



Graduate Program Handbook 2025-2026

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Wasserstein Hall, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

This Graduate Program Handbook incorporates by reference information included in the Harvard Law School Handbook of Academic Policies 2025-2026.

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The Graduate Program Handbook

Welcome to the Harvard Law School Graduate Program. This handbook contains important information on academic requirements, Graduate Program policies, financial matters, and general law school information. Please refer to this handbook throughout the year. This handbook incorporates the Harvard Law School Handbook of Academic Policies 2025-2026 by reference as though fully set forth herein.

The Graduate Program

The Graduate Program is the division of Harvard Law School responsible for the Master of Laws (LL.M.) and the Doctor of Juridical Science (S.J.D.) degrees, and for various aspects of graduate legal studies, including the Visiting Scholar and Visiting Researcher program. A centerpiece of Harvard Law School's internationalization of its student body, faculty, and curriculum, members of the Graduate Program constitute a vibrant academic community noted for its diversity of interests and backgrounds.

Through our degree programs, we are training the next generation of leaders in academia, private practice, government, and non-profit and non-governmental organizations worldwide.

In our other activities, and in conjunction with International Legal Studies, we promote awareness of foreign law and legal systems among faculty, students, and alumni, both at the law school and elsewhere at Harvard University.

ADMINISTRATION

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ADVISORS AND COORDINATORS

Current S.J.D. and J.D. candidates coordinate a variety of academic programs and colloquia, which are presented throughout the year. They also conduct course counseling and academic advising for LL.M. students. The candidates serving in such roles for the academic year 2025-2026 are listed below.

LL.M. Advisors

Arvind Abraham
Arnaaz Ameer
Prosper Batarimah
Will Cesta
Sagnik Das
Shengdong Guo
Sawako Hirata
Biyuan Hu
Yuanyuan Jin
Gustavo Manicardi Schneider
Eliel Sanchez Acevedo
Maayan Weisman
Fengyang Zhao

Writing Workshop Advisors for Long-Paper Writers/Writing Groups

Deyaa Alrwishdi
Rose Karoro
Xuejiao Li
Juan Rivera Rugeles
Stobo Sniderman
Wei-An Tsai
Dana Zuk

Writing Workshop Advisor for Short Writing Projects

Jacqueline Mwangi

Law Teaching Colloquium Coordinator

Ignacio Orellana Garcia

Fellows, SJD Seminar on Methodology and Schools of Thought

Shira Gur Arie
Nida Kadayifci

Teaching Fellows, Legal Research, Writing, and Analysis

Arvind Abraham
Sagnik Das
Omer Ein Habar
Jacqueline Mwangi
Ignacio Orellana Garcia
Nitsan Plitman

Visiting Scholars and Visiting Researchers (VSVR) Programming Coordinators

Rayhan Asat
Mykhailo Soldatenko

Byse Fellow

Guy Priver

COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES

The Committee on Graduate Studies is responsible for academic policy and admissions for the Graduate Program. The Committee also oversees the application of program policies and regulations in consultation with the program administrators and staff. The members of the 2025-2026 Committee on Graduate Studies will be announced in September.

Academics: LL.M. Candidates

LL.M. COURSE AND WRITING REQUIREMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND OPTIONS

Note: Information in this section relates specifically to requirements for HLS degree completion. It does not relate to qualification for any bar examination or other professional licensing.

A. GENERAL RESIDENCY AND OTHER ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for the LL.M. degree, students must spend the entire academic year — consisting of the fall, winter, and spring terms — in full-time residence and satisfactorily complete a course of study consisting of a minimum of 23 credits and a maximum of 28 credits in one academic year. The foregoing minimum and maximum include the one credit assigned for completion of the portion of the Legal Research, Writing, and Analysis course that takes place during Orientation.

- **Minimum Credits by Term:** As an academic matter, all LL.M. degree candidates must register for at least nine credits in the fall term, at least eight credits in the spring term, and at least two credits in the winter term (provided that they are meeting the overall minimum of 23). In some cases, different minimums may apply for visa purposes.
- **Maximum Credits by Term:** LL.M. students may register for up to 13 credits in the fall term, up to 12 credits in the spring term, and up to three credits (in a single offering) in the winter term, not to exceed 28 credits for the academic year. Students typically enroll in nine to 11 credits in each of the fall and spring terms and two to three credits in the winter term. Any questions about academic requirements and maximum credits should be directed to the Graduate Program.

Students enrolled at the law school may not be simultaneously enrolled, either full-time or part-time, in any other school or college either within Harvard University or at any other institution (provided, however, that LL.M. candidates may maintain an inactive enrollment status in a Ph.D. program at another institution).

In accordance with Harvard Law School policy, students may not be employed for more than 20 hours of work per week during the academic year while classes are in session.

LL.M. students must complete degree requirements for the LL.M. within 36 months of first matriculating at the law school. A leave of absence will not extend the period for completing degree requirements.

The typical study program consists of a balanced arrangement of courses and seminar work, subject to the approval of senior Graduate Program staff, acting under the direction of the Graduate Committee. Graduate students normally enroll in seven to nine courses/seminars in an academic year. Courses can carry from one to five credits, are taken for a grade, and often require exams but are sometimes assessed in other ways (papers, presentations, etc.) depending on the particular offering. Seminars are typically worth two credits, are taken for a grade, and are usually assessed through a designated type of written work (research papers, reaction papers) and/or presentations, and have small enrollment totals. Reading groups are usually worth one credit, are graded on a credit/fail basis, entail intensive reading (as well as, in some cases, additional assignments) and classroom discussion, and generally have enrollment smaller than that of a seminar. It should be noted that law school classroom offerings — courses, seminars, and reading groups — are frequently referred to with the generic term “courses.”

All degree candidates must register for a full-time schedule of course and/or seminar credits in each term and regularly attend all class sessions. Failure to do so will preclude eligibility for graduation. Please refer to the online Course Catalog for course information and requirements at: hls.harvard.edu/courses.

Additional course requirements for LL.M. students are described below. The Written Work Requirement is described on page 6. The cross-registration process and guidelines for courses outside of the law school are described on pages 34-35.

B. U.S. LAW COURSE REQUIREMENT, INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

LL.M. candidates who do not hold a J.D. degree from a law school in the United States or Puerto Rico are required to take one core course, of at least three credits, in U.S. law from the following list of “primary” courses:

- Antitrust Law
- Contracts*
- Civil Procedure*
- Constitutional Law: First Amendment
- Constitutional Law: Separation of Powers, Federalism, and Fourteenth Amendment
- Corporations
- Criminal Law*
- Evidence
- Family Law
- Legislation and Regulation*
- Property*
- Separation of Powers
- Torts*
- Taxation

Courses marked with an asterisk (*) are first-year courses in the J.D. curriculum. The remaining courses on the list above are part of the upper-level curriculum. Descriptions of these courses can be found in the online Course Catalog (see above).

Students who have significant grounding in U.S. law or in a substantially similar common law equivalent (as determined by the Committee on Graduate Studies) may petition the Committee on Graduate Studies to substitute another substantive course in U.S. law.

C. RECOMMENDED COURSES

The Committee on Graduate Studies strongly recommends that each LL.M. candidate also take at least one course focusing on legal history, legal theory, policy analysis, or legal process.

Students who hope to embark on a law teaching career are strongly encouraged to take at least one course that is primarily focused on legal theory or jurisprudence. Students may consult with the [Graduate Program](#) for further discussion of possible course selections in these areas.

D. LEGAL RESEARCH, WRITING, AND ANALYSIS FOR U.S.-EDUCATED STUDENTS

Students who hold a J.D. degree from a school in the United States must attend the anti-plagiarism and library training sessions of the Legal Research, Writing, and Analysis course that takes place during Orientation, and complete all associated training modules. They may sit in on the rest of the course, but may not receive credit for it.

E. WRITTEN WORK REQUIREMENT

1. Description

All LL.M. candidates must register for and successfully complete a paper that involves independent reflection, formulation of a sustained argument, and, in many cases, in-depth research. The paper written to satisfy the Written Work Requirement must be an individual effort: group projects, works of joint authorship, and the like do not qualify for the Written Work Requirement. The paper may be written in conjunction with a law school course or seminar that already requires a paper that would satisfy the writing requirement — commonly referred to as writing “in conjunction” with a course or seminar — or as an independent paper supervised by a member of the law school faculty (including instructors with Harvard Law School teaching appointments). Where a student seeks to write a paper “in conjunction” with a course or seminar, it must be clear that (i) the offering already requires a paper that would otherwise satisfy the LL.M. Written Work Requirement, (ii) the paper is not in lieu of an exam or other assignment(s) of the course (unless such option is specified in the syllabus and available to all enrollees in the course on an equal basis), and (iii) the paper is an individual assignment and not part of a group project. Where there is no course or seminar in the field in which a student wants to work, candidates generally will be able to find a faculty member who will be available to guide research in the particular field.

LL.M. students, other than U.S.-educated Students, may select either of the two options described below. The parameters for paper length and corresponding credits are as follows:

- **25-Page Paper:** the paper must be at least 25 pages long (including footnotes but not including endnotes, appendices, table of contents, abstracts, or acknowledgments) and is worth one credit if written independently; no additional credit (beyond the associated course credit) if written in conjunction with a course that requires a paper
- **50-Page Paper:** the paper must be at least 50 pages long (including footnotes but not including endnotes, appendices, table of contents, abstracts, or acknowledgments) and is worth two credits if written independently; one credit if written in conjunction with a course that requires a paper

Students with a J.D. degree from a law school in the U.S. must write a 50-Page Paper.

The Written Work Requirement cannot be satisfied with a series of shorter papers or journal entries, works of joint authorship, moot court briefs, or clinical work product. As the foregoing list of exclusions is not exhaustive, students should confirm with the Graduate Program that the proposed format for their required written work meets the requirement.

2. Registration for Required Written Work

All LL.M. students must formally register for the Written Work Requirement by submitting the LL.M. Written Work Requirement Registration and Proposal Form to the proposed faculty supervisor for signature and, once reviewed and signed, submitting the completed paperwork to the Graduate Program by no later than the published dates set forth in the Harvard Law School Handbook of Academic Policies 2025-2026, and as also specified in this section. Details about the proposal will be provided by the Graduate Program. Faculty members may require additional preliminary information, such as a discussion of the subject matter, an outline, or a longer description. A student should submit the Registration and Proposal form, as well as any other material requested, to the faculty member well in advance of the published deadlines since faculty members may require additional preliminary work before accepting a proposal.

Students writing the 50-Page Paper, or the 25-Page Paper in the fall term, must submit the signed Registration and Proposal Form to the Graduate Program by October 31, 2025. Students writing the 25-Page Paper in the spring term must submit the signed Registration and Proposal Form to the Graduate Program by February 9, 2026. Students who fail to register for the LL.M. Written Work Requirement by February 9, 2026 may be removed from the May 2026 degree list.

3. Supervision of Required Written Work

Students may ask any Harvard Law School faculty member or instructor with a Harvard Law School teaching appointment to supervise written work. Faculty on certain types of leave may not be available in a given term.

Writing credits under the supervision of a visiting faculty member ordinarily must be registered for and completed during the term(s) of the visitor's appointment; many visitors and lecturers have Harvard Law School appointments for only one term. Students who are contemplating supervision by visiting faculty for projects that might fall outside of that faculty member's term of appointment should contact the Graduate Program staff for guidance on this point.

4. Prohibition against Compensation

Students may not receive academic credit for written work for which they also receive compensation.

5. Multiple Use of Papers

Occasionally students seek to submit one paper for two or more courses or seminars. In such cases, the paper must be of sufficiently greater scope or depth to warrant such multiple credit. In order to assure compliance with this requirement, any student planning to submit the same or similar written work in more than one academic offering must first obtain the approval of the Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs by submitting a memo that documents the project plan. The instructors involved should discuss appropriate ways to make sure that the submitted work meets this greater burden. This memo must be signed by the instructors for both courses and must set forth the way in which the paper will meet the added requirement described in this paragraph.

Once the Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs approves the project, the memo must then be submitted to the Office of the Registrar before the student is accorded the requested credits. This rule applies to submission of work in any offering whether at the law school or elsewhere. A student who submits the same, or substantially the same, work in more than one course without such prior permission will be subject to disciplinary action.

6. Human Subject Research

Harvard Law School projects involving human subjects are reviewed by the Committee on the Use of Human Subjects (CUHS) within the Office of the Vice Provost for Research (OVPR), which serves as the university-wide Institutional Review Board (IRB). Students considering research projects that fall under IRB purview, i.e., regulated research with human subjects (including surveys or interviews) should review the University's policies on use of human subjects in research available on the Committee's website (cuhs.harvard.edu) and discuss their work with an [IRB Administrator at CUHS](#). Note that students should allow sufficient time for IRB review; late requests for review may not be granted. Requests are triaged within CUHS; please email cuhs@harvard.edu or call (617) 496-2847.

In addition, students whose research involves the collection or storage of human subject information must establish data security procedures that reflect the sensitivity of the data and in accordance with the Harvard Research Data Security Policy. Students should consult their faculty supervisors and the Information Technology Services (ITS) Department (at security@law.harvard.edu) for additional information.

