

LAW (LLM)

Law School

Program Website (<https://www.lawschool.cornell.edu/academics/degree-programs/general-llm-program/>)

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Program Description

Cornell Law School offers a highly selective Master of Laws Degree and admission is based on a holistic review of the entire application including prior academic performance, recommendations, and work experience.

Application Requirements

To be considered for admission to the General LL.M. program, applicants must have:

- Earned a first degree of law outside the United States prior to the start of the program.
- Proficiency in English as demonstrated by all aspects of the application and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS), if required.

Cornell accepts both the internet-based (iBT) TOEFL and IELTS test scores. If submitting a TOEFL score, applicants must request that the Educational Testing Service sends official score report(s) to the LSAC using institution code number 8395. If submitting IELTS scores, applicants must request official IELTS score report(s) be sent to the LSAC Credential Assembly Service for electronic download using the IELTS system. A high level of English proficiency is needed to complete the General LL.M. program. While all applications will be reviewed regardless of ESL scores, successful applicants typically have a minimum TOEFL overall score of 100 or a minimum IELTS overall band score of 7.0.

Applicants should plan to take either test prior to December. TOEFL and IELTS scores are valid only if dated within two years of the program's application deadline.

The English language proficiency requirement may be waived if an applicant meets at least one of the following criteria:

- is a citizen or permanent resident of the United States, or a citizen of the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand or Canada (except Quebec).
- at the time of enrollment at Cornell, the applicant will have studied in full-time status for at least two academic years within the last five years in the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, or New Zealand, or with English language instruction in Canada or South Africa. Even if English was the language of instruction at another school, if study did not occur in one of these countries, applicants are not exempt from the requirement. Applicants must submit a transcript that shows attendance at college in one of the approved locations, and that the academic program was at least two years in length.

If the criteria above is met, a waiver may be requested by uploading an addendum to the online application with the appropriate documentation. Waiver requests are reviewed with complete applications only.

Policies and Procedures

General LL.M. Grading Policy

LL.M. candidates are graded on the scale of High Honors (HH), Honors (H), Satisfactory (S), and Unsatisfactory (U), except that an LL.M. student may, after consultation with a Dean of Students advisor, elect to be graded on the J.D. scale and curve. This election applies to the entire academic year and must be made by notifying the Law School Registrar within the first four weeks of the date fall semester classes begin.

A grade of HH is appropriate for students who would have received an A or higher, H is appropriate for students who would have received a grade in the B+ to A- range, S is appropriate for students who would have received a grade in the range of C- to B, and U is appropriate for students who would have received a D+ or lower grade. There is no faculty policy regulating the proportion of HH, H, S, and U grades that faculty may give to LL.M. students.

Merit points are not assigned to HH, H, S, and U grades. For General LL.M. candidates, the Law School faculty determines whether the student's course work meets the necessary standard for the award of the LL.M. degree.

General LL.M. Academic Deficiency

Depending on the grade scale elected, a General LL.M. student who receives a U or grade of D+ or below at the close of the first semester of law study will be placed on informal probation and must meet with the Dean of Students prior to continued enrollment. An LL.M. student will be dropped for scholastic deficiency if, in the judgment of the faculty, the student's work at any time is markedly unsatisfactory. Work may be considered markedly unsatisfactory if, for example, the merit point ratio for work in the first semester is lower than 2.00 or two or more U grades are received.

Program Information

- Instruction Mode: In Person
- Location: Ithaca, NY

Program Requirements

The General LL.M. program requires the completion of 20 credits during two semesters of full-time study. Of the 20 credits, students must complete:

- LAW 6091 Introduction to the American Legal System (2 credits)
- One of the following:
 - LAW 6761 Principles of American Legal Writing
 - LAW 8991 Thesis
 - LAW 6871 Supervised Writing
 - Any LAW course that satisfies the Law School writing requirement
- 15 Credits of electives from Cornell Law School's extensive curriculum.
- For students planning to sit for the New York Bar exam, students must complete:
 - 24 credits in classroom law school coursework, including:
 - a professional responsibility course.
 - a legal research, writing, and analysis course

- core subjects covered by the New York State bar exam and the New York Law Exam

University Graduation Requirements

Requirements for All Students

In order to receive a Cornell degree, a student must satisfy academic and non-academic requirements.

Academic Requirements

A student’s college determines degree requirements such as residency, number of credits, distribution of credits, and grade averages. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of the specific major, degree, distribution, college, and graduation requirements for completing their chosen program of study. See the individual requirements listed by each college or school or contact the college registrar’s office (<https://registrar.cornell.edu/service-resources/college-registrar-directory/>) for more information.

