicant's purposes in seeking to pursue advanced studies; legal scholarship to date (including the LL.M. Paper); experience in academic or other law related activities; recommendations; and research proposal.

To be a successful applicant, you must satisfy the Committee on Graduate Studies that you are capable of pursuing advanced studies, of completing substantial research in a subject relating to law, and of making – in your proposed dissertation – a significant contribution to legal scholarship.

4. ENGLISH PROFICIENCY/TOEFL REQUIREMENT

A high level of English language proficiency is a requirement for admission. All applicants from non-English-speaking countries who did not complete their basic legal education entirely in the English language must take the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) within two years prior to submitting their applications. The Harvard Law School Graduate Program requires a score of at least 100 on the internet-based test (IBT), with at least 25 in each of the four subsections.

We will accept scores from the *TOEFL iBT*® Home Edition, but reserve the right to condition admission on an in-person test. We do not accept *MyBest*™ TOEFL score reports or the *TOEFL Essentials*™ test.

The TOEFL is offered by the Educational Testing Service at locations around the world. For more information, visit the [ETS website](#). **Harvard Law School's TOEFL Institution code is 3457.**

Please arrange to have an official TOEFL score report sent directly to the Graduate Program as soon as possible. Unofficial copies of score reports are not acceptable as official reports, nor are scores that are more than two years old.

TOEFL Waivers

Applicants with at least two consecutive years of full-time university education conducted entirely in English may request a waiver of the TOEFL; however, such waivers are very rare, and are granted at the sole discretion of the Committee on Graduate Studies, whose decision is final.

To submit a TOEFL waiver request, select "I am requesting a TOEFL waiver" on the English Proficiency/TOEFL page of the online application and complete the TOEFL Waiver Request within the application. **NOTE:** If you have not completed at least two consecutive years of full-time university education conducted entirely in English, your request for a TOEFL waiver will be automatically denied. The Committee on Graduate Studies will not make a decision on your TOEFL waiver request until all transcripts have been received.

Applicants who are currently enrolled at Harvard Law School or who received a Harvard Law School degree in the three years immediately preceding the date of application are exempt from the TOEFL requirement.

5. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

To apply for the S.J.D. program, carefully complete and submit the online Application for Admission. You will be responsible for assembling and submitting all of the credentials necessary for evaluating your application, and for making sure that all materials are received by the deadline. The application requirements include the following checklist items.

Checklist of application materials:

- Online application
- Curriculum vitae or résumé
- Recommendations (at least two)*
- Transcripts**
- Official TOEFL report (if applicable)***
- Personal Statement
- Summary of LL.M. Paper
- LL.M. Paper (or the equivalent)
- S.J.D. Research Proposal
- Financial aid application (if applicable)
- Application fee of US\$85

* The deadline for receipt of recommendations (except for those from Harvard faculty members) is April 15. The deadline for recommendations from members of the Harvard faculty is discussed below in [Section 8: Recommendations](#).

** Applicants who are currently enrolled at Harvard Law School only need to submit their unofficial Harvard Law School transcript. Applicants who have already graduated from Harvard Law School only need to submit their official Harvard transcript and transcripts for any additional degrees earned since graduating from Harvard. All other applicants must submit all relevant transcripts (see [Section 7: Official Transcripts](#) below).

*** Applicants who are currently enrolled at Harvard Law School or who received a law degree from Harvard Law School in the three years immediately preceding the date of application to the S.J.D. Program are exempt from the TOEFL requirement.

Format requirements:

For your personal statement, summary of your LL.M. Paper, and your S.J.D. research proposal, please be sure to type these documents using 12 point font, with at least one inch (2.5 cm) margins on each side.

6. ONLINE APPLICATION FORM

Please complete this form carefully. You will not be able to access or change any part of the form after you have submitted it. Please do not use ALL CAPS to complete the form (other than for acronyms such as UNICEF, etc.).

A note about names: Please include your full name exactly as it appears on your passport in the application and on all documents, but do not write it in ALL CAPS. Failure to submit your name exactly the way it appears on your passport will cause delays in reviewing your S.J.D. application and may compromise the issuance of your visa documents should you be admitted to the program.

To determine how your name is listed on your passport, look at the bottom of your passport biographic page.

- Your Surname is listed at the bottom of your passport biographic page before the "<<" sign.
- Your Given Names are listed after the "<<" sign. Include any middle name(s) in the First/Given Name field.
- For example, if your passport says P<xxxTORRES<SANTIAGO<<PABLO<LUIS<MANUEL<<<<<<, then you should list "Torres Santiago" as your Surname and "Pablo Luis Manuel" as your Given Names, even if you write your name differently in your home country.