7. Submission of Written Work to the Library

Once the paper for the LL.M. Written Work Requirement has been completed and submitted to the faculty supervisor, a copy of the final paper—in the form submitted to the supervisor for grading—must be submitted electronically to the Graduate Program for electronic deposit with the Law School Library. At this time, a Library Authorization form must also be signed.

8. Credit Adjustments

1. An LL.M. student writing the 25-Page Paper may seek to extend the work to a 50-Page Paper provided that (1) the student has the faculty supervisor's advance approval for the change, (2) the faculty supervisor confirms that the final paper significantly exceeds the original parameters in form (at least 25 additional pages of text, not including endnotes, appendices, or acknowledgments) and in substance, (3) the additional credit would not cause the student to exceed the maximum credit parameter for the term or the year, (4) approval is confirmed by the Graduate Program and noted to the Office of the Registrar, and (5) all such steps are completed by no later than April 10, 2026. The foregoing is the only circumstance where an additional credit may be considered and granted.

2. An LL.M. student who has registered for the 50-Page Paper and whose writing plans change may reduce the project to a 25-Page Paper provided that (1) the student has the faculty supervisor's advance approval for the change, (2) the final paper fulfills the narrower scope of a 25-Page Paper in form and in substance, (3) the credit reduction would not cause the student to fall below the minimum credit requirement for the term and the year, (4) the student has not taken part in the Winter Term Writing Program, (5) approval is confirmed by the Graduate Program and noted to the Office of the Registrar, and (6) all such steps are completed by no later than April 10, 2026.

F. WINTER TERM WRITING PROGRAM

Students who wish to devote the winter term exclusively to pursuing their research and writing on a single piece of written work worth at least two credits, while in residence, instead of doing course work, may apply to the Winter Term Writing Program (“WWP”). Information and applications will be available through the Graduate Program in October. Regardless of whether they plan to apply for the WWP, all students should register for a winter course since submitting an application does not guarantee admission to the WWP. If admitted, students will then have the opportunity to drop the winter-term course for which they had previously enrolled in order to take part in the WWP. The WWP itself does not confer credit. Hence, the work done during the winter term must be part of an independent 50-Page Paper for which the credits are assigned to the winter term. Participants in the WWP are expected to structure their own time and efforts during the term. However, there will be a mandatory group session on writing issues before the end of the first week of the term, and each participant will meet with a senior Graduate Program administrator partway through the term in order to share insights, discuss research objectives, and identify areas where additional assistance may be needed.

OPTIONAL WRITTEN WORK

In addition to the Written Work Requirement, all students have the option of doing additional written work for credit. With the agreement of the instructor, a student may do such optional written work for additional credit related to a law school seminar or course, or on an independent basis with law school faculty supervision. These are excellent opportunities for pursuing topics in depth, for exploring issues beyond the formal curriculum, for developing publishable scholarship, and for tailoring the law school experience to the student’s personal interests.

A. CREDITS

LL.M. student optional written work may receive one or two writing credit(s) and is expected to meet the standards for LL.M. Required Written Work in form (at least 25 pages of text, not including endnotes, table of contents, abstracts, appendices, or acknowledgments, of the student’s individual work, for one credit) and in substance. The number of credits granted for a particular piece of writing must be arranged in advance between the student and the faculty supervisor.

B. REGISTRATION FOR OPTIONAL WRITTEN WORK

Students must register for Optional Written Work by submitting the required registration form and proposal to the faculty supervisor for approval in advance and then to the Graduate Program by October 31, 2025 for fall term and by February 9, 2026 for spring term. Forms will be available online at: hls.harvard.edu/academics/curriculum/registration-information/written-work-registration-forms/.

C. MOOT COURT BRIEF FOR CREDIT

Harvard Law School faculty members advising moot court teams have the discretion to approve written work credit for a student for writing done as part of a moot court team, subject to the following conditions:

- In order to qualify for academic credit, the writing must be equivalent to work that would qualify for optional independent written work credit (which, for LL.M. students, is at least 25 pages of text—not including endnotes, appendices, table of contents, abstracts, or acknowledgments—of the student’s individual work for one credit).
- An LL.M. student may seek no more than one credit for involvement in a moot court brief and must submit a narrative describing that student’s individual contributions — in terms of form and substance — to the final brief.

To register for a credit for a moot court brief, an LL.M. student must complete the required registration form and proposal and submit it to the Graduate Program in accordance with the section on Registration for Optional Written Work (above).

D. REQUIRED CONSULTATION

LL.M. students must consult with the [Graduate Program](#) before seeking credit for optional written work of any kind, or the writing of a Moot Court Brief for Credit.

OPTIONAL GRADUATE ACADEMIC OFFERINGS

The Graduate Program organizes several optional academic offerings for graduate students throughout the year. These offerings, which have come to play a central role in the intellectual and community life of Graduate Program students, include the LL.M. Writing Workshop, the Law Teaching Colloquium, and Byse Workshops. Participation is optional and does not result in academic credit. Dates, times, and other details for fall-term workshops and colloquia will be provided in early September where available. Schedules and information for such programs throughout the year will be announced on the HLS Administrative Updates site and forwarded through the Graduate Program Listservs (see pages 45-46).

A. WRITING WORKSHOPS

Writing Workshop for Long (50-Page) Projects: Students writing the 50-Page Paper are strongly encouraged to participate in this workshop designed to support students engaged in complex writing projects. This Writers’ Workshop helps students identify a topic and research question, develop a research design, formulate a proposal, and structure the research and writing phases of their projects. Students also receive help in identifying resources from Harvard Law School, Harvard University, and the greater Boston area that may enrich their projects. The Workshop is organized in small groups led by workshop advisors on the basis of participants’ research interests. Peer learning through regular group attendance (there are generally seven to nine meetings throughout the year) and oral presentation of proposals is strongly encouraged. The Writers’ Workshop is different from the Winter Term Writing Program (WWP). However, the writing workshop advisors for the groups provide support for students who wish to apply for the WWP, the application for which requires a more elaborate research proposal than the one submitted in October in conjunction with registration for the 50-Page Paper.

Writing Workshop for Short (25-Page) Projects: Students writing the 25-Page Paper are strongly encouraged to take part in the programming presented through the Workshop for Short Writing Projects. This Workshop offers guidance to students in such areas as choosing topics and supervisors, writing research proposals, addressing methodological and organizational issues, and the like.

The Graduate Program Writing Workshops are different from, and can be joined together with or independently of, the for-credit Upper-Level Writing Workshops offered by HLS faculty members.

B. THE BYSE WORKSHOPS

The Byse Workshops, offered in academic areas of particular relevance to graduate students, provide in-depth treatment of the scholarship in their fields. The Workshops, led by the Byse Fellows, meet approximately every one or two weeks during the course of a semester. Discussion is generally organized around reading materials and/or an exposition by a workshop participant or guest speaker. The Workshops are offered on a noncredit basis.

The following Byse Workshop will be offered during the 2025-2026 academic year:

Spring 2026 *The Turn to the Local in International Law and Development* Guy Priver

C. THE LAW TEACHING COLLOQUIUM

Offered in the fall and spring on a non-credit basis, the 2025-2026 Law Teaching Colloquium takes the form of four or more information sessions highlighting various aspects of law teaching. The first session is expected to take place in the fall. In the past, the Colloquium has drawn on the pedagogic expertise of faculty at Harvard Law School and other institutions to discuss issues such as pedagogical methods, how to develop research agendas, and various aspects of a career in law teaching. Topics may range from cutting-edge legal scholarship to internationalization to legal publishing to curricular issues. This Colloquium is designed for S.J.D., LL.M., and J.D. students who are contemplating a career in teaching and has traditionally served as an interactive forum for students from the various law school degree programs.

Academics: S.J.D. Candidates

The Doctor of Juridical Science (S.J.D.) is Harvard Law School's most advanced law degree, designed for aspiring legal academics from the United States and abroad who wish to pursue sustained independent study, research, and writing. Candidates are expected to produce a dissertation that will constitute a substantial and valuable contribution to legal scholarship. Graduates of the program are expected to contribute to the furtherance of knowledge and understanding about law and legal institutions through their dissertations and other academic work.

Awarding of the S.J.D. degree is conditioned on the candidate's timely fulfillment of eight academic requirements:

- Submission of an approved study plan, including arrangements for course work and reading lists, in the first year
- Completion of the first year of study in residence at the law school, under the supervision of a faculty member and an orals committee, including reading for fields, meeting regularly with field supervisors, and completing eight credits of course work (normally on an audit basis)
- Successful completion of an oral (general) examination, in each of the fields outlined in the study plan
- Submission of a prospectus approved by the candidate's principal supervisor
- Two presentations at the S.J.D. Colloquium, the first to obtain feedback from the S.J.D. community regarding the candidate's prospectus, and the second to obtain feedback regarding the candidate's near-complete dissertation
- Submission and acceptance of the doctoral dissertation
- Successful oral defense of the dissertation
- Electronic submission of the final dissertation to the Graduate Program for electronic deposit with the HLS Library

The first of these requirements — preparation and submission of a study plan — is completed in the initial months of study. Successful completion of the oral (general) examination is also often accomplished during the first year of study, but must be completed by March 31 of the second year of S.J.D. study. By December 15 of the third year (typically within nine months of passing the oral examination), an S.J.D. candidate must complete and submit a prospectus that has been approved in writing by the candidate's principal supervisor. The S.J.D. candidate normally completes the remaining requirements — presentations of the prospectus and later of a dissertation chapter at the S.J.D. colloquium, submission and acceptance of the dissertation, and oral defense of the dissertation — during the first four to five years of the program. (See "S.J.D. Milestone Chart" on page 13 and "Completing the S.J.D. Program: An Illustrative Timetable" on page 26-27.)

| S.J.D. Milestone Chart | |
|--|--|
| Requirement | Deadline* |
| Study Plan | January 31, first year in program |
| Completion of Audit Requirement | End of first year |
| Oral Exam | Second year, but no later than March 31, second year |
| Prospectus | Second year or fall of the third year, but no later than December 15, third year |
| First Colloquium | Second or third year, but no later than April 30, third year |
| Declare Intended Graduation Date | Between 6 and 12 months before intended graduation |
| Second Colloquium | Between 6 and 12 months before graduation |
| Dissertation Submission (or Extension Request) | January 15, each applicable year, starting in the fourth year |
| Successful Dissertation Defense | See “S.J.D. Graduation Timelines” on pages 24-25 |
| Final Graduation Deadline | May, seventh year |

*NOTE: Candidates planning to graduate within four years will need to complete their oral exams and submit their approved prospectus well in advance of the respective deadlines.

FACULTY SUPERVISOR, PERIODIC CONSULTATION, AND SUPERVISION

Each S.J.D. candidate pursues the degree under the supervision of a faculty member selected by the candidate and approved by the Committee on Graduate Studies. This principal supervisor must be a tenured member of the Harvard Law School faculty.

It is essential that S.J.D. candidates consult periodically with their faculty supervisors not only during the first year of residence but continually until the dissertation is completed. The purpose of these consultations is to increase the chances that the candidate’s research and writing-in-progress are likely to lead to an acceptable dissertation.

Following the successful completion of the oral (general) examination (see “The Oral (General) Examination” on page 18), S.J.D. candidates should begin working on a prospectus under the guidance of their principal supervisor and other members of their supervisory team. The prospectus must be approved in writing by the principal supervisor and submitted to the Graduate Program no later than December 15 of the candidate’s third year (though candidates wishing to complete the program in four years should plan to submit their approved prospectus well before this deadline). (See “Prospectus” on pages 18-19 for more information on the content and format of a prospectus.)

Following the submission of the prospectus, candidates should meet or consult regularly (at least once every two months) with their principal supervisor and begin the process of selecting a second reader in conjunction with their principal supervisor (see “Dissertation Defense Committee” on page 22). Candidates are strongly recommended to have a second reader in place by the time of the First Colloquium. An effective way to ensure that the principal supervisor and second reader are aware of the approach, themes, and direction of the dissertation is to prepare an outline at an early stage and to submit draft chapters as they are written. Usually, principal supervisors and second readers find it easier to deal with chapters of a dissertation from time to time rather than receiving very large portions of the dissertation at once. Periodic submission of draft chapters will also help ensure that the candidate is proceeding in the right direction.

In some instances, S.J.D. candidates who have submitted dissertations written without adequate consultation have found that their principal supervisor and second reader were unable to approve what the candidate considered to be a completed dissertation. In such cases, the dissertation may either be rejected altogether (leading to a withdrawal from the program) or require very substantial reworking.

Candidates are advised to keep the Graduate Program apprised of their meetings with their principal supervisors. If candidates find that, despite reasonable efforts, they are not receiving adequate supervision from their principal supervisor, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Graduate Program, which will apprise the Committee on Graduate Studies.

Special Provisions for Non-Resident S.J.D. Candidates: All non-resident candidates must stay in periodic oral and/or written communication with their principal supervisor and second reader concerning the progress of their dissertation work. Circumstances permitting, non-resident candidates also are strongly encouraged to return to Cambridge at least once a year for consultations with their principal supervisor and second reader. If, in the opinion of a candidate’s principal supervisor, the candidate is not maintaining adequate contact, the Committee on Graduate Studies may require the candidate to submit periodic written progress reports, actual dissertation chapters, or other appropriate work.

