

BYU LAW

LL.M. PROGRAM





BYU Law School enthusiastically welcomes lawyers from around the globe to BYU to obtain an LL.M. degree. Through rigorous study of U.S. and comparative law, LL.M. students improve their knowledge, skills, and professional prospects. Professional advancement is only part of the story, however. BYU Law seeks to “develop people of integrity who combine faith and intellect in lifelong service to God and neighbor” (BYU Law Mission Statement). LL.M. students become not only talented lawyers but leaders of faith who can make a difference in their homes, congregations, communities, and nations. In short, the LL.M. degree at BYU Law benefits the whole person and in turn produces blessings throughout the whole world. I invite you to join the BYU Law community and experience the unique advantages of a BYU LL.M. degree.

David H. Moore

DAVID H. MOORE
DEAN, BYU LAW SCHOOL

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Part of Brigham Young University

The J. Reuben Clark Law School at Brigham Young University (“BYU Law”) is located in Provo, Utah. Founded in 1971, BYU Law is sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), which is headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah, and has members in countries all over the world. Additionally, the J. Reuben Clark Law Society has chapters all over the world, providing a global network of law school friends and alumni.

Provo is nestled in Utah Valley at the base of the Wasatch Front of the Rocky Mountains in the western United States. Students can take advantage of the mountains without leaving the valley. They can run up Rock Canyon early in the morning to rock climb before class, drive up Provo Canyon to ski or snowboard at Sundance on winter afternoons, hike the iconic Y Mountain, or bike the Provo River Trail from town to Bridal Veil Falls. Additionally, Provo is a gateway to Utah’s five breathtaking national parks: Arches, Bryce Canyon, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef, and Zion.

What is the LL.M. Degree?

The LL.M. degree at BYU Law is a master’s degree for lawyers with law degrees from outside the United States. It is a full-time day program that lasts eight months. The first semester is from August-December and the second semester is from January-April.

The LL.M. program is designed specifically for non-U.S. lawyers who intend to obtain the degree to enhance their employment opportunities in their home countries. This program does not provide the required courses and training to take a bar exam in the United States.

Do I Have to Be a Member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to Attend the Law School?

No. The Law School welcomes applications from students of all beliefs who will commit to live the Honor Code (see page 23).

What is the Goal of the LL.M. Program?

Established in 1988, the BYU Law LL.M. program seeks intelligent, dedicated attorneys from other countries who intend to return to their homes and make their communities better places to live. We expect our graduates to exemplify excellent academic legal practice standards and strong ethical and moral principles in their professional and personal lives.

"I am really grateful for the opportunity to attend BYU's Law School. It is the most important thing that I have done to improve my career. My professors and classmates are always willing to help, and the environment is simply fantastic."

DOUGLAS DE CASTRO, BRAZIL

Why Should I Go to BYU?

BYU Law is home to professors and students with extensive international experience. Many BYU Law professors conduct research studies internationally.

The Law School sponsors and is home to the [International Center for Law and Religion Studies](#), which hosts annual conferences for attorneys, government officials, non-profit organizations, and religious leaders from around the world for the purpose of expanding and deepening religious freedom around the world.

Many members of the Law School community speak second languages and have lived outside the United States. Over 80% of the JD student body speaks two or more languages. This makes the Law School an ideal learning environment for attorneys from other countries.

The Law School also has a strong commitment to provide LL.M. graduates with opportunities to work in U.S. law firms for up to one year through the Optional Practice Training program (see page 9) before returning to their home countries.

How Does the LL.M. Degree Compare to the JD Degree?

The LL.M. degree is a one-year master's degree for foreign attorneys only. An LL.M. applicant will only need to show finances for one year for visa purposes (see page 18).

International applicants may also apply for the JD degree, which is a three-year program. Unlike LL.M. applicants, JD program applicants must take the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) or the Graduate Examinations Test (GRE). All applicants to the JD program must be able to prove finances for three years for visa purposes (see page 18). If you have further questions about the JD program, please refer to the [JD Brochure](#) or contact the Admissions Office at admissions2@law.byu.edu.

How Does the LL.M. Degree Enhance My Practice as an Attorney?

The LL.M. degree is designed to help you understand the comparison between the legal system of the United States and the legal systems of other countries. In addition to an excellent education, graduates will have extremely well-respected credentials from a highly-ranked U.S. law school and, potentially, up to a year of experience working in a U.S. law firm through the OPT program (see page 9).

Note: Students who desire to practice law in the U.S. as a career will be better served by attending a different program.





What Are the Requirements of the LL.M. Degree?

The Law School requires that LL.M. students complete at least 24 credit hours. Classes are two, three, or four credits each. LL.M. students work closely with the LL.M. Program Coordinator to select the coursework that is best suited for their individual circumstances and interests.