Do not use nicknames, except in the Preferred First Name field. Please notify us of any legal name variations that may appear on requested documents.

7. OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS

You must submit an official transcript **and** diploma (i.e., certificate of degree conferral) for every university or law degree you have received, unless you are currently enrolled at Harvard Law School. (Applicants who have received a degree from a U.S. educational institution are not required to provide a separate diploma for that degree unless the transcript lacks a clear indication of degree conferral.) If you are a graduate of Harvard Law School, you will need to submit an official transcript **and** diploma for any degree(s) earned since graduating.

If you are enrolled in a degree program that is still in progress, you will need to submit a current transcript for that program. If your school is unable to provide a transcript, you must provide an enrollment letter from your school's registrar. In such cases, your application will not be complete without an enrollment letter.

Complete the top half of a [Transcript and Diploma Request Form](#) for each university or law school that you have attended. You should then print out and provide this form to the registrar or administrative officer in charge of student records at each university or law school. Ask the registrar or the administrative officer to (a) fill out the bottom half of the Transcript and Diploma Request Form; (b) provide an official transcript for your academic record; and (c) provide a diploma (for any degrees that have been granted). The registrar or administrative officer should place the completed Transcript and Diploma Request Form, your official transcript, and your diploma in an envelope, seal the envelope, and then sign across the seal (back flap) before giving this envelope to you. Do not open the envelope or break the seal when it is returned to you. You should then submit the transcript (and diploma for degrees that have been granted) in the sealed envelope to the Graduate Program prior to the application deadline.

IMPORTANT:

If your transcript or diploma is not provided in English, please see [Section 9: "Certified Translations"](#) below.

If original documents are not available, please supply certified copies of the original documents.

If the school prefers to send the Transcript and Diploma Request Form, your transcript, and your diploma directly to the Harvard Law School Graduate Program, please ask them to send the materials to the address below in [Section 24: "Where to send materials not submitted electronically."](#)

Law Exchange Programs

You must provide an official transcript for any exchange program for which you received credit for your law degree, unless the name of the exchange school, all credits earned, and individual class grades from the program are clearly reported on your official law school transcript.

Summer Programs/Certificate Programs

Please do not submit transcripts for summer programs, or for certificate programs shorter than 6 months.

Multiple Degrees from the Same School

If you have received more than one degree from the same university or law school, you may submit a single transcript (as long as the transcript provides detailed information, including credits earned and individual class grades, for each degree).

Bar Schools or Programs

If you attended one of the following bar schools or programs in Australia, Barbados, Ghana, Hong Kong, Japan, Jamaica, Kenya, Korea, New Zealand, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, or the United Kingdom, you should include the bar school/program in the list of institutions on the Education page of your application, selecting "Other" for the level of study. You will also need to provide a transcript for the bar school/program attended. Applicable bar schools or programs are Australian Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice (GDLP), Commonwealth Caribbean Certificate of Legal Education, Ghana School of Law, Postgraduate Certificate in Laws (PCLL), Legal Training and Research Institute (LTRI), Kenya School of Law, Judicial Research and Training Institute (JRTI), New Zealand Professional Legal Studies Course, Nigerian Law School, Sierra Leone Law School, Law School of Tanzania, Law Development Centre, Legal Practice Course (LPC), and Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC f/k/a BVC). ***If you did not participate in one of those programs, or if you attended a bar school or program in another country, please disregard this instruction.***

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

You must provide at least two letters of recommendation, one of which must be from your proposed principal supervisor and another from the supervisor of your LL.M. Paper (or comparable written work). If they are the same person, you must provide a second recommendation from another professor who is familiar with your academic work. Most applicants provide three recommendations. **We will not accept more than five recommendations under any circumstances.**

IMPORTANT: Regardless of whether your recommenders are Harvard faculty or external recommenders, you must provide the names and institutional affiliations of all of your recommenders on the Recommendations page of the application. **Recommendations from unregistered recommenders will not be considered.**

Note that when you enter your proposed principal supervisor's name and email on the [S.J.D. Program page](#) of the application, that information will be automatically entered for your first recommender on the [Recommendations page](#) of the application.

Harvard Faculty Recommendations

The Graduate Program solicits recommendations directly from Harvard faculty members* on behalf of S.J.D. applicants.

*For purposes of your S.J.D. application, anyone with a harvard.edu email address (i.e., from HLS or any part of Harvard University) is a Harvard recommender.