THE FIRST YEAR OF STUDY

All S.J.D. candidates must be in residence at the law school during their first year of study (please see “Residency Status” on page 28-29).

The first year of study is designed to prepare candidates in the various fields of study that will form the basis for the dissertation. During this first year, all candidates must attend courses, read in three or four fields under the guidance of a faculty orals committee (see “The Orals Committee” on page 17), and meet regularly with members of that faculty orals committee. Meetings with committee members should proceed at a regular pace sufficient to demonstrate incremental progress toward field mastery, at a cadence determined with each supervisor (ideally at the start of each semester or year). In conjunction with this study, candidates may also pursue interdisciplinary work at other faculties of the university.

First-year S.J.D. candidates who are hired as Teaching Fellows or Teaching Assistants elsewhere at Harvard University may not undertake more than one section of any course in a given semester, and are strongly discouraged from combining a Teaching Fellow or Teaching Assistant position with any other campus employment.

A. PREPARATION OF THE STUDY PLAN

The study plan represents the candidate’s academic itinerary for the period of time (typically the first year of study) leading to the oral examination, and should lay a foundation for later work on the dissertation. An acceptable study plan should be built around the candidate’s specific fields of study and should include a combination of courses, readings, and other academic work. The oral examination must take place by no later than March 31 of the second year. The study plan must also include the candidate’s deadline for completion of the oral (general) examination (see “The Oral (General) Examination” on page 18). The study plan should be organized around three or four fields chosen with reference to the candidate’s dissertation proposal and future teaching plans. These fields normally include one interdisciplinary field — a field that seeks to combine study of the law with insights from another discipline (such as anthropology, economics, history, philosophy, or political science).

Fields: Definition of fields is difficult and in all cases requires careful consideration. Candidates should use the field definition stage as an opportunity to engage their principal supervisor and orals committee members to clarify their academic projects. General guidelines for field definition are listed below:

1. Field definition goes together with creating a bibliography.
2. Fields should not be so broad that they would be impossible to master in one year; however, the opposite may apply when fields are defined too narrowly. A good way to think of a field is that it should be sufficiently extensive to form the framework of a course on the subject.
3. The typical number of fields in a study plan is three. This usually means that a candidate will have three orals committee members, including the principal supervisor acting as the orals committee member for one of the fields. Any candidate proposing more than four or fewer than three fields, or any candidate proposing fewer than three orals committee members, must petition the Committee on Graduate Studies for approval.
4. In general, skills areas (languages, statistics, calculus, etc.) are not appropriate subjects for fields. These are skill deficiencies that should be made up outside the fields, preferably during the first year of S.J.D. study. Appropriate exams should be scheduled to ensure acquired proficiency.

5. Once the study plan has been approved and filed with the Graduate Program, any changes a candidate proposes to a field (i.e., addition or deletion of a field or the applicable field supervisor, change of field title, etc.) require prior written approval by the principal supervisor, the supervisor(s) of the field(s) in question, and the Committee on Graduate Studies.

Course Work: S.J.D. candidates in the first year must normally complete course work carrying eight credits (normally on an audit basis) at the law school or, if appropriate, at other departments of the university. Arrangements for course work must be set forth in the study plan.

Any S.J.D. candidate who does not hold a primary degree in law from a U.S. law school:

- must complete at least one course in U.S. law during the first year of S.J.D. studies or during the LL.M. year
- is strongly encouraged to complete at least one course in legal history, legal process, or legal thought during the first year of S.J.D. studies or during the LL.M. year.

The content of courses pursued in connection with the fields of study will typically be examined in the context of the oral (general) examination.

S.J.D. candidates usually complete course work on a nonregistered (audit) basis. Any candidate interested in auditing a Harvard Law School course must submit an audit request form to the Office of the Registrar. The form requires the signature of the instructor of the course. The form will be held in the Registrar's Office until the end of the Add/Drop period (see "Add/Drop and Waitlist Processing" on page 34). If space becomes available, the candidate will be notified that they may attend the course. Potential auditors may, subject to available seating, sit in on the course until an official decision is made. Audited courses do not appear on student transcripts. Exceptions to the policy on auditing procedures may be made only with the approval of the Office of Academic Affairs.

Cross-Registration: First-year S.J.D. students who have not waived the LL.M. degree (see "Course Work Undertaken for Credit" below) may also cross-register for courses outside the law school as long as the course pertains to their fields of study and approval is obtained from the faculty supervisor and the Committee on Graduate Studies. For first-year S.J.D. students, cross-registered courses, if any, should be listed in the draft S.J.D. study plan to be submitted no later than October 15 of the first year (see "Approval of the Study Plan" on page 17).

Course Work Undertaken for Credit: If a principal supervisor advises a candidate who has waived the LL.M. degree (see "LL.M. Waiver" on page 29-30), or who is beyond the first year of study, to complete certain course work for credit, the candidate must petition the Committee on Graduate Studies for approval to complete such work for credit. First-year candidates who have not waived the LL.M. degree and who wish to take courses for credit need not petition the Committee. All Harvard Law School academic work — with the exception of specified courses offered on a credit/fail basis — will be graded Honors, Pass, Low Pass, or Fail (H, P, LP, or F). S.J.D. candidates taking courses for credit must receive a minimum grade of Pass (P) in any given course offered at Harvard Law School.

Class Attendance and Participation: S.J.D. candidates who enroll in courses are subject to the Class Attendance and Participation guidelines set forth in the section on Policies (see page 36).

B. THE ORALS COMMITTEE

In the course of preparing the study plan, S.J.D. candidates must assemble an orals committee consisting of the principal supervisor and two or three other faculty members. Members of the orals committee should be selected with a view to the fields that the candidate intends to pursue in the study plan (see “Preparation of the Study Plan” on page 15). In addition to the principal supervisor, at least one other member of the orals committee must be a member of the Harvard Law School faculty, while the remaining member(s) of the committee may be selected from the Harvard Law School faculty, from other departments of the University, or from other universities. Candidates pursuing an interdisciplinary field or fields are encouraged to choose their orals committee members from faculty who are specialists in those fields, which may involve selections from within or outside Harvard University.

The principal supervisor and orals committee members will be responsible for consulting with the student throughout the year and administering the oral (general) examination. Orals committee members (other than the principal supervisor) do not participate in the supervision or oral defense of the dissertation, unless they have individually agreed to do so.

Candidates should consult with their principal supervisors, with senior Graduate Program staff, and/or with members of the Graduate Committee concerning any questions on the selection of members of the orals committee.

C. APPROVAL OF THE STUDY PLAN

Candidates must submit drafts of their study plans to their principal supervisors and orals committee members early in September of the first year of study, and should discuss with them the desirability of pursuing specific courses, selected readings, interdisciplinary study, skills enhancement (e.g., languages, mathematics, or statistics), and other academic projects in their specific fields of study. On the basis of these discussions, candidates must put their study plans in writing, following the guidelines in “Preparation of the Study Plan” (see page 15), and have them approved by their principal supervisor. Candidates are strongly encouraged to avail themselves of the assistance of the Associate Director, Graduate Writing and Academics, in formulating this study plan. A draft study plan must be submitted to the Graduate Program no later than October 15, and a final draft of the plan approved by all supervisors must be submitted to the Graduate Program, for review and approval by the Committee on Graduate Studies, by January 31 in the first year of study. Upon review, the Committee on Graduate Studies may request adjustments to the study plan. These adjustments should be made on the timeline set forth by the Committee on Graduate Studies. Once a plan has been finalized and filed with the Graduate Program, a candidate must consult with the Graduate Program before making any changes to a field and/or supervisor (and resubmit the plan thereafter).

D. PERIODIC CONSULTATION WITH SUPERVISOR AND ORALS COMMITTEE

S.J.D. candidates must meet and consult regularly with the members of their orals committee during the course of their first year of study and up to the time of the actual oral examination. Meetings with orals committee members should proceed at a pace sufficient to demonstrate incremental progress toward field mastery. While the precise frequency of meetings with faculty during the year will vary, typically candidates meet with their advisors every two to four weeks. Some faculty may prefer to meet slightly less often but more intensely; others may prefer to meet in small groups rather than individually. Candidates must keep their supervisors and orals committee members informed of their progress and engage them substantively on the materials in prescribed readings and courses.

E. THE ORAL (GENERAL) EXAMINATION

Candidates must undertake field meetings and successfully complete the S.J.D. oral (general) examination in their fields of study during the first or second year in the S.J.D. program. The examination must be completed before starting work on the dissertation. In rare cases, a written examination may be substituted for an oral examination in one or more of the fields. Any changes in field supervision, content, structure, or title made to the fields between the time the study plan is submitted and the time the oral examination takes place must be approved in writing, in advance of the oral examination, by the faculty supervisor(s) and the Committee on Graduate Studies.

The purpose of the S.J.D. general examination is to test the candidate's competence in the fields set out in the study plan. The oral examination is conducted by a panel consisting of the principal supervisor and the supervisor of each field covered in the study plan. Typically, half an hour is devoted to questions in each field. Candidates may be examined on any of the material covered in the study plan and are typically questioned on the more salient themes developed during consultations with their supervisors and orals committee members.

Each student and the student's principal supervisor will agree on a target month (no later than March 31 of the second year) for completion of the oral examination at the time the student develops the study plan. In selecting a date, the parties should take into account such factors as the student's background in the fields, whether the fields should be tailored more narrowly towards a dissertation or more broadly towards the student's teaching interests, the amount of time the student can spend in residence, and other relevant factors.

Note: It is the candidate's responsibility to schedule a time and location for the oral examination with the candidate's orals committee members. Once scheduled, the candidate must provide this information to the Graduate Program at least two weeks in advance of the date of the exam.

Upon completion of the oral examination, the faculty supervisor will prepare a brief report for the Committee on Graduate Studies providing a grade for each field (Distinguished, Good, Pass, or Fail, with pluses and minuses as appropriate), an overall grade of "Pass" or "Fail" for the examination, and comments on the candidate's performance. The overall grade of "Pass" or "Fail" for the examination will appear on the candidate's transcript. If the overall grade is "Pass," the transcript notation will indicate the specific fields of study in which the candidate was examined. Apart from the "Pass/Fail" result, oral exam grades are not made available to the candidate and may not be disclosed beyond the Graduate Program.

PROSPECTUS

By December 15 of the third year of study, an S.J.D. candidate must submit to the Graduate Program a prospectus of between 2,000 and 3,500 words of text (with no more than an additional 1,000 words in footnotes) that has been approved by the candidate's principal supervisor.

While the Committee recognizes the variety of projects that S.J.D. candidates undertake and appreciates that particular subdisciplines of law (e.g., law and economics, legal history, and socio-legal studies to mention but three) may entail very different approaches, and therefore wishes to provide students and their supervisors considerable leeway as to how to structure their prospectus, its expectation is that each prospectus will address all of the following:

- What is the principal issue (or issues) that you wish to investigate in the dissertation? Why do you believe it to be significant in light of previous scholarship in your field? How do you propose to develop, challenge, or depart from existing positions or themes in the relevant scholarship?
- What is your working hypothesis? In the case of a dissertation likely to be comprised of at least three separate but related essays, what is the overarching theme (that would be the subject of the dissertation's synthesizing chapter) and what are the working hypotheses of at least two of the essays?
- What methodology or conceptual framework will you be employing to approach the issue(s) you wish to address in your dissertation? The more detail provided, the more likely that the colloquium audience will be able to offer useful feedback.
- We appreciate that the prospectus comes at an early stage in your work on your dissertation, but to the extent you now can, please specify how you intend to structure the dissertation (i.e., provide a tentative outline of chapters).
- What challenges do you foresee in undertaking this work (e.g., access to archives, a need to conduct survey research, conceptual challenges)?
- How might the Graduate Program and the S.J.D. community be most helpful to you? Are there particular questions you would like us to consider in advance of the colloquium?

Candidates should develop their prospectus in conjunction with the principal supervisor and other members of their orals committee, taking advantage of this opportunity to avail themselves of the full range of faculty expertise on their supervisory team. After the prospectus is completed, a candidate must secure written approval from the principal supervisor for the prospectus before submitting it to the Graduate Program.

A candidate planning to submit a dissertation comprised of at least three related essays and a comprehensive synthesizing essay should incorporate into (or submit with) the prospectus a formal petition for approval of the multiple-essay format that satisfies the requirements set forth in "Permission and Requirements for Multiple-Essay Submissions" under "Dissertation Requirements" on pages 20-22. Prospectuses containing requests for approval of the multiple-essay format will be referred to the Graduate Committee for review of the multiple-essay format request, including the plan for the comprehensive synthesizing essay. A primary supervisor's written approval is required but is not a substitute for Graduate Committee approval of the multiple-essay format.

As noted above, a candidate's prospectus is due by December 15 of the third year of study (though candidates wishing to complete the program in four years should plan to submit their approved prospectus well before this deadline). Once the prospectus has been received, the Graduate Program will work with the candidate and the supervisory team to schedule the First Colloquium, which must take place by April

30 of the third year of S.J.D. studies.