Every LL.M. student must take one first-year class*, a legal writing and research class for LL.M.s, and an Introduction to American Law class. All other credits are considered elective credits, and the student can register for any class as space permits. Other than the two classes that are specifically for LL.M. students, classes will be with students enrolled in the JD program.

*"First-year class" refers to courses that are mandatory in the first-year JD curriculum. The LL.M. Program Coordinator will inform LL.M. students which courses will fulfill the requirement.

Who Teaches in the Program?

Our professors are among the best in the nation. They are recognized experts in all aspects of the United States legal system such as commercial law, antitrust law, administrative law, criminal law, constitutional law, legal history, property law, securities law, immigration law, international law, bankruptcy, and taxation. Members of the faculty have served as law clerks to justices of the United States Supreme Court as well as in other prestigious clerkships and law practices before joining the faculty. LL.M. students will have the opportunity to work closely with multiple faculty members during their program of study.

How Large Is BYU? How Many Students Attend BYU Law?

The university enrolls approximately 30,000 undergraduate students annually. The Law School enrolls approximately 12 LL.M. students and 120 new JD students each year.

What Is the Optional Practical Training (OPT) Program?

OPT is a status designation given by the United States Government. It allows those with student visas to remain in the United States for up to one year after graduation in job placements that are within their field of study. Students who have completed an advanced course of study at a university in the United States, such as the BYU Law LL.M., are eligible to apply for OPT status after their F-1 student status ends.

Will the Law School Help Me Find a Placement for OPT?

Yes. BYU Law is committed to assist graduates in finding an appropriate OPT program that will correspond to the graduate's field of study in their home country and provide invaluable experience in law practice in the U.S. Though the Law School will do all it can to assist in providing an OPT opportunity for every LL.M. graduate, many factors may affect the availability of this program for individual graduates.

"I decided to attend BYU Law School because I admire the great study atmosphere here. In the LL.M. program we can choose whatever classes we are interested in and get a general view of the American legal system. The curriculum is memorable. My horizons were broadened through this program."

JUN HAN, CHINA



APPLYING

Who Is Qualified to Apply?

Applicants must have received a law degree in their home country and be certified, or eligible to be certified, to practice law in their country. Applicants must also sit for the TOEFL, IELTS, E3PT, or equivalent exam.

What Is the Schedule of the LL.M. Program?

The program starts every year during the month of August and has holidays and one-week breaks during fall (August-December) and winter (January-April) semesters. The school year concludes in April.

When Should I Apply?

Applicants may begin applying November 1 of the year before they wish to begin the program. The application deadline is January 1. The application for the LL.M. program is online on the [BYU Graduate Studies webpage](#).

What Are the Parts of the Application?

Note: All parts of the application must be in English or accompanied by an English translation. They must be completed, submitted, and received before the application can be reviewed by the Admissions Committee.

The Application Consists Of:

- Electronic Application
- Two (2) letters of recommendation (see “Letters of Recommendation” on page 12)
- Transcript and Certificates
- Resume
- Personal statement
- An official TOEFL, IELTS, E3PT, or equivalent exam score report
- Honor Code Endorsement (see “Honor Code” on page 23)

Electronic Application

LL.M. applicants do not submit materials through LSAC. To apply, please follow the steps on the [BYU Graduate Studies website](#).

Letters of Recommendation

You must submit two letters of recommendation from professors or colleagues who know you well. The Admissions Committee is interested in reading submissions from evaluators who can speak to your capabilities and potential as a legal practitioner. Letters may be submitted following the instructions on the [BYU Graduate Studies website](#). If your letters are written in a language other than English, a translation should be included with the letters.

Transcript and Certificates

Complete, official transcripts of applicants' legal education must be provided, as well as any certificates or other documents establishing their eligibility/ability to practice law in their home countries. Applicants should start the process of obtaining their transcripts early because this process takes a minimum of 2-3 weeks but can take longer during peak times.

As part of the application process, applicants will indicate if they are currently licensed to practice law in their home country and submit a copy of their license. If they are not licensed, they are subject to a foreign credential evaluation by either IERF or SpanTran, upon acceptance to the program. The evaluation report will need to be submitted to Graduate Studies before official admission to the LL.M. program.

Resume/Curriculum Vitae

A current resume/curriculum vitae ("CV") is required for each applicant. These can be uploaded as part of the electronic application. Applicants from countries that typically include personal information such as ID number, nationality, or ethnicity should be aware that such information is not considered necessary as part of the resume/CV.

Personal Statement

Applicants should write an essay explaining why they want to pursue an LL.M. at BYU Law and how they plan to use the degree after graduation. Personal statements should not exceed 2 typed, double-spaced pages.