For Harvard recommenders:

- Ask each prospective Harvard recommender if they would be willing to submit a recommendation in support of your S.J.D. application.
- If they agree, let them know that the recommendation will be due around the middle of May, and that the Graduate Program will contact them after April 22 with a formal request and instructions for submitting their recommendation.
- Register recommenders who have agreed to submit recommendations on your behalf on the [Recommendations page](#) of the application and select “Yes” for the question “Harvard Faculty Member?”
- You won’t need to do anything further regarding your Harvard recommenders. Because the Graduate Program requests Harvard recommendations outside of the online application system, they will not appear on the checklist of materials on the Application Status Page that you can access after submitting your application. **Please do not contact your Harvard recommenders or the Graduate Program regarding the status of these recommendations.**

Non-Harvard Recommendations

Any recommender who is not a Harvard recommender must submit their recommendation by April 15. It is your responsibility to make sure that your external recommenders are aware of the applicable deadline for receipt of their letters. We will only accept letters of recommendation submitted through our online application system. For each non-Harvard recommender:

- Register the recommender on the [Recommendations](#) page of the application, select “No” for the question “Harvard Faculty Member?” and select “To be submitted electronically by the recommender” when offered the option.
- After you submit your application, the recommender will receive a “Recommendation Request” email from the Harvard Law School Graduate Program with instructions on how to submit the recommendation online.

Certified Translations of Letters of Recommendation

For letters of recommendation that are not in English, applicants must obtain certified translations. Obtain a paper copy of the recommendation in a sealed envelope from the recommender and take that envelope to a qualified translator. Instead of providing the email address of the recommender in the application, provide the email address for the qualified translator so that the qualified translator will receive the email with the link for uploading the recommendation. Please see [Section 9: “Certified Translations”](#) for more information.

IMPORTANT: Recommendations must be written solely by the recommender. If your recommender cannot provide a letter in English, please ask them to provide a letter in their own language. In such cases, the applicant should obtain a certified translation into English done by someone other than the applicant (please follow instructions in [Section 9: “Certified Translations”](#) below). We reserve the right to disqualify the application of a candidate who has played any role in writing or translating a letter of recommendation.

9. CERTIFIED TRANSLATIONS

Documents that are not provided in English must be translated by third-party qualified (i.e., certified, professional, or formally trained) translators. For avoidance of doubt, applicants and their family members may not translate application-related documents even if they are qualified translators.

For official transcripts and diplomas

If your school does not provide your transcript and/or diploma in English, please take the applicable school documents in the original sealed envelope to a qualified translator and ask them to:

- (a) open the sealed envelope;
- (b) translate the contents into English — the translation must be a literal and complete version of the original document;
- (c) certify that the original is a true and official copy of your school documents as the translator received them from you; and
- (d) place the original documents, the translation, and the certification in a new envelope, seal the envelope, and sign across the envelope seal.

You should then pick up the sealed envelope from the translator and send it to us unopened (for address see [Section 24: “Where to send materials not submitted electronically”](#)).

For letters of recommendation

If a recommendation is not written in English, please ask your recommender to provide a letter in their own language, in a sealed envelope that has been signed over the seal. (This must be done in hard copy - electronic letters are not acceptable.)

Instead of providing your recommender's email address in the [Recommendations](#) section of the online application, provide the email address of a qualified translator.

Take the recommendation in the sealed envelope to a qualified translator and ask them to:

- (a) open the sealed envelope;
- (b) translate the contents into English — the translation must be a literal and complete version of the original document;
- (c) certify that the original is a true copy of the letter of recommendation as the translator received it from you; and
- (d) upload the translation, together with a scanned copy of the original letter, using the link they receive by email after you register them in the [Recommendations](#) section of the online application.

10. PERSONAL STATEMENT

Please write an essay telling us why you have decided that doctoral study, and your particular S.J.D. proposal, is important to you at this point in your life. The essay may (but is not required to) include: a description of your intellectual development and aspirations, the ideas you hope to pursue in doctoral studies, what you expect to gain from your studies, and the career plans you hope to pursue in the long term. *Your statement should be no more than 1,000 words in length* – anything exceeding this limit will be disregarded.

The Personal Statement must be *solely the product of your own efforts*. We reserve the right to disqualify the application of a candidate who has submitted a Personal Statement written by, or with the help of, someone other than the candidate.

Your personal statement must be typed using 12 point font, with at least one inch (2.5 cm.) margins on each side.

Please follow the instructions on the Documents Uploader page of the online application to upload your Personal Statement. Note that your Personal Statement must be uploaded and submitted with the rest of your application. We will not accept any Personal Statement sent to us separately from the online application.

11. LL.M. PAPER

Please provide (a) a summary and (b) a copy of your 50-page (or longer) LL.M. Paper. (Applicants who did not write an LL.M. Paper must submit a summary and a copy of their Master's Thesis or comparable written work.)

The summary, or abstract, of your LL.M. Paper (or comparable written work) must be no more than *500 words* (anything exceeding this limit will be disregarded), and should include a description of the main themes and conclusions of your LL.M. Paper.