PRESENTATIONS AT THE S.J.D. COLLOQUIUM

Twice during the program, S.J.D. candidates are required to present their dissertation work at the S.J.D. Colloquium, a weekly gathering of S.J.D. candidates, members of the Committee on Graduate Studies, the presenter's principal supervisor, and other faculty members (including, among others, those invited by the candidate). The S.J.D. Colloquium Series is facilitated by a faculty member or a senior Graduate Program administrator. Attendance at the S.J.D. Colloquium is mandatory for all in-residence S.J.D. students.

A. FIRST COLLOQUIUM

The first presentation takes place after completion of the oral examination and the submission of a prospectus (see pages 18-19), and must be held by April 30 of the third year (though candidates wishing to complete the program in four years should plan to complete this requirement well before this deadline). The prospectus will be circulated to other Colloquium participants one to two weeks in advance of the scheduled event.

The candidate's principal supervisor must be present at this colloquium; the presentation should last no more than 20 minutes and will be followed by a question-and-answer period. Presenters should assume that the audience will have read the prospectus and therefore use their time in a way best designed to get across their central ideas and secure the feedback of the S.J.D. community.

B. SECOND COLLOQUIUM

The second presentation must be completed at least six months prior to graduation and may take place up to 12 months prior to the intended graduation date (preferably well before the dissertation is finalized for submission so that the student can still benefit from feedback given at the Colloquium). It is a formal presentation of the completed dissertation (or, in certain circumstances, a paper emanating from the dissertation research) to academic colleagues, similar in form to a job talk or conference paper. Candidates interviewing for teaching jobs are encouraged to use their Second Colloquium presentation as a mock job talk, and are strongly urged to schedule their presentations well before such interviews. The presentation should last for no more than 20 minutes and will be followed by a question-and-answer period.

For presenters of the Second Colloquium, a chapter of the dissertation (or a paper emanating from the dissertation research), accompanied by an abstract or précis, must be submitted to the Graduate Program no later than eight days prior to the scheduled event. These documents will be distributed to other Colloquium participants one week prior to the scheduled events. In all cases, the abstract or précis, which should be **no more than seven pages in length**, is designed to encourage thoughtful and grounded exchange during the presentations.

It is the responsibility of the S.J.D. candidate to schedule a Second Colloquium date before the appropriate deadline.

DISSERTATION REQUIREMENTS

IMPORTANT: Please consult the S.J.D. Graduation Timelines (see pages 24-25) for information about the deadlines for submitting a dissertation and completing the (second) S.J.D. Colloquium in advance of an intended graduation date.

S.J.D. candidates should generally expect to complete and submit their dissertation within three years of passing the oral examination. Dissertations based on substantial fieldwork or archival research, however, may take longer to complete.

A candidate's dissertation should make a substantial contribution to the existing scholarship in its chosen area. It will do so most commonly (a) by formulating a research problem that probes some aspect of the conceptual framework for thinking about an issue and investigating the problem systematically from this angle to construct an original argument, or (b) by developing a new approach to addressing a recognized and significant problem and showing how understanding of its dimensions is advanced by this methodology. The claim the dissertation advances should be clear, and the supporting arguments should be well structured and appropriately referenced. A dissertation that merely surveys, catalogs, or compiles relevant literature, legislation, case material, or the ideas of others will not satisfy the standard.

Prohibited Submissions: Commissioned studies, committee reports, writings of joint authorship, and academic work, papers, or dissertations written in or submitted as part of another degree program or academic requirement at another academic institution will not be accepted in fulfillment of the dissertation requirement. Academic work, papers, or dissertations written in or submitted as part of another degree program or academic requirement at Harvard will not be accepted in fulfillment of the dissertation requirement without permission from the Graduate Committee (and the corresponding department or program, as applicable).

Length of Dissertation: While there is no prescribed length, a majority of dissertations are approximately 250 to 300 pages (the equivalent of a book-length manuscript), but in certain areas such as law and economics the norm tends to be shorter. (Dissertations substantially exceeding 300 pages require permission from the principal supervisor.) Length is in part a function of the subject chosen and methodology and should be determined in consultation with the principal supervisor, subject to the final approval of the Graduate Committee.

Form of Dissertation: Depending on the nature of the project, the dissertation may be in the form of (a) a monograph; or (b) a series of at least three related essays connected with a comprehensive synthesizing essay separate from the introduction that draws on and establishes a general thesis supported by the other essays, and provides sufficient depth and context such that it could stand on its own. Projects that are historically, sociologically, or philosophically oriented are generally best served by a monographic form, but in other cases a series of related essays may be acceptable with the approval of the Graduate Committee.

Permission and Requirements for Multiple-Essay Submissions: To request permission to submit a dissertation in the form of at least three related essays in addition to a comprehensive synthesizing essay, candidates must submit a petition for the Graduate Committee's review. The petition should be incorporated in, or submitted together with, the prospectus. If a candidate with a project originally envisioned as a monograph later decides to petition for approval of a multiple-essay submission, the candidate may submit a "late petition" at that time, but in no event less than one year before the candidate's intended graduation date. Petitions submitted within a year prior to graduation will not be accepted.

NOTE: Inclusion of essays submitted for publication prior to the supervisor's approval of the prospectus is strongly discouraged.

Petition for Multiple-Essay Dissertation: Whether submitted with the prospectus or thereafter, a petition for a multiple-essay dissertation must:

- set forth the substance of the dissertation project as a whole
- explain why, in light of the nature and focus of the dissertation project and the norm for dissertations in the relevant discipline, a multiple-essay format is more appropriate than a monograph
- acknowledge the requirement to include a comprehensive synthesizing essay, separate from the introduction, that draws on and establishes a general thesis supported by the other essays
- set forth the general thesis of the synthesizing essay
- specify the details of publication and provide applicable citations for any of the essays that have been published or submitted for publication (as noted above, inclusion of essays submitted for publication prior to the supervisor's approval of the prospectus is strongly discouraged)
- be accompanied by a statement from the candidate's principal supervisor (a) supporting the multiple-essay format in light of the norm for dissertations in the relevant discipline; and (b) if applicable, providing a justification for inclusion of any essay submitted for publication prior to the supervisor's approval of the prospectus, which is strongly discouraged

A Late Petition **must also** set forth in detail the substance of the synthetic essay (or the candidate may submit a draft of the synthesizing essay).

Note: While such requests — when presented in a timely manner and in compliance with the above specifications — are generally granted, candidates should not assume that requests for multiple-essay submissions are automatically granted.

A. DISSERTATION DEFENSE COMMITTEE

The dissertation defense committee (hereafter the “defense committee”) is comprised of the candidate's principal supervisor and a second reader, who must be full-time Harvard Law School faculty members (although tenure is not required in the case of the second reader). The second reader will be selected by the candidate in consultation with the principal supervisor as soon as possible upon completion of the prospectus (see “Prospectus” on pages 18-19). If the candidate and the principal supervisor deem it useful, an additional reader (who need not be on the faculty of Harvard Law School) may be included on the defense committee. Once the second reader (or readers) has been identified, the candidate should report their name(s) to the Graduate Program.

B. FORMAT OF FINAL DISSERTATION

Manuscripts must be page-numbered and double-spaced, with a margin of 1½ or 1¾ inches on the left side of the page to allow for reader comments. While there is no predetermined format for the cover page, each candidate should check with that candidate's principal supervisor for specific requirements or preferences. At a minimum, the page should include the candidate's name, “S.J.D. Dissertation,” the dissertation title, the names of the members of the defense committee, and the date of submission.

Multiple-essay dissertations composed of one or more published articles can include the articles as published, but they must be paginated with a sequential numbering system to capture their inclusion in a unitary project and to facilitate library storage in a monographic form.

C. SUBMISSION OF DISSERTATION

Candidates are expected to submit drafts of dissertation chapters or essays to each member of the defense committee for timely comments, instead of waiting to complete a whole draft of the dissertation or until submitting an essay for publication.

Deadline for submission: The completed dissertation (or a request for an extension) must be submitted to the Graduate Program by January 15 of the fourth year of study and, for candidates who have received initial dissertation submission extensions, by January 15 of the fifth and sixth year, as applicable.

NOTE: If the dissertation is submitted around the winter holiday break and one or more members of the defense committee will be teaching during the January term, the evaluation period may take up to two months; *in such cases the dissertation must be submitted by no later than December 15 if the candidate wishes to graduate in May of the following year.*

Dissertations submitted after the expiration of this limit will be accepted only if approval for an extension has been obtained from the principal supervisor and the Committee on Graduate Studies (see “Extension of Dissertation Period” on page 25).

For avoidance of doubt, dissertations submitted in draft form or without introductions, conclusions, or (if applicable) synthesizing essays are not considered “completed dissertations.”

Please see “Degree Deadlines” on pages 24-25 for further information regarding deadlines and degree dates.

D. EVALUATION OF DISSERTATION

After submission of the completed dissertation to the Graduate Program (which will in turn circulate copies thereof to the principal supervisor and second reader or readers), the defense committee will provide an initial evaluation with written comments as to whether the dissertation needs (1) minimal revision, (2) significant revision, or (3) major rewriting, typically within a month after submission.

(For candidates with approved multiple-essay dissertations, the comments should also address the adequacy and quality of the synthesizing essay, in particular whether the synthesizing essay adequately draws on and establishes a general thesis supported by the other essays.)

If a dissertation needs only minimal revision, a date for the dissertation defense can be scheduled within the following two months, but in any event not later than six weeks before the intended graduation date. If a dissertation needs significant revision, the candidate will have up to six weeks to complete the necessary revisions and submit the revised document to the Graduate Program. If the defense committee deems the revisions to be satisfactory, the defense may then be scheduled within the following two or three weeks, but in any event not later than six weeks prior to the intended graduation date.

If a dissertation requires major rewriting, the candidate may need to spend one or more additional semesters to complete this work. In cases where such a candidate is approaching a completion deadline, the candidate will need to petition for an extension in order to spend one or more semesters to work on these revisions (see “Extension of Dissertation Period” on page 25 on how to apply for an extension). If the candidate is not eligible for another extension, the Graduate Committee will require the candidate to withdraw from the S.J.D. Program. (The Graduate Program staff will address logistical details regarding such withdrawal with the candidate at that time.) If the candidate subsequently completes the necessary revisions in a satisfactory manner, the candidate may then petition for readmission in order to carry out the dissertation defense, subject to the overall time limits set forth in “Compliance with Requirements” on page 28. In cases where a dissertation requires major rewriting, any member of the defense committee may refer the matter to the Graduate Committee.

E. ORAL DEFENSE OF DISSERTATION

Following completion of the dissertation, each candidate must pass an oral defense of the dissertation as a whole, which may include a discussion of publication possibilities. This examination is to be given by the dissertation defense committee and may, if warranted, include a representative of the Committee on Graduate Studies. Each member of the defense committee must complete and sign a report on the oral defense and submit it to the Graduate Program by the relevant due date (see “Degree Deadlines” on pages 24-25 for applicable deadlines).

NOTE: It is the candidate’s responsibility to schedule a time and location for the oral defense with the dissertation defense committee members within the necessary timeframe leading up to graduation. Once scheduled, the date must be reported to the Graduate Program at least two weeks in advance of the date of the defense.

Once the defense committee gives final approval to the dissertation and corrections, if any, are made, an electronic copy of the final dissertation must be submitted to the Graduate Program for electronic deposit with the Law School Library. At this time, a Library Authorization form must also be signed.

F. DEGREE DEADLINES

In order to determine whether to recommend to the law school faculty that a candidate be awarded the S.J.D. degree, the Graduate Committee must receive separate written reports from each of the principal supervisor and the second reader(s) evaluating the final dissertation, as well as a separate report of the oral defense. (While the oral defense report may be submitted jointly on behalf of the full defense committee, each dissertation reader must submit an independent written evaluation of the final dissertation.) These reports — as well as the final version of the approved dissertation (for electronic deposit with the HLS Library) — must be received by no later than September 15 to qualify for a November degree, January 15 to qualify for a March degree, or May 1 to qualify for a May degree. (Please note: Reports on the oral (general) examination, described on page 18, should already be a part of the candidate’s file.) The Committee on Graduate Studies will not consider recommendations from supervisors after the relevant dates listed on page 25.