English Language Proficiency Requirement

WHAT IS THE TOEFL?

The TOEFL exam is the Test of English as a Foreign Language. It assesses English language proficiency. Consult the [TOEFL website](#) for more information.

Other English language exams such as the English3 (E3PT) or IELTS may be used, but admission eligibility and decisions will be based on TOEFL equivalency. Please find more information on the [BYU Graduate Studies webpage](#).

WHAT TOEFL SCORE IS REQUIRED FOR ACCEPTANCE TO THE LL.M. PROGRAM?

Applicants who score under 90 on the TOEFL exam may be conditionally admitted to the LL.M. program, pending the successful completion of a three month English training course offered by the [English Learning Center at BYU](#), beginning in May and ending in August. Applicants who score between 90 and 100 may also be required to take the course. Admitted applicants who score over 100 who are admitted will not be required to complete the English training course.

SUBMITTING TOEFL SCORES

Applicants must submit their official TOEFL score report. The score must not be more than two years old on the date of application, and the Law School must receive the official score report by the application deadline. Students who speak English as their first language may request a waiver from the TOEFL requirement but should do so early enough in the application process to leave sufficient time to sit for the exam should an exemption not be granted.

Other English language exams such as the English3 or IELTS can be used, but admission eligibility and decisions will be based on TOEFL equivalency.

Interviews

The Law School Admissions Office may reach out to applicants to request an interview. These are typically held via videoconferencing technology that requires the applicant to have access to a reliable internet connection and a webcam. If an applicant does not have access to these tools, the interview may be held over the telephone.

How And When Will Offers Be Extended?

The Admissions Committee will make decisions on applications received by the January 1 deadline by March 1. Notification will follow as soon as possible. Letters will be sent to all applicants by e-mail notifying them whether they have been admitted, wait-listed, or denied. *It is essential that you provide us with e-mail and street addresses that will be valid at all times throughout the admissions process.*

What Things Are the Members of the Admissions Committee Looking for When They Review My Application?

The Admissions Committee will evaluate the following: (1) a sufficiently high TOEFL or equivalent score to allow you to effectively communicate orally and in writing, (2) your previous academic record and legal background, (3) your reasons for applying and your post-graduation plans, (4) your work ethic, and (5) the evaluation of your potential by your recommenders.



FINANCES

How Much Does the LL.M. Program Cost?

- For current tuition costs for the LL.M. program, please visit law.byu.edu.
- For a current listing of estimated expenses, check [BYU Enrollment Services](#). The costs are divided into tuition for two semesters and “additional expenses.”

These estimates are calculated for one individual, and some spend less. However, if a student is married and has children, the expenses will be higher. Please contact the [Office of Graduate Studies](#), (801) 422-4091, for the most current information and to obtain the necessary I-1 and I-2 Forms.



Why Are There Two Tuition Rates?

More than 50 percent of the operating costs of the Law School are paid by the monetary contributions of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Therefore, students and their families who are contributing members have already made a significant donation to the operation of the university. This distinction is similar to the higher tuition that state-sponsored law schools charge to nonresidents.

What Is Included in the Expenses Other Than Tuition?

These amounts are average costs of attending school for two semesters, which include housing, insurance, books, food, personal items, and other payments. These averages are fixed by the BYU Office of Financial Aid to be used by all students, including international students, in the official paperwork submitted to the government.

Are There LL.M. Scholarships Available?

At this time, no funds are dedicated for LL.M. scholarships. However, practically speaking, the low tuition for the program already works as a “scholarship.” By comparison to other U.S. law schools, our tuition is one-third to one-half less.

Can an LL.M. Student Work in the United States During the LL.M. Program?

An LL.M. student may not work off-campus. An LL.M. student may work in a university-sponsored job during school up to 20 hours per week. Working more than 20 hours per week or working in an off-campus job are violations of F-1 student visa status.

Anticipated earnings cannot be used to prove finances for visa purposes. Applicants are expected to provide their own money to pay tuition and expenses. Proving financial resources is a requirement to be accepted into the LL.M. program. You should plan on having 100 percent of the money required for the program before you apply.

VISA AND UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FORMS

What is “Status”?

“Status” is the word used by the United States Government to describe why you are in the country. The visa status that LL.M. students receive is F-1.

How Do I Get a Visa?

You must apply for a visa through your consulate office. You will probably need to request an interview as part of your visa application. It may take up to two months to schedule your interview. You must pay a SEVIS fee, a visa fee, and have an I-20 before you go to the interview.

What is SEVIS?

SEVIS stands for Student Exchange Visiting Information System. It is the computer database that will keep track of your status and where you live while you are in the United States. You must report any change of address at once. Your SEVIS information is kept by two offices: the Law School Registrar and the university’s International Student and Scholar Services Office.