The summary and the LL.M. Paper (or comparable written work) must be *solely the products of your own efforts*. We reserve the right to disqualify the application of a candidate who has submitted a summary or a paper written by, or with the help of, someone other than the candidate.

Your LL.M. paper (or comparable written work) must be typed using 12 point font, with at least one inch (2.5 cm.) margins on each side.

Please follow the instructions on the Documents Uploader page of the online application to upload each of these documents separately from each other, using the appropriate uploaders. Note that your LL.M. Paper (or comparable written work) and the summary thereof must be uploaded and submitted with the rest of your online application. We will not accept either document sent to us separately from the online application.

Special instructions applicable ONLY to candidates who are currently enrolled in a Harvard Law School Degree program: To comply with the April 1 deadline, please upload a draft of your LL.M. Paper and the summary with the rest of your online application, which must be submitted by April 1.

You will receive separate instructions from the Graduate Program about how and when to submit the final version.

12. S.J.D. RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Please describe in *at most 2,500 words* what research you propose doing as an S.J.D. candidate. Your description should include what significant novel contribution to the literature your proposed project would make, how you foresee doing the research, how the fields of study (see below) you propose will prepare you to do it, and what you see as the biggest challenges to making this a viable project.

Your S.J.D. research proposal must be no more than 2,500 words in length, not including footnotes. It must be typed using 12 point font, with at least one inch (2.5 cm.) margins on each side.

A word on footnotes: Please do not try to evade the 2,500 word limit by squeezing ideas and discussions into footnotes if they really belong in the text.

Please follow the instructions on the Documents Uploader page of the online application to upload your proposal. Note that your S.J.D. research proposal must be uploaded and submitted with the rest of your online application. We will not accept an S.J.D. research proposal sent to us separately from the online application.

13. FIELDS OF STUDY

The S.J.D. Program page of the application asks you to name three or four fields of study (and the proposed faculty supervisor for each field) as part of your proposed program of study. In your S.J.D. Research Proposal, you are also expected to explain how these fields of study will prepare you to carry out your research project (see above).

Fields are areas of study in law or other disciplines in which you can imagine teaching a course, of which you plan to gain working knowledge, and which are germane to the dissertation topic. You may include one interdisciplinary field – that is, a field that seeks to combine study of the law with insights from a discipline other than law (such as anthropology, economics, history, philosophy, or political science, etc.).

Definition of fields may be difficult and require some thought, and you may wish to consult your proposed supervisors about field definition. Here are some general guidelines: First, a field may be viewed as a particular group of authors and/or texts that are part of a discursive community or tradition. Thinking of a field in these terms may be helpful later when you begin putting together reading lists for each field as part of your overall study plan, leading up to your oral (or general) examination, at which you will be examined on each field. Second, fields should not be so broad that they would be impossible to master in one year. Third, skills areas such as statistics, calculus, languages, etc., generally are not considered fields. However, a course in such a subject may appropriately be included as part of the study plan for a particular field. Finally, in identifying possible fields, you should be realistic about your abilities and experience to date in particular areas of study. Most S.J.D. applicants select fields that are related to some aspect of their LL.M. Paper or academic/professional experience.

For each field you must propose a faculty member who will supervise your readings and study in that field. If a proposed field supervisor is not a member of the Harvard Law School faculty, you must indicate the field supervisor's institutional affiliation. Your proposed principal supervisor – that is your overall dissertation supervisor – must be (a) a tenured member of the Harvard Law School faculty, (b) must provide a recommendation in support of your application, and (c) must also supervise one of your fields of study. At least two of your field supervisors (including your principal supervisor) must be full-time members of the Harvard Law School faculty. Together, the supervisors of your respective fields will constitute your eventual Oral Examinations Committee.

14. LL.M. WAIVER (Current Harvard Law School LL.M. Candidates ONLY)

Current Harvard LL.M. students applying to the S.J.D. program are permitted to “waive” the LL.M. degree by answering “Yes” in response to the question “Do you wish to waive your Harvard LL.M. degree?” on the S.J.D. Program page of the online application. If admitted, applicants who have waived the LL.M. degree will not be awarded the LL.M. degree upon completion of their LL.M. studies at Harvard. However, they will be permitted to count the tuition paid for their LL.M. year in satisfaction of the Harvard University requirement that a student pay at least one year's full tuition for every degree that they receive from Harvard. For the first year of S.J.D. studies, students who have waived the LL.M. degree are charged tuition of \$500. Otherwise, tuition for the first year of S.J.D. studies is the same as tuition for the LL.M. and J.D. degrees at Harvard.