Non-academic Requirements

Conduct Matters. Students must satisfy any outstanding sanctions, penalties or remedies imposed or agreed to under the Student Code of Conduct (Code) or Policy 6.4. Where a formal complaint under the Code or Policy 6.4 is pending, the University will withhold awarding a degree otherwise earned until the adjudication process set forth in those procedures is complete, including the satisfaction of any sanctions, penalties or remedies imposed.

Financial Obligations. Outstanding financial obligations will not impact the awarding of a degree otherwise earned or a student’s ability to access their official transcript. However, the University may withhold issuing a diploma until any outstanding financial obligations owing to the University are satisfied.

Learning Outcomes

- Possess knowledge of the substantive and procedural law required for effective participation in the legal profession. Graduates will be able to:
 - Identify and describe legal terms, concepts, theories, rules, and principles.
 - Understand how the law operates in domestic and global contexts.
- Engage effectively in legal research, analysis, and problem-solving in a time frame appropriate to legal practice. Graduates will be able to analyze common law and statutory authority independently and critically to:
 - Spot relevant issues.
 - Identify controlling authority and accurately assess the weight of authorities.
 - Apply governing rules to legally relevant fact patterns.
 - Marshal relevant facts and governing rules to reach reasoned, well-supported conclusions that address the issues at hand.
 - Employ deductive reasoning and analogy to devise strategies and solutions for complex legal issues in academic environments and in various practice settings.
- Communicate effectively in both oral and written form as counselors and advocates. Graduates will be able to:
 - Identify appropriate audience(s) and tailor written and oral advocacy accordingly.

- Convey legally relevant information objectively and persuasively.
- Explain complex legal concepts orally and in writing in a manner that both members of the legal profession and the public can understand.
- Interact respectfully and effectively with persons of all backgrounds and levels of skill and training, demonstrating professionalism both in person and online.
- Write and speak clearly and concisely in a well-organized, well-reasoned manner.
- Assess complex fact patterns in a professional conversation, deposition, or oral argument and provide meaningful legal analysis during that discourse.
- Employ active listening skills.
- Possess the practical skills fundamental to exceptional lawyering and client representation. Graduates will be able to:
 - Work effectively in teams and independently.
 - pose creative solutions to complex problems independently and through collaboration with peers, senior members of the profession, and interdisciplinary teams.
 - Engage in culturally competent interactions in an increasingly global legal community connected across countries and cultures through technology, immersive study, and transnational practice.
 - Appreciate the impact of their professional conduct and counsel in diverse professional settings, both formal and informal, in person and online.
 - Reflect on and draw lessons from experience to improve their own performance and provide effective professional feedback to others.
 - Arrange their affairs in a professional manner, including by meeting deadlines, keeping scheduled appointments, attending, and preparing appropriately for client and court meetings, and responding promptly to administrative offices, clients, and colleagues.
 - Regularly reflect on their unique aptitudes and capacities and proactively consider how these capabilities align with the broad variety of legal skills and practice settings, taking timely and appropriate steps to seek support when necessary.
- Conduct themselves with the highest moral and ethical standards. Graduates will be able to:
 - Demonstrate knowledge of the ethical rules and expectations which govern members of the legal profession.
 - Apply those ethical expectations throughout their course of study and careers in interactions with courts, clients, and colleagues.
 - Apply the law governing lawyers to resolve ethical, moral, and other professional dilemmas.
 - Understand what the governing law is.
 - Exercise with due care the role entrusted to them as officers of the legal system and public citizens, having special responsibility for the quality of justice.

Program Calendar

Fall 2025

Date	Event
August 7, 2025	First Day of Term
August 7, 2025	First Day of Instruction
October 11-19, 2025	Fall Break

November 26-30, 2025	Thanksgiving Break
December 3, 2025	Last Day of Instruction
December 4-7, 2025	Study Days
December 8, 2025	First Day of Exams
December 20, 2025	Last Day of Exams
December 20, 2025	Last Day of Term

Winter 2026

Date	Event
December 26, 2025	First Day of Term
December 26, 2025	First Day of Instruction
January 17, 2026	Last Day of Exams
January 17, 2026	Last Day of Term

Spring 2026

Date	Event
January 20, 2026	First Day of Term
January 20, 2026	First Day of Instruction
February 15-17, 2026	February Break
March 28-April 5, 2026	Spring Break
April 29, 2026	Last Day of Instruction
April 30-May 3, 2026	Study Days
May 4, 2026	First Day of Exams
May 16, 2026	Last Day of Exams
May 16, 2026	Last Day of Term

Summer 2026

Date	Event
May 28, 2026	First Day of Term
May 28, 2026	First Day of Instruction
June 21, 2026	No Classes
July 5, 2026	No Classes
August 16, 2026	Last Day of Instruction
August 17, 2026	Last Day of Term