S.J.D. Graduation Timelines. The following charts illustrate the applicable completion milestones leading up to each of the university’s key graduation dates:

| Intended Graduation: May | |
|--|-------------|
| Declare intended graduation date (no later than) | November 15 |
| Complete Second Colloquium (no later than) | November 15 |
| Submit dissertation to Graduate Program (no later than) | January 15* |
| Evaluation from Defense Committee to candidate (no later than) | February 15 |
| If necessary, revised dissertation to Defense Committee (no later than) | April 1 |
| Dissertation defense (no later than) | April 15 |
| Final Reports by Defense Committee to Graduate Program and all other deliverables from candidate to Graduate Program (no later than) | May 1 |

* December 15 if one or more members of the Defense Committee will be teaching during the January term

| Off-Cycle Graduations: | November | March |
|--|-----------------|--------------|
| Declare intended graduation date (no later than) | May 15 | September 15 |
| Complete Second Colloquium (no later than) | May 15 | September 15 |
| Submit dissertation to Graduate Program (no later than) | May 15 | September 15 |
| Evaluation from Defense Committee to candidate (no later than) | June 15 | October 15 |
| If necessary, revised dissertation to Defense Committee (no later than) | August 1 | December 1 |
| Dissertation defense (no later than) | September 1 | January 4 |
| Final Reports by Defense Committee to Graduate Program and all other deliverables from candidate to Graduate Program (no later than) | September 15 | January 15 |

G. EXTENSION OF DISSERTATION PERIOD

Extensions for completion of the S.J.D. dissertation beyond the fourth year of the program will be granted on a case-by-case basis pursuant to the procedure described in the next paragraph. Candidates seeking an extension beyond the fourth year of the program must request an extension no later than January 15 of the fourth year, and no later than January 15 of each subsequent year for which an extension is requested. Extensions will not be granted beyond 72 months from the end of the first year of S.J.D. candidacy.**

To apply for an extension, a candidate must submit the S.J.D. Extension Request Form (which is circulated to eligible students around December) to the Graduate Program by the January 15 deadline. The Graduate Program will then solicit the approval of the candidate's primary supervisor. Extension requests must be approved by the Committee on Graduate Studies. The results of the Committee's review are typically communicated to candidates by the end of March.

** The Graduate Committee may grant extensions of up to (but under no circumstances exceeding) 108 months from the end of the first year of S.J.D. residence to candidates pursuing second doctoral degrees provided: (1) the candidate has been pursuing a second doctoral degree concurrently with the S.J.D. candidacy, and (2) the candidate has completed the other doctoral degree within 72 months after the end of the first year of S.J.D. candidacy.

COMPLETING THE S.J.D. PROGRAM: AN ILLUSTRATIVE TIMETABLE (FOUR-YEAR PROGRAM)

Candidates must complete all course requirements during the first year of study (the required year in residence). Candidates must complete the oral examination by March 31 of the second year of study (see “The Oral (General) Examination” on page 18). The period for completion of the S.J.D. dissertation will be influenced by a number of factors, including whether field research is involved. An illustrative timetable follows.

FIRST YEAR

August:

Hold discussions with principal supervisor and orals committee members

September:

Assemble reading lists and consult with members of the orals committee; prepare study plan

October 15:

Submit draft study plan to Graduate Program

January 31:

Complete final revisions, if any, to the study plan; submit copy to Graduate Program

May:

Complete eight credits of course and seminar work; hold oral examination; orals committee sends oral examination report to Graduate Program

Note: Candidates should meet with and discuss their progress with their principal supervisors and orals committee members regularly throughout the year.

SECOND YEAR

June:

Begin research and writing; draft prospectus

September:

Present prospectus draft to principal supervisor; continue research and writing

November:

Finalize prospectus and obtain approval by principal supervisor (must be completed by December 15 of the second year of study); submit prospectus to the Graduate Program and schedule First Colloquium

Thereafter:

In conjunction with principal supervisor, identify and select second reader (must be a member of the HLS full-time faculty) for dissertation, ideally before the First Colloquium

Continue research and writing

Conduct first presentation of work at the S.J.D. Colloquium (must be completed no later than April 30 of the third year of study)

Note: Candidates should meet or consult with their principal supervisor at least every two months throughout the year.

THIRD YEAR

Continue research and writing; send draft chapters to principal supervisor and second reader

FOURTH YEAR

Note: The following timetable applies to May degree candidates; for November and March degrees, see “Degree Deadlines” on page 24.

October:

Conduct second presentation at the S.J.D. Colloquium

No later than January 15*:

Submit completed dissertation to the Graduate Program for distribution to defense committee

*December 15 if one or more members of the defense committee will be teaching during January term

No later than February 15:

Defense committee sends evaluation of dissertation to candidate; if only minor revisions are needed, may schedule defense at any time up to April 15

No later than April 1:

Submit revised dissertation in cases where significant revisions are required

No later than April 15:

Hold dissertation defense

May 1:

Defense committee submits final reports on dissertation and oral defense to the Graduate Program

Candidate provides electronic copy of completed dissertation to the Graduate Program

May:

Awarding of S.J.D. degree

Note: Candidates intending to finish the dissertation within 24 months of the end of the required residency period should follow the “Fourth Year” schedule during their third year.

COMPLIANCE WITH REQUIREMENTS

S.J.D. candidates who fail to meet or consult periodically with their supervisors, fail to timely complete milestones or degree requirements or to timely obtain required program extensions, fail to pay all fees each year, or who otherwise violate residency or other requirements will be withdrawn from the S.J.D. program. Exceptions may be made in limited cases for students with special circumstances.

Candidates who have not completed the requirements for the degree within 72 months from the end of the first year of S.J.D. candidacy may apply for readmission to register for purposes of defending the dissertation and receiving the degree within 24 months of the effective date of withdrawal, provided that their dissertation has been satisfactorily completed by that time and the candidate’s principal supervisor is willing and able to supervise the final work.

RESIDENCY STATUS

A. DEFINITIONS

Beyond the mandatory first year in residence, four different enrollment statuses are available to S.J.D. students: Resident, Traveling Scholar, Leave of Absence, and Enrolled Full-Time at Another Harvard School. The latter three categories are collectively referred to as “non-resident.”

- **Resident Students** are those students who, for the entire academic year or semester in question, are physically resident in the Cambridge area and are engaged primarily in their S.J.D. studies. Such students have full access to Harvard’s resources and facilities, including residence halls and Harvard-owned housing, and are eligible for Harvard visa sponsorship. Only Resident students are eligible for such benefits as Graduate Program-sponsored fellowships and conference funding (see page 30-31). All first-year S.J.D. students must register for Resident status. Students who declare resident status are expected to be present in the Cambridge area for the duration of the semester. Students in residence are expected to spend no more than 2 weeks (in the aggregate) away from campus during a semester without prior permission. Students who do not meet the residence requirement will be reclassified as traveling scholars and financial aid will be rescinded. Note that the fall 2025 semester begins on Tuesday, September 2nd.
- **Traveling Scholars** are those students who are physically located outside of the Cambridge area but are engaged primarily in their S.J.D. studies. Such students have full access to Harvard’s online resources and access to Harvard’s library facilities during their visits to campus and are also eligible for Harvard visa sponsorship. Traveling Scholars are not eligible for Graduate Program-sponsored fellowships or conference funding and are eligible for financial aid only if funds are still available after the needs of the Resident Students have been met.
- **Leave of Absence Students** are those students who are devoting less than half of their time to their S.J.D. studies, regardless of their physical location. Such students retain their Harvard e-mail accounts only; they do not have access to Harvard’s other resources and are not eligible for Harvard visa sponsorship, conference funding, Graduate Program financial aid, or Graduate Program-sponsored fellowships. Students in this category with outstanding student loans may have to begin repayment.

- **Students Enrolled Full-Time at Another Harvard School** will retain their Harvard Law School e-mail accounts, but are not eligible for Graduate Program financial aid, conference funding, or Graduate Program-sponsored fellowships. Access to other Harvard resources (including library privileges and visa sponsorship) will be available through the Harvard school in which they are enrolled full-time.

Note: Students must update their residence status each summer (even if it will not be changing) and may change their status on a semester-by-semester basis, but not more frequently.

B. REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

The Registrar's Office administers an online registration check-in process that is available for all S.J.D. candidates who plan to be in residence during fall 2025. This process will be available online by early August 2025. All continuing S.J.D. students who will be in residence during 2025-2026 must complete this online registration process by no later than September 2, 2025. S.J.D. students will receive an e-mail in August from the Graduate Program with detailed information on how to complete the online registration/check-in process. Please note that all new S.J.D. students must complete this online registration process by September 2, 2025. First-year S.J.D. students are also required to check in with the Graduate Program in person by appointment; appointment requests may be sent to gpquery@law.harvard.edu.

In order to register for Resident status, continuing S.J.D. students should also obtain financial clearance from the Graduate Program by 4 p.m. on September 2, 2025. Otherwise, their Resident status will be suspended until they complete their financial clearance.

All S.J.D. students who will not be in residence during the 2025-2026 academic year must have completed the Application for Non-Resident S.J.D. Status and submitted it to the Graduate Program no later than June 20, 2025. This form indicates, among other things, the student's planned activities for the coming academic year, where the student expects to be physically located, and the status for which the student plans to register (e.g., Traveling Scholar or Leave of Absence). In order to be valid, the form must be signed by the student's principal supervisor; in the case of students without U.S. citizenship, permanent residency, or asylum status who wish to be non-resident, the form must also be signed by a representative of the Harvard International Office. Failure to submit a properly completed form by the applicable deadline may result in the student being placed on Leave of Absence status by default.

MISCELLANEOUS

A. LL.M. WAIVER

Current Harvard LL.M. students applying to the S.J.D. program are permitted to "waive" the LL.M. degree prior to graduation. The LL.M. waiver option is not available to those who have already received their LL.M. degrees from Harvard when applying to the S.J.D. program.

Provided they have fulfilled the requirements for the LL.M. degree, an applicant who waives the LL.M. degree but does not enroll in the S.J.D. Program will receive the LL.M. degree at the University's next regularly scheduled date for the awarding of degrees in early November. Applicants who are not admitted to the program and wish to reapply for admission in the next application cycle may extend the LL.M. waiver for up to one additional year.

An applicant who waives the LL.M. degree and enrolls in the S.J.D. program will not be awarded the LL.M. degree. The waiver is permanent and irrevocable. An S.J.D. candidate who waived the LL.M. degree may subsequently elect to receive the LL.M. degree only by withdrawing from the S.J.D. program.

An S.J.D. candidate who has waived the LL.M. degree will be permitted to count the tuition paid for the 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 the student receives. 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. degree.

The election to waive the LL.M. degree has no effect on admissions decisions or the academic requirements for the S.J.D. degree. Waiving the LL.M. degree does, however, preclude the applicant from taking courses for credit during the 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 supervisor supports the request on academic grounds.)

S.J.D. students who have waived their Harvard LL.M. degrees should reflect their LL.M. studies on their résumés and in similar contexts by language such as the following: "Harvard Law School LL.M. Program [date] (requirements completed, degree waived)." Under no circumstances should they represent themselves as having actually received the LL.M. degree.

B. GRADUATE PROGRAM ADVISORS AND COORDINATORS

The Graduate Program generally expects to hire Advisor and Coordinator positions such as LL.M. Advisor, Writing Workshop Advisor, Law Teaching Colloquium Coordinator, and the like. Selections for these positions are made based on an application process held in the spring of each academic year. In general, the Graduate Program expects to have application materials for these positions available in April or May; questions should be directed to gpacademics@law.harvard.edu.

C. CONFERENCE AND OUTSIDE EXAMINER FUNDING

S.J.D. students who are in residence and who have completed the oral exam are eligible for limited funding to cover certain expenses related to their studies. First, resident S.J.D. students may apply for a stipend of up to \$750 per academic year for expenses incurred in order to speak at academic conferences outside of the Boston area (provided that such travel is permissible under Harvard policies). Students must request eligibility through the S.J.D. Conference Stipend Request Form at hls.harvard.edu/apply-for-s-j-d-conference-travel-funding/. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis; submission of a stipend request does not guarantee approval.

In order to be eligible for this stipend:

1. the travel must be for a conference that takes place between June 1 and May 31 in an academic year in which the student is in residence (for avoidance of doubt, students attending a conference in June, July, or August must be in residence for the following fall term, and any funding received for such conference will be applied to the annual conference funding limit for the following academic year)
2. the student must have completed the oral examination
3. the student must not be eligible to receive funding from other sources to cover these expenses

4. the student must seek written confirmation of eligibility from the Graduate Program at least three weeks in advance of the planned travel
5. the student must submit an Assumption of Risk form to the Graduate Program at least three weeks in advance of the planned travel (see hls.harvard.edu/ils/opportunities-abroad/international-travel-procedures/assumption-of-risk-forms/)
6. the student must comply with all HLS and university travel policies in effect at the time of travel, including completing all HLS International Travel Procedures no later than two weeks before commencing travel (see hls.harvard.edu/ils/opportunities-abroad/international-travel-procedures/)
7. the student must submit the requisite post-travel paperwork, along with receipts, to the Graduate Program no later than three weeks after the applicable conference date

NOTE: Receipts submitted more than three weeks after the applicable conference date will not be processed.

Second, the Graduate Program will reimburse orals and defense committee members who are affiliated with an academic institution outside the Boston area up to \$500 for expenses incurred for travel to Cambridge for the student's oral examination or dissertation defense, as appropriate, if the examiner's own academic institution will not bear the cost of such travel. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted at least three weeks in advance of the intended travel.

Reimbursement is made after the fact upon presentation of actual receipts and completion of forms required by Harvard University. Please note that requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and that a request does not guarantee reimbursement of travel expenses for conference attendance or for outside examiners.

D. DEDICATED WORK SPACE

Provided the Harvard Law School campus is open for normal campus activities, dedicated work space will be made available to resident S.J.D. candidates based on availability. If demand for work space exceeds capacity, priority will be given to students in their first three years of the S.J.D. program. Nonresident S.J.D. candidates are not eligible for work space.