The election to waive one's LL.M. degree from Harvard has no effect on admissions decisions or the academic requirements for the S.J.D. degree. Waiving the LL.M. degree does, however, generally preclude the candidate from taking courses for credit during their S.J.D. studies. (In exceptional cases, the Committee on Graduate Studies may approve a candidate's petition to take a particular course for credit if the candidate's principal supervisor supports the request on academic grounds.)

The waiver is also permanent and irrevocable. An admitted candidate who waives the LL.M. degree may subsequently elect to receive the LL.M. degree only by withdrawing from the S.J.D. Program. The option to waive one's LL.M. degree is available only to an applicant who is currently enrolled in Harvard's LL.M. Program and who has not yet completed their LL.M. studies.

Applicants who are entitled to waive their LL.M. degree but choose not to do so *will not be eligible* for financial aid from Harvard Law School to cover their first-year S.J.D. tuition, fees, and living expenses. In addition, they may be eligible for only reduced financial aid in subsequent years.

Applicants who have fulfilled the requirements for the LL.M. degree and elect to waive the LL.M. degree, but are not admitted to the S.J.D. Program, will receive the LL.M. degree at the University's next regularly scheduled date for the awarding of degrees (usually early November).

15. FINANCIAL AID

If you wish to apply for financial aid from Harvard Law School, you must also complete the financial aid application (including the Parent Financial Information Form and, if applicable, the Spouse's Form).

To complete the financial aid application, please return to the [application home page](#) and select the financial aid application. (You can work on an application for admission and the online financial aid application simultaneously, but you must complete the "Personal Data" page of the online admissions application before starting the online financial aid application). Your application for financial aid will have no bearing on your application for admission, since the two decision processes are completely separate. Financial aid applications are not reviewed until after admission decisions have been reached.

16. APPLICATION FEE

The application fee is US\$85 and must be paid online by credit card when you submit your application. Do not send cash.

The application fee is nonrefundable and will not be credited to your program fee if you are admitted.

Application fee paid by sponsor: If your application fee will be paid by a sponsoring organization (e.g., IIE, government agency, etc.) that is unable to pay the fee with a credit card, please contact the Graduate Program (gpquery@law.harvard.edu) well before the application deadline for further instructions on how to submit your online application and instructions for how the sponsoring organization should submit the application fee.

17. REAPPLYING TO THE S.J.D. PROGRAM

The Harvard Law School Graduate Program retains application files for two academic years after the original year of application. If you reapply within two academic years of your original application, you do not need to resubmit transcripts already provided with your original application. However, you must complete the "[Prior Application](#)" page of the online application. You must also provide at least two new letters of recommendation, and any transcripts for additional academic credentials you may have received since your earlier application.

Other than the items described in the preceding paragraph, you must complete and submit a new online application. In particular, note that you must provide a new Personal Statement, a new S.J.D. research proposal, a new C.V. or résumé, and a new application fee of US\$85. If you wish to apply for financial aid, you must also submit a new financial aid application. The deadline for reapplications is the same as that for initial applications.

18. REQUIRED CERTIFICATION

To submit an application, you will need to make the required certification:

I certify that the information presented in my application is accurate, complete, honestly presented, and is my own work. I also certify that any information submitted on my behalf is authentic, including letters of recommendation, academic transcripts, and certifications. I understand and agree that any inaccurate information, misleading information, or omission will be cause for an investigation of misconduct in the admissions process, rescission of any offer of admission, and/or for discipline, dismissal, or revocation of degree if discovered at a later date. I agree to immediately notify the Graduate Program of changes or updates to information submitted within this application and I acknowledge that any changes or updates may affect the outcome of the admissions process.

19. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Harvard University's policy is to make decisions concerning applicants, students, faculty, and staff on the basis of the individual's qualifications to contribute to Harvard's educational objectives and institutional needs. Harvard Law School fully embraces this principle, and does not discriminate against any person on the basis of characteristics such as race, color, religion, creed, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, disability, source of income, or status as a veteran in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its programs and activities.

Questions about the Non-Discrimination Policy

Inquiries regarding the application of the Law School's non-discrimination policy may be referred to the following Law School coordinator of that policy, Catherine Peshkin, Assistant Dean for the Graduate Program and International Legal Studies, or to the Director of Admissions and Financial Aid, Harvard Law School Graduate Program, at 617-496-8214.

Inquiries concerning the application of non-discrimination policies may also be referred to the Regional Director, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, J. W. McCormack POCH, Room 222, Boston, MA 02109-4557.

20. CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

The application for admission, together with all supporting materials, becomes the property of the Harvard Law School Graduate Program upon submission. No materials will be returned to the applicant or forwarded to other schools or agencies. All information submitted by the applicant will be treated as confidential and, subject to relevant laws, will not be shared with persons outside of Harvard University without the applicant's permission.