What is an I-20?

An I-20 is a “Certificate of Eligibility” that the United States Government requires you to have in order to apply for a visa.

Why Do I Need an I-20?

You need an I-20 in order to apply for an F-1 Student visa, the document issued by the United States Government that gives you permission to enter the country.

How Do I Get an I-20?

After you apply, and if you are accepted, you will be contacted by the BYU International Student and Scholar Services office with a request to prove finances covering the cost of attendance for one full year of school. If you can prove finances, you are eligible to receive an I-20.





How Do I Prove Finances?

There are two documents needed to prove your finances: an Affidavit of Support showing who is sponsoring you (including self-sponsorship) and bank statements from the sponsor showing available funding. These bank statements cannot be more than 3 months old.

How Long Does It Take to Get a Visa?

The waiting period varies, depending upon individual circumstances. If you have to go to “name clearance,” it may take an additional three to five months. If you are denied a visa, you may appeal. Appeals can take up to six months.

What If I Have a Permanent Resident Number?

If you have a valid Permanent Resident Number, you do not need to prove finances. Submit a copy of your green card with your application.

What is an I-94?

An I-94 is also known as the Arrival/Departure Document and it tracks your entrances and departures with the United States. It is given to individuals admitted to the United States as nonimmigrants. If you are admitted, the BYU International Student and Scholar Services office will send you further instructions regarding the I-94.

What if My Visa Expires After I Am in the United States but Before the LL.M. Program Ends?

A visa expiration does not affect your status. You can stay in the United States to finish the LL.M. program. However, if you want to leave the United States after your visa expires, you will have to apply for and receive a new visa to come back into the country, even if you have not yet completed the LL.M. program. For a number of reasons, we generally do not advise students to visit their home country during the LL.M. program because of the complications that could arise when trying to re-enter the United States.

Students have the option of living either on or off the BYU Campus. On-Campus Housing information can be found at the [On-Campus Housing Portal](#). For single students, full rates can be reviewed online under the “19 and Over” tab. There are multiple options available, as well as meal plans. The ultimate rate will depend on whether students choose a dorm or apartment-style accommodation, which specific dorm or apartment they select, and which meal plan students choose.

For students who are married and/or have children, on-campus apartments are also available. Full rate information for on-campus family housing is available on the same website under the “Families” tab. For students who prefer to live off-campus, information can be found in the [off-campus housing portal](#).

“I enjoyed being at BYU Law School very much. I was able to receive profound knowledge of the American legal system and a fair impression of studying at an American law school. I was fortunate to meet wonderful people at the Law School: the professors, the staff members, and my classmates. I want to stress the seriousness of the academic side of the program; nevertheless, I was able to enjoy out-of-school activities with my friends. I’d like to thank all the people that made my time here so great!”

KATYA MILONOVA, RUSSIA



HONOR CODE

What Is the Honor Code at BYU?

It is an ethical code that each university student is expected to follow. Its requirements reflect the code of conduct that has been established by the sponsoring institution, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Parts of the Honor Code are excerpted below. Full information can be found on [BYU's website](#).

As a matter of personal commitment, students, faculty, and staff of Brigham Young University are expected to demonstrate in daily living, on and off campus, those moral virtues encompassed in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and will:

- Be honest
- Live a chaste and virtuous life
- Obey the law and all campus policies
- Use clean language
- Respect others
- Abstain from alcoholic beverages, tobacco, tea, coffee, and substance abuse
- Observe Dress and Grooming Standards
- Participate regularly in church services if a member of the LDS Church
- Encourage others in their commitment to comply with the BYU Honor Code

Other specific policies embodied in the Honor Code include:

- Academic Honesty
- Dress and Grooming Standards
- Continuing Student Ecclesiastical Endorsement

How to Complete the Honor Code Endorsement

Compliance with the Honor Code is a part of the application, and your application is not complete until you have an "Honor Code Endorsement." To receive an endorsement, you must commit to live the Honor Code and receive a positive endorsement from a faith leader and/or a judge.

To start this process, go to endorse.byu.edu, select "Student" and then select "Applicant." You will be prompted to read and commit to living by the Honor Code. You will also be prompted to print off instructions for having an interview with either your own clergy, a leader of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints known as a bishop or branch president, a judge, or the BYU Chaplain. The interviewer must evaluate whether you will live by the Honor Code based on their discussion with you. After the interviewer submits that evaluation, you will be contacted via email by the BYU Chaplain for the final step in the Honor Code Endorsement process.

BYU LAW

For more information, visit law.byu.edu/admissions
or email admissions2@law.byu.edu.