Course Registration and Course Changes

LL.M. students have submitted course preferences for 2025-2026 through a two-phase process that took place over the summer. Preliminary schedules, reflecting the courses in which each student is enrolled, as well as initial waitlist information, were sent to students by email. During Orientation, LL.M. students will review their course schedules and talk about changes in individual meetings with their LL.M. Advisors. All students have the opportunity to finalize their schedules during periods for Add/Drop and Waitlist Processing held throughout the academic year (see “Add/Drop and Waitlist Processing” on page 34).

Course Counseling Sessions: Every LL.M. student has been assigned an LL.M. Advisor. LL.M. students will have individual and group meetings with their LL.M. Advisors. Counseling sessions will be held throughout Orientation and available during the entire academic year. Students sign up for their first course counseling appointments through an online process; the instructions for signing up were issued by email in mid-August. Further consultations are available by appointment. LL.M. Advisors will continue to guide students in their advising groups throughout the academic year, plan social events in the fall and spring terms, and remain available for questions and consultations.

Credit Maximums and Schedule Changes: LL.M. students may not register for more than 28 credits over the course of the academic year (including the one credit assigned for completion of the portion of the Legal Research, Writing and Analysis course that takes place during Orientation; this one credit is assigned after the end of Orientation); most students will not register for more than 24 credits. LL.M. students who are seriously considering enrolling for 28 credits are encouraged to seek guidance on workload balancing and potential opportunity costs. If a student is enrolled for the 28-credit maximum and wishes to add a course to their schedule or needs to register for a paper worth one or two credits, that student must first drop one or more course(s).

Any alteration is subject to course availability. Please note that extensive alteration of one’s schedule may result in lost or missed class time.

All course changes made during the designated Add/Drop and Waitlist Processing periods (see page 34) must be made in HELIOS. Detailed instructions on how to view waitlists and how to accomplish these changes using HELIOS will be provided during Orientation.

THE COMPONENTS OF COURSE REGISTRATION

During Orientation, information will be provided on the following technical components of registering for law school courses:

- Open Courses
- Waitlisted and Oversubscribed Courses
- Add/Drop and Waitlist Processing
- Courses Requiring Permission

Students will refer to this information throughout the academic year. (Please also see “Cross-Registration” on pages 34-35).

A. OPEN COURSES

Open courses are those courses that have not yet been filled and can be added without waitlisting or instructor permission. In some cases, there may be a large number of spaces available, while in other cases there may be only very few spaces available. It should be noted that an “Open” course can quickly become a “Waitlisted” course once students enroll in any available spaces. Further information about access to and parameters for Open courses in HELIOS, the law school’s student information and registration system, will be provided during Orientation.

B. WAITLISTED AND OVERSUBSCRIBED COURSES

Courses that have been filled, and that do not require instructor permission to enroll, will have waitlists. Waitlist size varies by course. The most popular courses will typically have the fewest spaces available and/or the longest waitlists, and are referred to as “Oversubscribed.” Students who are enrolled in an oversubscribed course and decide to drop it are strongly encouraged to do so by no later than the end of the day after the first meeting of the class. Students should also check individual course descriptions for special deadlines and requirements.

C. WAITLIST PROCESS

The process for adding your name to a waitlist, removing your name from a waitlist, or enrolling in a course from a waitlist will be described in detail during Orientation, and will be clarified in separate documentation. If your name is on a waitlist, it will remain there, in priority order, unless and until a space in the course or seminar becomes available.

During designated Waitlist Processing periods (see “Add/ Drop and Waitlist Processing” on page 34), seats in courses with waitlists will be offered to students as space becomes available. Students who are offered a space in a waitlisted course will be given a fixed time period in which to add the course to their schedules. **Students who fail to respond during that specified time frame, after having been notified that the space is available, will lose their chance to add the course and will be dropped from the waitlist. Occasionally, students have reported that waitlist offers were mistakenly caught as spam. Therefore, students should routinely check the “spam” folders on their HLS e-mail accounts to help ensure that they do not miss any waitlist offers that have been issued.**

D. COURSES REQUIRING PERMISSION

Courses requiring instructor permission for enrollment may be added only after the student registering for the course obtains approval (in the form of an e-mail or other written permission) from the course instructor. In all cases, students should carefully review course descriptions to comply with all prerequisites as well as any restrictions.

ADD/DROP AND WAITLIST PROCESSING

The Add/Drop/Waitlist period for LL.M. students began on August 18, 2025 at 3:30 p.m. EDT (UTC/GMT-4). Students will use HELIOS to:

- add themselves to courses that have not yet been filled
- add themselves to waitlists for courses that have already been filled
- add themselves to courses with waitlists after they receive an enrollment offer
- drop themselves from waitlists for courses in which they are no longer interested
- drop themselves from courses they no longer wish to take

Waitlist Processing — the process by which students on waitlists may be offered the chance to enroll in a particular waitlisted course if a seat becomes available — for all fall, winter, and spring courses began on August 18, 2025 and continues until the Add/Drop deadline for each respective term (listed below). As soon as a space in a course becomes available, an offer will be issued to the next person on the waitlist. Students offered a place in a waitlisted course typically will have 15 hours from when the offer is issued to accept. Any student who does not respond within this 15-hour window will be completely removed from the waitlist for the course.

Students may continue to make course schedule changes in HELIOS until the following deadlines, subject to publicized maintenance periods during which the system will be unavailable:

- **September 8, 2025 at 11:59 p.m.:** last day for Waitlist Processing for and changes to fall, fall-winter, and fall-spring courses. Add/Drop and Waitlist Processing for winter and spring term courses continue.
- **January 5, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.:** last day for Waitlist Processing for and changes to winter and winter-spring courses. Add/Drop and Waitlist Processing for spring term courses continue.
- **January 30, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.:** last day for Waitlist Processing for and changes to spring term courses.

CROSS-REGISTRATION

LL.M. students may petition to cross-register for graduate-level courses outside the law school. Cross-registration petitions are subject to review by the Committee on Graduate Studies and the prior approval of the [Graduate Program staff](#) (acting on the Committee's behalf). LL.M. students may cross-register for up to six law school credits in approved graduate-level cross-registered courses during the LL.M. year. Approved cross-registration credits count towards the credit requirements for the LL.M. degree once the student obtains a passing grade as determined by the school or department in which the course or seminar is taken. No law school credit is awarded for language, field, or studio courses, or courses not reasonably related to a program of law study.

Students are normally granted approval to take graduate-level courses in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (in fields such as anthropology, economics, government, history, and philosophy), the Kennedy School of Government, the Business School, the School of Education, other divisions of the university, the Fletcher School at Tufts, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Cross-registration information, including each relevant school's cross-registration petition and enrollment periods, can be found at: hls.harvard.edu/academics/curriculum/cross-registration-at-harvard-law-school/.

DEADLINES FOR COURSE CHANGES

If you do not drop a course from which you intended to withdraw within the specified Add/Drop and Waitlist Processing periods (i.e., by the last day of the Add/Drop period for a particular term), a designated notation of WD (Withdrawn After Deadline) will appear on your permanent transcript in the “grade” section. It is therefore very important that you pay close attention to deadlines (see page 34) and carefully review your online academic schedule to verify your course enrollment status.

Policies

REGISTRATION AND ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

All LL.M. degree candidates must register for nine to 10 credits in the fall term, eight to 10 credits in the spring term, and at least two credits in the winter term. All degree candidates must also regularly attend all courses and seminars in which they are registered. Failure to register for any term or attend classes on a regular basis will preclude eligibility for graduation. In some cases, specific credit minimums may apply for visa purposes. Questions should be directed to the Graduate Program. All LL.M. candidates are required to remain in residence during each term.

S.J.D. candidates in residence must follow check-in and financial clearance procedures stipulated by the Registrar's Office and the Graduate Program. All first-year candidates must regularly attend all courses and seminars taken during the first year.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Regular attendance at classes and participation in class work are expected of all students. In cases of substantial delinquency in attendance, the law school may, after written warning, treat students as having withdrawn from the course, seminar, or reading group in question. Students who believe they need to miss classes for an extended period of time must speak with the [Assistant Dean for the Graduate Program and International Legal Studies](#), who can assist with such situations, help ensure that students comply with the law school's attendance policy and related academic policies, and direct students to applicable resources as necessary. In no event may students receive credit for courses or seminars with meeting times that overlap in whole or in part.

Under Massachusetts law, special circumstances apply to religious observances. Pursuant to the requirements of the law set forth in Chapter 151C, Section 2B of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a copy of this regulation is included in full here:

Any student in an educational or vocational training institution, other than a religious or denominational educational or vocational training institution, who is unable, because of his religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination or study or work requirement and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up such examination, study, or work requirement which he may have missed because of such absence on any particular day; provided, however, that such makeup examination or work shall not create an unreasonable burden upon such school. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available to the said student such opportunity. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of his availing himself of the provisions of this section.

COURSE SELECTION AND ACADEMIC EVALUATION

Subject to limited exceptions, graduate students are eligible to enroll in most courses and seminars at the law school. Admission to courses and seminars requiring special permission from the instructor is expected to be based on similar criteria as those applied to J.D. students.

Academic performance by graduate students in courses and seminars and on written work will be evaluated on the same basis as performance by J.D. students at the law school. In addition, graduate students are required to meet all academic requirements of the Graduate Program.

EXAMINATIONS

Students are reminded that exchange of information, collaboration, or communication of any kind during an examination is not permitted at the law school. Consequences for such collaboration may range from disallowance of the examination to suspension or expulsion from the law school.

Students who arrive late for their exams will not receive compensatory time to complete their exams. Late exam cases (including late arrivals to an in-class exam) will be referred to the Administrative Board.

Students who fail to appear for a scheduled exam for a course in which they are enrolled may be subject to disciplinary action by Harvard Law School.

More complete information regarding exam policies is found in the “Examinations” section of the Harvard Law School Handbook of Academic Policies 2025-2026 and in the law school’s Standing Policies of the Administrative Board Concerning Exam Administration.

LL.M. WRITTEN WORK DEADLINES

Deadlines for registering for and submitting a final copy of the paper an LL.M. student writes in satisfaction of the Written Work Requirement are listed in the “Written Work Registration Deadlines” and “Deadlines for Submission of Law School Work” sections of the Harvard Law School Handbook of Academic Policies 2025-2026.

GRADES AND DEGREE COMPLETION

All Harvard Law School academic work — with the exception of specified courses offered on a credit/fail basis — will be graded Honors, Pass, Low Pass, or Fail (H, P, LP, or F).

In order to be eligible for the LL.M. degree, LL.M. candidates must complete at least 23 credits of work (including course work and written work) graded Low Pass (LP) or higher; of those 23 credits, no fewer than three must be graded Pass (P) or higher.

Students failing to meet minimum grade requirements may be allowed, by decision of the Graduate Committee, to undertake substitute work, take a different examination in the same course, or retake courses within the next academic year following the end of their LL.M. year. All additional work must be completed no later than 12 months after the end of the year in which the student matriculated in the LL.M. program. Outside of the foregoing circumstance, however, all work must be completed within a single academic year consistent with the fact that the LL.M. is a single academic year degree program.

LL.M. students must complete degree requirements for the LL.M. within 36 months of first matriculating at the law school. A leave of absence will not extend the period for completing degree requirements. Further information on Leaves and Withdrawals is found in the applicable section of the Harvard Law School Handbook of Academic Policies 2025-2026, herein incorporated by reference.

S.J.D. candidates taking courses for credit must receive a minimum grade of Pass (P) in any given course offered at Harvard Law School.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is, in brief, the using of the ideas or words of another as one's own. In the United States, rules relating to plagiarism are very strict, and may not have exact counterparts in some other countries. The issue is essentially one of academic and intellectual honesty.

Specifically, all work submitted by a student for any academic or nonacademic exercise is expected to be the student's own work. In the preparation of their work, students should always take great care to distinguish their own ideas and knowledge from information derived from sources. The term "sources" includes not only published or computer-accessed primary and secondary material, but also information and opinions gained directly from other people.

The responsibility for learning the proper forms of citation lies with the individual student. Quotations must be properly placed within quotation marks and must be fully cited. In addition, all paraphrased material must be completely acknowledged. Whenever ideas or facts are derived from a student's reading and research, the sources must be indicated. In case of doubt, students should acknowledge, in the text or in a footnote, the source of an idea or the source of language other than their own. Even where a source is cited, lengthy paraphrasing should be avoided where there would be ambiguity about how much of the text actually incorporates the ideas of others.

In addition, the amount of collaboration with others that is permitted in the completion of work can vary, depending upon the policy set by the head of the course or the supervisor of a particular exercise. Students should assume that collaboration in the completion of work is prohibited unless explicitly permitted, and students should acknowledge any collaboration and its extent in all submitted work.

Students who are in any doubt about the preparation of their work should consult the appropriate instructor, supervisor, or administrator before it is prepared or submitted. Students who submit work that is not their own without clear attribution of all sources, even if the omission is inadvertent, will be subject to disciplinary action. Several law school students have been cited for plagiarism in recent years.