21. INTERVIEWS

Evaluative interviews are not part of the admissions process because we believe that an adequate comparison of personal qualities and professional accomplishments is not possible on the basis of brief personal interviews. Therefore a visit to Harvard Law School will not improve your chances of admission. However, if you do visit Harvard Law School, we will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Please contact us (gpquery@law.harvard.edu) at least two weeks in advance to schedule a meeting.

22. CHECKING THE STATUS OF YOUR APPLICATION

You will not be able to check to see if your materials have been received until after you have submitted your online application. Once you submit your online application, you will be able to track the status of your application as it is processed by our office on your [Status Page](#) in the online application. Your Status Page will indicate whether your various supporting documents (recommendations, transcripts, TOEFL score reports, etc.) have been received. You will not have access to your Status Page, and the status of materials sent to the Graduate Program will not be updated, until AFTER your application is submitted.

If there is a problem with any of the materials you submit, we will contact you. Please do not contact the Graduate Program to inquire about the status of your application materials. Given the number of applications we receive and the limited time we have available to process, authenticate, and review each of them, it is not possible for us to reply to inquiries asking us to verify receipt of application materials or to confirm application status.

Instead, we ask that you check your Status Page in the online application and return to it periodically to see if specific items have been received. NOTE: It may take several weeks for the status of a particular item to be updated.

23. ADMISSIONS DECISIONS

Admissions decisions for S.J.D. applicants will generally be communicated by early June.

Please do not call or email the Graduate Program office to inquire about the status of your admissions decision. This will only disrupt our workflow and prevent us from completing our decision-making process as quickly as possible.

Once the decisions have been reached, you will be notified promptly. To protect the confidentiality of applications, we do not release any information on an application decision to anyone other than the applicant.

24. WHERE TO SEND MATERIALS NOT SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

Materials not submitted electronically through the online application should be sent to:

Harvard Law School Graduate Program Admissions Office
1585 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 5005
Cambridge, MA 02138
USA

IMPORTANT:

Please note that all materials related to your application will be filed by your family name (also known as surname or last name). Please include your full name (exactly as it appears on your passport) and underline your family name(s) on all correspondence with the Graduate Program.

Other than materials submitted through the online application (including online recommendations), all supporting documentation must be in printed form.

No videos or digital media storage devices (e.g. USB flash drives, DVDs) will be reviewed.

Please do not submit books, articles, dissertations, or other publications.

25. TECHNICAL PROBLEMS WITH THE APPLICATION

Please note that the Graduate Program application works best when it is accessed through the Chrome web browser on a computer (as opposed to a tablet or smartphone). You can [download Chrome here](#) for free if you do not already have it installed on your computer.

Some actions within the application may require you to click a pop-up dialog box to confirm the action you have selected. If your browser has a pop-up blocker enabled, you may need to disable the pop-up blocker or create an exception for graduateprogram.law.harvard.edu. If you are completing the application on a public computer terminal and the application seems to be "stuck," you may need to contact the system administrator to create a pop-up blocker exception in order to complete the application.

If you are using the Chrome browser, pop-up dialog boxes may offer the option to "prevent this page from creating additional dialogs." **DO NOT SELECT THIS OPTION.** Dialog boxes are required to perform certain actions (including submitting the application), and blocking dialog boxes will prevent you from being able to complete those actions.

If you inadvertently select the "prevent this page from creating additional dialogs" option in Chrome, you should immediately click "Continue" at the bottom of the page to save your work and then close the browser and completely exit out of Chrome. When you reopen the browser and return to the application, dialog boxes should be re-enabled. If you do not know how to disable the Chrome pop-up blocker or if exiting and restarting the browser fails to restore the dialog box function, please consult the pop-up information on the [Chrome support site](#) for instructions before contacting the Graduate Program.

If you experience any technical problems using the Graduate Program application, please email gpquery@law.harvard.edu for assistance.

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

Graduate Program

1585 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 5005
Cambridge, MA 02138, USA

2024-2025 S.J.D. Application

Reapplicant:

Prior AppYear:

Program:

Other S.J.D. or Doctoral Program Applications:

- | | | | |
|----|-------|----|-------|
| 1. | _____ | 4. | _____ |
| 2. | _____ | 5. | _____ |
| 3. | _____ | 6. | _____ |

Name exactly as it appears in passport:

Surname (family name(s)) Given name(s)

Name as written in home country:

Last First Preferred

Sex: _____ Date of birth: _____
MM/DD/YY

Gender Identity: _____ Pronouns: _____

Place of birth: _____
City State/Province Country

Citizenship 1: _____ U.S. Permanent Resident status: _____

Citizenship 2: _____

Mailing Address: _____ Permanent Address: _____

Telephone (mailing): _____ Telephone (permanent): _____

Mobile telephone: _____

Email: _____ Email 2: _____

English language proficiency – (For all applicants from abroad, including Canadians)

