The LL.M. Winter Term Writing Program – January 2027
Instructions for LL.M. Students

Introduction

Participants in the Winter Term Writing Program (WWP) devote the entirety of the winter term to the intensive, full-time research and/or writing of a single writing project worth at least two credits, under the supervision of an HLS faculty member, in lieu of taking a winter-term course. The application deadline is **Thursday, November 12, 2026**.

Work done during the winter term is expected to be part of a larger project, typically the 50-page paper. Applicants to the WWP will have already arranged for a faculty supervisor and registered for the full writing project. The WWP itself does not confer credit. Therefore, to be eligible for the WWP, students must be writing a 50-page paper independently of a course or seminar. If accepted, the two writing credits would be moved to the winter term.

There will be a mandatory group session on writing and research challenges with Pamela Pollock on Monday, January 4, and each participant will meet with Pamela in mid-January to share research objectives, discuss progress, review research and writing strategies, and identify areas where additional assistance may be needed. There may also be additional optional programming to build community around writing, to support writers and the writing process. **Beyond that, participants in the WWP are expected to structure their own time and work during the winter term.** Each participant is responsible for making sure that the proposed paper is not similar to any other paper that student has written or is writing currently for degree credit.

In past years, students have reported that actively participating in the LL.M. Writing Program during the fall term aided their progress in the winter. Students in the program have opportunities to present work-in-progress to their workshop group and consult individually with their SJD writing advisor about their project. WWP applicants are urged to take advantage of the LL.M. Writing Program. For more information (questions?) contact Pamela Pollock.

Registration and related residency requirements mandate that students must be enrolled for at least two credits during the winter term. Therefore, LL.M. students who participate in the Winter Term Writing Program cannot switch to writing a shorter paper later in the year. The Graduate Program evaluates applications carefully to help ensure that all students who enroll are prepared to make substantial progress on their research and writing during the winter term.

Calendar for the January 2027 Winter Writing Program

November 12, 2026	Application deadline
January 4, 2027	Start of winter term
January 22, 2027	End of winter term
January 25, 2027	Start of spring term

Check Degree Credit Requirements

Applicants considering the WWP in lieu of a winter course must check their LL.M. credits to make sure they are meeting degree requirements. Taking the WWP instead of a winter course eliminates the winter term as a source of classroom credits.

Application Process

Applications should be submitted via the LL.M. Winter Term Writing Application form by November 12, 2026. All applications must be approved by the HLS faculty member who is to supervise the project; students should also direct their supervisors to the "Guidelines for Faculty Supervisors" document.

1. The applicant must respond to a series of narrative questions to provide a clear description of a feasible topic and a workable research methodology, the plan for which must be approved by the student's HLS faculty supervisor. During the fall term, the applicant must have done the necessary research to define the topic, identify key sources and work out the research approach. This requirement is designed to ensure that intensive directed research and/or writing can continue at a strong pace at the very start of the winter term. Students who have progressed with their intensive research prior to the winter term should find it possible to submit at least a detailed outline (or a first draft) to the faculty supervisor by the end of the winter term.
2. The application must describe an arrangement for adequate supervision and a progress plan, as well as an assurance that the work will be done while the student is in residence for the full term. Arrangements might involve some combination of formal meetings and informal contact; the student and supervisor will determine what arrangements are appropriate.
3. Send an email to your supervisor that includes

    a. The basic details of your project
    b. A copy of your complete narrative response form
    c. A request that your supervisor replies to confirm their approval of the project with the following statement: "**I confirm that I will be supervising the required written work for [*Your Name*] during the winter term, as described in the message below, and that I have read and approved the details set out in the student's narrative response form included with that message.**"

4. Fill out and submit the LL.M. Winter Term Writing Application form. All applicants must upload a copy of their complete narrative responses, a preliminary bibliography, and a copy of the email approval from their supervisor via this form. **The Graduate Program will not accept incomplete narrative forms. If your submission does not address all of the questions, we will return it to you to complete before reviewing.**

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Students who pursue the WWP must be in residence **in Cambridge for the entirety of the winter term** and devote the term to full-time pursuit of the research and writing project.

    - **Proposed Work Outside of Cambridge**: LL.M. students participating in the WWP are expected to be in residence in Cambridge, MA to pursue their research and writing during the entirety of the winter term. In the event that research outside of Cambridge is necessary to the project, the student must make a clear case in the application as to why the work cannot be done in Cambridge, must define the nature and scope of the research work, and must specify how the time would be spent outside Cambridge, including specific dates and locations. Where interviews are contemplated, the application must include the names of the subjects, the dates on which the interviews will take place, a draft interview script, and the status of the project's IRB review. The application must also describe an arrangement for adequate supervision by the HLS faculty supervisor while the student is away from Cambridge and an assurance that the work will be done by the deadline specified below in the section entitled Completion of Work.

- Students on visas who propose travel outside the United States for the WWP should contact the Harvard International Office at (617) 495-2789 before applying to the WWP. Changes in the applicable laws may affect a student's ability to travel outside the United States and to return. Please also check this website: http://www.hio.harvard.edu/travel. Any student considering travel outside the United States should check all relevant travel advisories and will be contacted separately regarding procedures for international travel.

- Students seeking to conduct research involving human subjects (e.g., through using methods including but not limited to interviews or surveys) should contact the IRB to confirm if their work will contribute to generalizable knowledge as per the IRB definition and requires IRB oversight. The HUA IRB assigns dedicated reviewers to departments and schools who can assist with this decision. These reviewers can be contacted directly and offer office hours as well. For general questions, students may also email cuhs@harvard.edu or call (617) 496-2847.

- Students registered in a winter course for which add/drop is administered through the Office of Clinical and Pro Bono Programs ("OCP") must follow OCP procedures and drop deadlines to avoid receipt of a WD. Students with further questions about drop deadlines for clinical courses should contact OCP directly.

- If the project in the WWP application is in addition to any other extra-credit writing project(s) that the student has in progress, the student must follow applicable procedures for multiple written work projects (this includes multiple projects for the same supervisor as well as projects with different supervisors). Students with questions about this should consult with the Graduate Program

(gpcourses@law.harvard.edu) to determine whether additional documentation is needed. Questions about the multiple use of part or all of a single paper, as specified in the 2026-2027 HLS *Handbook of Academic Policies* under Academic Honesty, should be directed to the Graduate Program Office before the WWP application deadline.

Faculty Supervision and Completion of WWP Work

- The student and the faculty supervisor must agree on the final product for the WWP. The work to be completed should be a draft of a paper, or at minimum a detailed outline. There is no grade for the WWP *per se*; rather, the entire paper is graded following completion.
- Participants must submit the agreed-upon work to their faculty supervisors by the agreed-to deadline.
- If the work to be completed during the winter term is not the final paper, the final paper is due on April 23, 2027, or by an earlier date if required by the faculty supervisor.

The WWP application should represent a thorough and complete process of planning and discussion with the faculty supervisor since this same faculty member will supervise the student through to completion of the paper.