The cases described below should be viewed as illustrative only. Actual practices that may constitute plagiarism may differ, and actual penalties imposed may be more or less severe than those described here:

- A student who had plagiarized through paraphrasing the ideas of another throughout most of a seminar paper was suspended for one semester. The student argued that the standards applied to acknowledging sources in this country were far more stringent than those applied in the student's own country, and therefore the plagiarism was accidental. Although the student's argument may have been factually true, the Administrative Board found that the student had in fact plagiarized and that this could not and would not be tolerated. At the time of the suspension the student was completing the spring semester of the LL.M. program. The student received no credit for the entire semester. Under the terms of the suspension, this student had to re-apply to the LL.M. program in order to regain admission. The readmission was denied.
- A student submitted a short paper that consisted entirely of material taken from a published article by another author. The material was not placed in quotation marks, nor was the article cited. Although the paper was one of several short, ungraded papers submitted in that course, the student received no credit for the course and was suspended for a semester.

- A student had graduated with the LL.M. degree. In time, it was brought to the attention of the student's former supervisor that the student's LL.M. paper had been plagiarized. The student's degree was rescinded.

Financial

STUDENT ACCOUNTS AND EXPENSES

Student account notices for the 2025-2026 academic year were sent by the Harvard University Student Accounts Office to students at their Harvard Law School email addresses in July. For LL.M. students, the charges on their account include the following items:

- Tuition
- Student Health Services fees and Student Health Insurance Plan fees
- Activities fee
- Residence hall (fall semester fee) or first months' Harvard University Housing rent (if any), together with any associated insurance and/or meal plan charges

For 2025-2026, tuition and mandatory fees for the whole year (as well as rent, if any, due for fall residence hall or affiliated housing) must be paid in full before LL.M. students will be permitted to register for the fall semester. LL.M. students will also be responsible for their spring semester residence hall fee or monthly Harvard University Housing rent when it is billed. S.J.D. students are billed by semester.

After the initial account notice, students will receive periodic emails when charges, credits, or payments are posted to their account. No account notices will be sent if the student's account has a zero balance and there is no activity for the applicable period. It is the student's responsibility to pay any outstanding balances by the due date and to keep their account current. **No diploma will be awarded to any student who has failed to pay all student account charges by the date specially established for graduating students.**

SPONSORED BILLING

Students who have a sponsoring organization that will be paying Harvard University directly for all or part of the student's tuition and fees must complete and submit the Third-Party Billing Form (available on the Admitted Students website). The student's sponsor will receive a separate billing statement and payment instructions from Harvard University's Third-Party Billing Office. Students are responsible for paying the items on their student accounts that the sponsor will not be paying. In addition, if the student's sponsor fails to pay the agreed-upon amount, the student is responsible for paying all charges remaining on the student's account before the end of the academic year. Third-Party Billing Forms should be sent to:

Graduate Program Financial Aid
Harvard Law School
Graduate Program, WCC 5005
1585 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
Email: GPFinAid@law.harvard.edu

FINANCIAL AID CREDITS

Students who have accepted a scholarship and/or loan from the Graduate Program or the Harvard University Committee on General Scholarships may deduct the amount of any such financial aid when paying their student bill, unless this amount is already reflected on the student account under the heading “Anticipated Aid.”

Note: Students who have accepted financial aid from any non-Harvard sources may not deduct any part of such aid from their amounts due (unless the financial aid will be paid directly to Harvard by a sponsor who has submitted a Third-Party Billing Form; please see information on sponsor payments on page 39).

Each student who accepts a student loan as part of their financial aid package must attend a loan information session during Orientation. International students with student loans may also need to present their passports, visa documents, and local identity cards (e.g., driver’s license or national identity card) to comply with verification requirements.

HEALTH INSURANCE AND DENTAL INSURANCE

All registered students are automatically enrolled in the University Health Service Plan. The total fee, which includes access to services provided by the University Health Clinic, Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurance coverage, and prescription drug coverage, is \$6,108 for the 2025-2026 academic year.

The Health Services fee is mandatory and cannot be waived by any student in 2025-2026. The Massachusetts Division of Health Care Finance and Policy has issued regulations that set the minimum standards for a student health insurance program. To waive participation in the Harvard-sponsored Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurance plan, students located in the Cambridge area must show that you have alternative health insurance that is comparable to these minimum standards (and foreign insurance typically does not satisfy this requirement). Further information regarding these standards and waiver eligibility is available at: hushp.harvard.edu/waiver-eligibility-application-process/. To apply for a waiver, please carefully review all information and follow the instructions available at the foregoing link.

Insurance coverage for a spouse and other dependents is also available if you specifically apply for such coverage within the open enrollment period (i.e., before August 31, 2025 for the fall term, and before February 28, 2026 for the spring term). For more information and for the applicable enrollment forms, please visit: hushp.harvard.edu/student-dependents. Enrollment forms for dependents are also available at: at the Health Clinic located in the Smith Campus Center, 75 Mt. Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

PAYMENT OF STUDENT ACCOUNTS

All students are expected to pay amounts due on their student accounts on a timely basis. No diploma will be awarded to any student with an outstanding balance. In some cases, the actual degree will be withheld until the balance is paid in full.

Any student who leaves the university with an amount due on the student account that is unpaid for 60 days or more may be subject to collection activities. The costs associated with collecting an unpaid account will be added to the student’s outstanding debt and must be paid in full.

Student bills may be paid online or by money order, check, Convera, CIBC, or Flywire, but not by cash or credit card. All payments are to be made in U.S. currency. Checks must be drawn on a U.S. bank (or a bank with a U.S. branch indicated on the check) and made out to “Harvard University,” with your name and Harvard student identification (“HUID”) number clearly written on the check.

For more information about the acceptable forms of payment, please visit sfs.harvard.edu/methods-payment.

Harvard University accepts international wire transfers through Convera, CIBC, and Flywire. Each of Convera, CIBC, and Flywire offers various payment methods, a wide range of international currency options, competitive exchange rates, and the convenience of paying through a local bank. There are no transaction fees from Harvard University’s bank, though your bank may charge a fee. Links to the Convera, CIBC, and Flywire payment pages for Harvard University are under “International Wire Transfers” at sfs.harvard.edu/methods-payment.

IMPORTANT TAX INFORMATION FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

If you are a foreign student and you receive a scholarship from a U.S. source, you may be subject to a 14% withholding of U.S. federal income tax on the amount of your scholarship that exceeds tuition and mandatory fees. However, if you come from a country that has a tax treaty with the United States, you may be exempt from such tax withholding. (Note that tax withholding is not necessarily the amount of tax you owe — even if tax is withheld, you may not actually owe tax and may receive a refund and, conversely, even if tax is not withheld, you may actually owe tax when you file your tax return.)

For more information on tax withholding for foreign students, please visit: sfs.harvard.edu/information-foreign-students and <https://www.hio.harvard.edu/general-tax-information>. The Harvard University Financial Services (UFS) Office helps international students determine their tax residency status and apply for tax treaty benefits. Please contact the UFS at FAD_IPTC@harvard.edu with any questions about tax residency or tax treaties. Please note that although a tax treaty may exempt your scholarship (and/or earnings, if any) from tax, you are still required to file an income tax return (report). (You will receive more information about this from the Harvard International Office.)

General

LOGISTICS

Law School Registration

All students must complete certain mandatory administrative clearance procedures before they can register as Harvard Law School degree candidates. The Graduate Program will provide further information about this process to LL.M. and S.J.D. students. Students are also required to update their address and emergency contact information online in HELIOS by no later than August 20, 2025.

Upper-year S.J.D. candidates must complete the registration procedures described on page 29.

Late registration will not be permitted, except in extreme cases and only with permission of the Graduate Program.

A. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CLEARANCE

International students must register with the Harvard International Office (HIO) immediately after arriving at Harvard, and will not be permitted to register at HLS until they have received clearance from the HIO. For the 2025-2026 academic year, the HIO registration process will take place online. To register, students must complete the HIO Registration Form (hio.harvard.edu/hio-registration-form).

B. FINANCIAL CLEARANCE

Students who are not current in their student account payments will not be allowed to enroll.

C. HEALTH SERVICES CLEARANCE

New graduate students must submit the required medical forms and immunization records and receive approval from the Health Services Office in order to maintain their enrollment at the law school.

D. OTHER OUTSTANDING CONDITIONS

Students must also satisfy any outstanding admissions condition(s), acknowledge the Harvard University Financial Responsibility Agreement, and complete all required modules and trainings, including Zero-L.

Social Security Number

International students intending to work in the United States may need a Social Security Number (“SSN”). To apply for an SSN, students may need to present evidence of work authorization as well as certain other documents, depending on the student’s visa type (F-1 or J-1). For more information, please visit: hio.harvard.edu/social-security-numbers.

Books and Assignments

Casebooks may be purchased in the Textbook Annex of the Harvard Cooperative Society (The Coop) in Harvard Square and at the Law School Coop located in Wasserstein Hall. The Coop offers memberships for a one-dollar fee; you may also apply for a Coop charge card. Please see the Coop website at: store.thecoop.com.

Some used casebooks are available at The Coop, at the Harvard Bookstore (1256 Massachusetts Avenue), and at other bookstores in Harvard Square, but be sure to get the correct editions. These used textbooks may often be purchased at substantial savings.

Do not buy course books until you are certain of your schedule. Photocopied materials, which are used in some courses and seminars, are available at the law school Copy Center, but only to students who are officially enrolled in those courses. The Copy Center is situated in the basement of Wasserstein Hall. Book lists and reading assignments for the first classes of the year will be available online in late August, prior to the start of classes. Please consult these assignment listings as you complete your course selection.

Important: All students are expected to have read the assigned materials and to come to the first class prepared to discuss those readings.

Canvas

Canvas is Harvard Law School's web-based learning management system. Each student has a personalized Canvas dashboard that displays information directly pertaining to that student and the courses in which the student is enrolled. Canvas also displays regular announcements and useful information of a general nature.

Students can log in to Canvas by entering their HarvardKey and password at: canvas.harvard.edu (HarvardKey login required).

Advising and Mentoring

Graduate Program students can take advantage of a robust network of advising and mentorship resources. Each LL.M. student is matched with an experienced alum, typically a student in the S.J.D. program, who provides individualized course counseling, conducts small group meetings, organizes occasional social events, and serves as a guide throughout the year. In addition, HLS faculty members offer special advising sessions and other events specifically for LL.M. students, including an advising panel during Orientation, topical “lunch” talks, casual discussions, and more. As well, students receive regular advice and support from faculty, from senior Graduate Program staff members, and from the network of S.J.D. students who serve in various advising and coordinator roles (see page 3).

Reporting Change of Address

Please report any change of residential address to the Graduate Program and to the Harvard Law School Registrar's Office. In addition, **all non-U.S. citizens** (including U.S. permanent residents) **are required to report their current address to the government. *Any change of residential address must be reported within 10 days.***

For non-U.S. citizens, there are three different reporting procedures, depending on visa type and country of origin or citizenship. The process is not complicated, and the majority of Harvard-sponsored foreign students will be able to use the Harvard International Office's online address reporting feature at: hio.harvard.edu/report-change-address.

Temporary Travel Abroad

Information about Harvard Law School's guidance on university-related international travel can be found at hls.harvard.edu/ils/opportunities-abroad/international-travel-procedures/.

ON AND AROUND CAMPUS

Research Programs and Centers

Graduate students are encouraged to participate in the activities and events of the law school's various research and regional studies programs. Specialized programs offer opportunities to study and work on individual or group projects in conjunction with Harvard researchers and scholars. These programs also bring together individuals with the same or common interests, providing an invaluable resource and enriching students' experience at the law school. For a listing of research programs and centers, please refer to: hls.harvard.edu/research-programs-centers.

Student Organizations and Journals

There are many voluntary student organizations at the law school, all of which will be soliciting members during the early weeks of the academic year. A Student Activities and Journals Fair will be held in September.

Many graduate students are also involved with the publication of the Harvard International Law Journal. One of many student-run journals at the law school, the International Law Journal features scholarly articles on topics in international law as well as student-written notes and book reviews. For more information on student organizations and journals, please visit: hls.harvard.edu/student-life/office-of-community-engagement-equity-and-belonging/student-orgs/ and hls.harvard.edu/student-life/office-of-community-engagement-equity-and-belonging/student-journals/

Thefts

Each year a number of thefts of student property and law school property are reported. Students should be sure to lock their room or office even if leaving it for only a short time. Students should not leave valuables, including laptops, books, and papers, unattended anywhere in the law school at any time. Wallets left in the inside pockets of coats hanging on the backs of chairs or on coat racks are often reported stolen. If you have a bicycle, use a secure method for locking it. Many students recommend using a lock referred to as a "U-Lock."

Students are strongly encouraged to register their bicycles and laptops with the Harvard University Police Department. Registration, which can be done online, serves as a deterrent to theft and can help in the recovery of stolen property. For more information, visit the HUPD website at: hupd.harvard.edu/bicycle-registration or hupd.harvard.edu/laptop-theft-prevention.

Lockers

Graduate students who are not living in the law school residence halls may obtain a locker in the basement corridors for their books, coats, etc. The number of lockers, however, is limited; lockers are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. Initial locker assignments will be issued by e-mail in late August for those who submitted online applications. Students wishing to apply for a locker after the fall term begins should e-mail dos@law.harvard.edu.