English proficiency category: _____

What language do you use...
At home? _____ At school? _____ At work? _____

Official TOEFL Exam Scores						
iBT Exam	Test Date	Total	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing

S.J.D. Program Information

LL.M. Law School: _____

Graduation Date: _____

LL.M. Written Work Supervisor: _____

Proposed Dissertation Supervisor: _____

Proposed Dissertation Topic:

Fields of Study:

Field 1: _____

Supervisor: _____

Email: _____

Field 2: _____

Supervisor: _____

Institution: _____

Field 3: _____

Supervisor: _____

Institution: _____

Field 4: _____

Supervisor: _____

Institution: _____

Additional Professors:

1. **Name:** _____

Academic Field: _____

Institution: _____

2. **Name:** _____

Academic Field: _____

Institution: _____

3. **Name:** _____

Academic Field: _____

Institution: _____

Expected Courses:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

References: Please give the names and professional positions of at least two persons whom you have asked to write letters of recommendation on your behalf. *(Note: The letters that are most helpful are those written by law school faculty members who know you well or by persons for whom you have worked in a professional capacity. Letters from personal or family friends are generally not helpful.)*

_____	_____
<i>Name</i>	<i>Professional affiliation</i>
_____	_____
<i>Name</i>	<i>Professional affiliation</i>
_____	_____
<i>Name</i>	<i>Professional affiliation</i>
_____	_____
<i>Name</i>	<i>Professional affiliation</i>
_____	_____
<i>Name</i>	<i>Professional affiliation</i>

IMPORTANT: Recommendations must be written solely by the recommender. If your recommender cannot provide a letter in English, please ask them to provide a letter in their own language; if possible, you should then include a certified translation into English done by a qualified translator (other than yourself). *(See instructions on certified translations.) Under NO circumstances should an applicant prepare or review a letter of recommendation. We reserve the right to disqualify the application of a candidate who has played any role in writing (or translating) a recommendation letter.*

Recommendation Waiver:

I authorize my recommenders to provide a candid evaluation and all relevant information (collectively, the "report") to Harvard Law School. I understand that U.S. legislation may provide me with a right of access to this report, that I may waive such access, and that no school or person can require me to waive this right.

- I waive my right to access these reports.
- I do **not** waive my right to access these reports.

Signature of applicant: _____ Date: _____

Higher Education: List all universities and law schools you have attended, beginning with the institution from which you received your highest law degree, followed by the rest in chronological order.

Law School:		
City	Country	Dates of Attendance -
Degree or Diploma	Date of Degree	Applicant Reported GPA /
Field of Study	Status of Degree	Applicant Estimated Class Rank of
If applicable, please submit a brief description of how you estimated your law school class rank.		
Other School 1:		
City	Country	Dates of Attendance -
Degree or Diploma	Date of Degree	Applicant Reported GPA /
Field of Study	Status of Degree	Applicant Estimated Class Rank of
Other School 2:		
City	Country	Dates of Attendance -
Degree or Diploma	Date of Degree	Applicant Reported GPA /
Field of Study	Status of Degree	Applicant Estimated Class Rank of
Other School 3:		
City	Country	Dates of Attendance -
Degree or Diploma	Date of Degree	Applicant Reported GPA /
Field of Study	Status of Degree	Applicant Estimated Class Rank of
Other School 4:		
City	Country	Dates of Attendance -
Degree or Diploma	Date of Degree	Applicant Reported GPA /
Field of Study	Status of Degree	Applicant Estimated Class Rank of
Other School 5:		
City	Country	Dates of Attendance -
Degree or Diploma	Date of Degree	Applicant Reported GPA /
Field of Study	Status of Degree	Applicant Estimated Class Rank of

Academic honors: If you received any of your university or post-secondary degrees “with honors” or with some other distinction, please indicate the type of honors or distinction you received (e.g., *magna cum laude*, First Class Honors, *très bien*) and the dates on which you received them. Please include any memberships in scholastic honor societies.

Publications: List any books, articles, or theses you have published (give title, date of publication, and name of publisher).
Note: Do not submit books, articles, or other publications with your application.

Bar membership: Are you a member of the bar?

Yes No

If yes, in which jurisdiction(s)?

Character and Fitness: Please answer the questions below carefully, keeping in mind that, in most cases, failure to disclose relevant information may be more serious than the underlying conduct itself. Failure to make required disclosures regarding misconduct, disciplinary action, or criminal history is (and has been) grounds for rescission of admission and/or serious disciplinary action at Harvard Law School, and may even result in post hoc withdrawal of a conferred degree. Subject to the limitations on criminal record disclosures set forth below, please make sure to disclose any information that could possibly fall into these categories. You may provide as much information about context and/or mitigating circumstances as you think necessary.