The Graduate Program Lounge

The Graduate Program Lounge, Wasserstein 5053, is available to Graduate Program students during normal building hours. Scheduled use of the room for group functions, such as Writing Workshop meetings, may be available by appointment through the Graduate Program in Wasserstein 5005; these arrangements must be made at least one week in advance. The Lounge may not be used for private meetings unless permission is granted by the Graduate Program.

Meals

The Caspersen Student Center will begin its regular operating schedule of three meals a day by the start of classes in early September.

STAYING CONNECTED

E-Mail

The Graduate Program, as well as other administrative offices throughout the law school and the university, will use students' Harvard Law School e-mail address as the primary means of communication. It is important that students check their HLS e-mail regularly for important updates, announcements and alerts.

Students may continue to use their HLS student email accounts for 365 days after they graduate, at which time access will no longer be available. As your class nears graduation, you will receive a reminder that your account will be available for another year together with tools that will enable you to transfer data to other email accounts (such as a personal Gmail account). Email forwarding for alumni is available through the Harvard University Alumni & Development Services. For more information, visit alumni.harvard.edu/help/email-forwarding.

E-Mail Listservs

The Graduate Program establishes two sets of group e-mail lists — the Administrative and Student Listservs — for use by administration and students. Official announcements and information from the Graduate Program and International Legal Studies, relevant to the class as a whole, will be issued to students via the Administrative Listservs. At the beginning of the academic year, students will also be given instructions for the Student Listservs, including how to send messages to the class as a whole. In the past, the Student Listservs have also been useful tools for facilitating discussions on important topics such as class events, intellectual debates resulting from class discussions, and more. All current LL.M.s, Graduate Program Fellows, and staff are included on the LL.M. e-mail listservs. Access to the S.J.D. e-mail listservs

is restricted to current S.J.D. students and staff. LL.M. and S.J.D. students can only send messages to their respective Student Listservs; only Graduate Program and International Legal Studies staff can send messages to the Administrative Listservs.

LL.M.–J.D. Matching Program

The Graduate Program sponsors an informal arrangement known as the LL.M.-J.D. Matching Program. LL.M. students who have expressed an interest are matched up with a J.D. Student. The J.D. students welcome LL.M. students to the Harvard community and will be available as informational and social contacts throughout the course of the academic year. In accordance with the nature of this type of program, the J.D. participants will not be expected to provide housing or meals, nor to make expenditures on behalf of their LL.M. matches.

Administrative Updates

The HLS Administrative Updates page at hls.harvard.edu/dean-of-students/ad-up/ is a dynamic, web-based listing for administrative announcements at the law school, and includes course announcements, student organization announcements, administrative news, lost and found, job opportunities, and other general information (updated daily throughout the academic year). Students should consult this source regularly.

Calendar@Law

Once students have been enrolled, the Harvard Law School Office of Communications will send them a daily community e-mail listing upcoming events. The Calendar@Law e-mail also includes administrative notices about employment opportunities and other matters of interest. This e-mail provides a quick and easy way to stay abreast of law school events and activities. For a full calendar of HLS events, visit hls.harvard.edu/calendar.

News@Law and Harvard Law Today

During the academic year, the Harvard Law School Office of Communications issues an e-mail newsletter, news@law, containing news media mentions of Harvard Law faculty and students, and Harvard Law Today, a weekly e-mail newsletter with news and stories related to the law school. Students are added to the mailing lists for both publications.

Mail

Personal mail must be directed to your dormitory or off-campus residence address. The Graduate Program is not able to accept personal mail on behalf of students; personal mail directed to the Graduate Program will be returned to sender.

For procedures on reporting change of address or phone number during the year, please see “Reporting Change of Address” on page 43.

Notices

Notices and announcements of special interest may be found on the Graduate Program bulletin board inside the Graduate Program in Wasserstein 5005, and on bulletin boards placed throughout the law school buildings in accordance with policies established by the Dean of Students Office. There are also plasma screens in multiple locations throughout the law school displaying daily event information. Please consult these sources daily for information on functions throughout the law school.

Student Representatives and Class Marshals

Each year the LL.M. class elects two representatives, and the S.J.D. class elects one representative, to the Harvard Law Student Government. The LL.M. class also elects class marshals. Elections will be held early in the fall and will be announced at the start of the academic year. Representatives and Marshals also serve as de facto social chairs and may wish to delegate LL.M.-specific tasks to their classmates who volunteer.

Students running for class representative must be willing to dedicate a significant amount of time to their responsibilities as class representatives. Representatives will work with members of the LL.M. class to bring new ideas and items of concern to the administration and maintain an open dialogue with the Vice Dean and the administration of the Graduate Program. They may also coordinate various academic and social events.

The class marshals elected by the LL.M. class work alongside the class marshals elected by the J.D. 3L class. As a group, the class marshals bring the Class of 2026 — J.D.s and LL.M.s alike — together as a whole as they lead the class in commencement-related plans and activities. The final honorable duty comes on Commencement morning, when the class marshals and the Dean of the law school lead the entire graduating class to Tercentenary Theatre in Harvard Yard.

POST-GRADUATION

Teacher Placement

Harvard Law School offers information and guidance on teacher placement opportunities for law teaching positions in the United States. Students with questions about law teaching should consult with the Assistant Dean for the Graduate Program and International Legal Studies. Additional programming through the Law Teaching Colloquium — a series of information sessions and panel discussions about various aspects of law teaching — will be offered during the academic year.

Students hoping to pursue a teaching career at a law school in the U.S. should be aware that hiring institutions will very likely expect them to be able to teach an introductory or other basic U.S. law course, and will want to make sure that their academic transcripts reflect appropriate course work to enable them to do so.

Post-Graduation Practical Training for International Students

Each year many international LL.M. students are interested in gaining practical experience through temporary employment in the United States after graduation. The Graduate Program has emphasized that employment in the United States is extremely difficult to obtain and advised students against coming to Harvard if this was the student's primary goal. Securing employment, unfortunately, is exceedingly challenging, if not impossible, because most U.S. law firms and legal employers have very few positions available for international lawyers. Time devoted to the search for employment will limit your ability to get the most out of your LL.M. experience and may not yield a job offer. Most U.S. law firms will employ international lawyers only if the needs of the firm call for the assistance of a lawyer from a particular country, and/or the firm is interested in developing, maintaining, or improving its contacts within a given country. In addition, a firm's ability to offer employment at all is directly affected by the economic environment.

If, despite this prognosis, you decide to pursue employment in the United States, you should prepare for a highly time-intensive and entrepreneurial undertaking. If you are interested in employment in the private sector, we advise you to consult with the law school's Office of Career Services concerning the resources that office can make available to you during your search. The law school's Bernard Koteen Office of Public Interest Advising (OPIA) provides similar resources for those interested in finding employment or internships in the public sector. Representatives of both offices are in regular contact with the LL.M. class.

In the past, the Office of Career Services has supported a range of job search activities by LL.M. students. These activities have included arranging for some on-campus interviewing by potential employers during the course of the year, and co-sponsoring a job fair for international students typically held in January. Students interested in participating in these and other activities should contact the Office of Career Services for further information in September. Information about additional opportunities will be sent out via the student Listservs, as available.

You should be aware that a number of prospective employers may restrict their interviewing to J.D. candidates. The LL.M. job search process typically continues well into the spring. Although the Office of Career Services and the Office for Public Interest Advising stand ready to assist you in your job search, you should be prepared for a difficult and time-consuming process, which will require much initiative on your part. In addition, it will be up to you to make your own travel arrangements and cover any related expenses. At the end of the process, it is possible that you will not have secured a job.

New York Bar Examination

Each year, many LL.M. students express interest in taking the New York State Bar Examination after they have received their degrees. Because the bar exam is administered by the New York State Board of Law Examiners ("NY BOLE"), international students who are considering sitting for the bar exam should consult the NY BOLE website at nybarexam.org/Foreign/ForeignLegalEducation.htm for more information on the specific eligibility requirements for lawyers who have received their initial legal education outside of the United States.

Eligibility and coursework requirements have recently changed. As the Graduate Program has advised, in the information provided to LL.M. students during the summer, students should be aware of two key provisions that they may need to address **before they arrive in Cambridge for Orientation and the start of classes**:

- All foreign-educated lawyers must submit the mandatory Online Foreign Evaluation Form (obtained by request through the NY State Board of Law Examiners Applicant Services Portal (portal.nybarexam.org/) to request a decision on their eligibility to sit for the New York bar exam. The NY BOLE is now recommending that students submit this request at least one year before they plan to sit for the exam.
- The eligibility requirements also address the number of credits that must be earned and the specific subject matter of courses that must be completed. As you select courses, you may need to keep these requirements in mind. The Graduate Program will relay information about the substantive eligibility requirements during Orientation, and will communicate with students throughout the year as questions arise. As well, the Office of Career Services typically holds an information session in the fall regarding application procedures.

Please note that all applications to sit for the New York Bar Examination are considered on a case-by-case basis. **The Graduate Program will help provide information and guide students throughout the year, but only the New York State Board of Law Examiners is able to verify whether certain courses or types of experience qualify students to sit for the exam.**

Pro Bono Requirement. Effective January 2013, the New York State Court of Appeals implemented a rule affecting bar admission in New York. All candidates seeking admission to practice in New York are required to file documentation showing that they have completed 50 hours of qualifying pro bono work during or after their LL.M. degree program, as codified in Rule 520.16 of the Rules of the Court of Appeal (nycourts.gov/ctapps/520rules10.htm). After candidates who have passed the exam are notified of the results, the candidates must then submit an actual application for admission to the bar. Thereafter, a swearing-in date is scheduled. This part of the process can take several months. This means that candidates who take the New York Bar Exam are subject to the Pro Bono Rule in order to be admitted to practice in that state. Likewise, any candidate who took and passed the New York Bar Exam prior to July 2014 but who did not seek admission to practice at that time will be subject to the Pro Bono Rule as well. The New York State Court of Appeals has published information and Frequently Asked Questions regarding the implementation and requirements of this rule at:

http://ww2.nycourts.gov/sites/default/files/document/files/2018-07/FAQsBarAdmission_0.pdf.

Skills Competency Requirement. The New York Court of Appeals has instituted a requirement that students seeking admission to the New York bar must also satisfy a Skills Competency Requirement (in addition to all existing bar admission requirements). This requirement is effective as of August 1, 2018 for LL.M. students who plan to qualify for the bar exam using their LL.M. degree (and was effective for all others as of August 1, 2016). For more information about this requirement, please consult the New York Board of Law Examiners website at: nybarexam.org/Skills/skills.htm.

The Skills Competency Requirement can be satisfied in one of five ways, but at this time the only ways that are applicable for LL.M. students at Harvard Law School are “Apprenticeship” (22 NYCRR 520.18(a)(4)) (at least six months in duration) and “Practice in another jurisdiction” (22 NYCRR 520.18(a)(5)) (at least one full year of full-time work or two years of half-time work). Both the “Apprenticeship” and “Practice in another jurisdiction” requirements can be satisfied before or after the LL.M., but please note that completing this requirement after the LL.M. program through an “Apprenticeship” or through “Practice in Another Jurisdiction” in the home country or elsewhere may preclude international students from taking advantage of the authorization they could otherwise obtain to work in the U.S. after graduation for nine months to a year (depending on their student visa type).

Information about eligibility and applying to sit for the bar exam in any other state should be obtained by contacting the Board of Law Examiners in that state directly.

IMPORTANT LINKS

Administrative Updates

hls.harvard.edu/dean-of-students/ad-up/

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts MyBlue App

myblue.bluecrossma.com/student-harvard

Canvas

canvas.harvard.edu/ (HarvardKey login required)

Change of Address

hio.harvard.edu/report-change-address

Clinical and Pro Bono Programs

hls.harvard.edu/clinics/

Commencement

hls.harvard.edu/dean-of-students/commencement/

Committee on the Use of Human Subjects

cuhs.harvard.edu

Dean of Students and Office of Community Engagement, Equity, and Belonging

hls.harvard.edu/dos-ceeb/

Emergency Information

hls.harvard.edu/emergency-information/

Graduate Program (including financial aid)

hls.harvard.edu/graduate-program/

Harvard International Office

hio.harvard.edu

Harvard Law School Library

hls.harvard.edu/library/

Harvard University Student Health Services (health insurance)

hushp.harvard.edu

HLS Research Programs and Centers

hls.harvard.edu/research-programs-centers

Information Technology Services

hls.harvard.edu/information-technology-services/

International Travel Procedures

hls.harvard.edu/ils/opportunities-abroad/international-travel-procedures/

Office of Career Services

hls.harvard.edu/office-of-career-services-ocs/

Office for Community Support, Non-Discrimination, Rights and Responsibilities

csndr.harvard.edu/

Public Interest Advising, Bernard Koteen Office of

hls.harvard.edu/bernard-koteen-office-of-public-interest-advising/

Registrar's Office

hls.harvard.edu/registrar/

TimelyCare

camhs.huhs.harvard.edu/timelycare

University Counseling and Mental Health Services

camhs.huhs.harvard.edu

University Health Services (medical services other than mental health services)

huhs.harvard.edu

The Well: Health and Wellness at HLS

hls.harvard.edu/student-life/the-well-health-and-wellness-at-hls/