Education

Has your college, university, or law, graduate, or professional school career been interrupted for one or more terms, other than for your own health-related reasons? _____

At any college, university, or law, graduate, or professional school, have you ever been the subject of disciplinary or academic misconduct proceedings of any kind, or otherwise subject to probation, suspension, expulsion, or any other penalty (with the exception of an oral reprimand) for any reason? (For avoidance of doubt, you should disclose proceedings and/or sanctions that were suspended, expunged, or otherwise discharged.) _____

Are there any disciplinary or academic misconduct charges pending against you? _____

Details:

SAMPLE

Criminal

Have you ever been convicted of (or pleaded guilty or no contest to) any felony or misdemeanor offense (or any equivalent crime under the applicable legal system)?

Note that you are not required to provide information in your application or at any point in the admissions process that relates to:

- (1) An arrest, detention, or disposition regarding any violation of law in which no conviction resulted or the conviction was vacated;
- (2) A conviction for any of the following misdemeanor offenses: drunkenness, simple assault, speeding, minor traffic violations, affray, or disturbance of the peace; or
- (3) A misdemeanor conviction that occurred more than five years before your application for admission, unless (a) you were also sentenced to imprisonment; or (b) within the five years preceding your application you were convicted of any additional offense.

Are there any felony criminal charges or misdemeanor criminal charges (other than for drunkenness, simple assault, speeding, minor traffic violations, affray, or disturbance of the peace) currently pending against you?

Note: Admission to the bar in certain jurisdictions may require substantial additional disclosures. If you are interested in pursuing bar admission in the U.S., you should consult the applicable disclosure requirements and admission standards (information for each jurisdiction is available through the National Council on Bar Examiners at <http://www.ncbex.org>).

Details:

Professional

In a professional setting, have you ever been the subject of any disciplinary or misconduct proceedings? (For avoidance of doubt, you should disclose proceedings and/or sanctions that were suspended, expunged, or otherwise discharged.)

Are there any such disciplinary or misconduct charges pending against you?

Details:

Administrative details: The following questions are for Graduate Program staff to use in completing administrative tasks and do not have bearing on your admission decision.

Have you ever been affiliated with a Harvard program (summer school, degree program, employment status) for which you received a Harvard University ID number (“HUID”)? _____

Are you applying to the Graduate Program as a Fulbright Scholar? _____

Visa: (for international applicants)

If admitted, will you need a student visa sponsored by Harvard? _____

Explanation for other/no visa. _____

Do you intend to apply for U.S. permanent residence? _____

Do you intend to seek permanent employment in the U.S. or elsewhere outside of your home country? _____

If yes, please specify where: _____

Finances: Do you have sufficient funds to cover your travel, tuition, and living expenses at the Harvard Law School? _____
If yes, please indicate your source of funds below:

Please note: We have a very limited time for making financial aid determinations once our admission decisions have been made. If you do not submit your financial aid application until after you receive an admission offer, we likely will not have any grant funds available to award to you, and will only be able to offer you loan assistance.

Do you intend to apply for financial aid from Harvard Law School? _____

To apply for financial aid from Harvard Law School: Please complete the Financial Aid Application from the Application Home Page, <https://graduateprogram.law.harvard.edu/apply/>, and submit it by the financial aid application deadline.

Release of information: If you are admitted to the S.J.D. program, may the Graduate Program release your name, address, and e-mail to your fellow classmates and current students (for correspondence purposes) prior to your arrival at Harvard Law School?

Yes, I would like my name and address released.
If you are admitted to the S.J.D. program, your name, address, and e-mail may be released to your fellow classmates and current students (for correspondence purposes) prior to your arrival at Harvard Law School.

No, I would not like my name and address released.
If you are admitted to the S.J.D. program, your name, address, and e-mail will not be released to your fellow classmates or current students prior to your arrival at Harvard Law School. In this case, your information will be released to faculty and staff of Harvard University only.

Certification:

I certify that the information presented in my application is accurate, complete, honestly presented, and is my own work. I also certify that any information submitted on my behalf is authentic, including letters of recommendation, academic transcripts, and certifications. I understand and agree that any inaccurate information, misleading information, or omission will be cause for an investigation of misconduct in the admissions process, rescission of any offer of admission, and/or for discipline, dismissal, or revocation of degree if discovered at a later date. I agree to immediately notify the Graduate Program of changes or updates to information submitted within this application and I acknowledge that any changes or updates may affect the outcome of the admissions process.

Signature of applicant: _____ **Date:** _____