



PennState
Dickinson Law

Student Academic Handbook LL.M. & Exchange Student Supplement 2026-2027

Penn State Dickinson Law
Graduate & International Programs
Carlisle, PA 17013
University Park, PA 16802
DickinsonLawLLM@psu.edu
814-867-2373

Welcome to the LL.M. Degree and Exchange Student Programs.

This document serves as a supplement to the J.D. Student Academic Handbook, which is the primary source for Penn State Dickinson Law's academic policies and protocols. LL.M. and exchange students are expected to understand and adhere to all academic policies and protocols. When not explained herein, students are directed to defer to the J.D. Student Academic Handbook. LL.M. and exchange students should become especially familiar with the following policies and resources:

[The Student Code of Conduct](#)
[Honor Code](#)
[Nondiscrimination Statement](#)
[Report Bias](#)

[Title IX: Sexual Harassment & Sexual Misconduct](#)
[FERPA Rights & Confidentiality](#)
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LL.M. DIRECTORY

LL.M. and exchange students should work primarily with Graduate & International Programs for their needs and inquiries. However, specific requests may be directed to the appropriate department as needed. For a complete listing of Penn State Dickinson Law departments, please see [Department Directory](#).

GRADUATE & INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

- Amanda DiPolvere, Associate Dean for Admission and Enrollment ajd7@psu.edu
- Stephen Barnes, Assistant Dean [Recruitment & Partnerships] sgb14@psu.edu
- Kristin Hrehor, Director of LL.M. Academic Advising kah6508@psu.edu
- Jing Hu, Director of Graduate and International Programs Offices jxh574@psu.edu
- Brenda Johnson, Director of Admissions blj10@psu.edu
- Angela Sanchez Gago, Director of Outreach and European Programs ams12067@psu.edu
- Lindsey Kurtz, Language and Writing Specialist lmk299@psu.edu
- Amy H. McMurdy, Program Coordinator [Part-Time, Student Services] ajm9647@psu.edu

ACADEMICS

- Rachel Arnold, Registrar rx25@psu.edu
- Alexandra Dunn, Assistant Registrar afd5093@psu.edu
- Jeffrey A. Dodge, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs^{CR} jad6742@psu.edu
- Michele Vollmer, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs^{UP} mrv3@psu.edu

STUDENT SERVICES

- Valerie D. James^{CR} vdj5027@psu.edu
Senior Assistant Dean for Academic & Student Services

CR – *Carlisle*

UP – *University Park*

MASTER OF LAWS (LL.M.)

Degree Requirements

The LL.M. degree program has been designed to give students a high-level understanding of the U.S. legal system. Studying alongside J.D. students, LL.M. students may enroll in a wide variety of courses that allow for a certificate in certain types of law or law-related topics.

LL.M. students must earn a minimum of 24 credits, which can be taken full-time over one academic year. Full-time students must enroll in at least 12 credits but no more than 17 credits per semester. Students should initiate conversations with the LL.M. Academic Advisor and Penn State's Global Programs Office if they wish to stay for a third semester, as immigration regulations may be changing.

All LL.M. students must complete the following core courses:

- LWLLM 910, Introduction to the U.S. Legal System (2 credits)
- LWLLM 911, Legal Analysis, Writing and Research (2 credits)

For 2026–2027, students at both locations will complete a portion of LWLLM 910 online via Canvas before their arrival; the remainder of the course will be taught in person at both locations. See [LL.M. Curriculum](#) for more information.

Certificates

As a generalized LL.M. degree program, students may enroll in a wide variety of courses that allow for the achievement of a certificate in certain areas of law. LL.M. students must complete 9 total credits of required and elective coursework to satisfy a specific certificate requirement. Students may earn only up to two certificates, and doing so requires careful planning. A minimum grade of 'C' is required for each course being used toward a certificate. To declare a certificate, students are required to submit a Certificate Declaration Form prior to graduation.

Students must request approval from the appropriate [Associate Dean for Academic Affairs](#) to count any course not listed among the approved courses for any given certificate.

Current available certificates in both locations include the following:

- Arbitration, Corporate and Business Law
- Civil Rights, Equal Protection and Social Justice
- Foundations of American Law
- Intellectual Property, Technology and Privacy Law
- International, Foreign, and Comparative Law
- Litigation and Dispute Resolution
- National Security, Administrative and Immigration Law

LL.M. and EXCHANGE STUDENT ACADEMIC POLICIES

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

LL.M. and exchange students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity, which are essential to credible legal study and the ethical practice of law.

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the law school community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation, or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.

Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, copying, plagiarism, fabrication of information or citations, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of an-other person or work previously used without in-forming the instructor, and tampering with the academic work of other students.

Plagiarism is intentionally or recklessly submitting work that uses, without proper acknowledgment, words, ideas, results, methods, opinions, or concepts that do not originate from the student. It does not matter whether the appropriated information is published or unpublished, academic or non-academic in content, or in the public or private domain. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to submitting work without proper citation, submitting as the student's own work content produced by generative AI, and submitting content that results from such a degree of outside assistance that it cannot reasonably be deemed the student's own work.

Violations of the rules of a professor in an exam or a course set out in the syllabus, a course handbook, or exam rules are all Honor Code violations and may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program. For more information, please refer to the [Honor Code](#).

Academic Standing

LL.M. and exchange students must maintain good academic standing throughout the degree program, which requires regular course attendance and participation, as well as maintaining a grade average of at least "C" (or a 2.0 GPA).

Academic standing for LL.M. and exchange students is evaluated throughout the student's program of study. If a student fails to achieve a grade average of at least "C" or 2.0 GPA at the end of any semester, fails to attend class, or fails to submit assignments, the appropriate Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will provide written notification to the student of failure to maintain good academic standing. The student will be granted an opportunity to be heard as to whether they are able or willing to undertake continued study necessary to complete the LL.M. program. The appropriate Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will determine whether the student may continue in the LL.M. program or whether probation or dismissal from the program is appropriate.

For more information on academic standing, academic dismissals, and withdrawal policies, see the [Student Academic Handbook](#).

Class Attendance

Prompt and regular course attendance is required of all Penn State Dickinson Law students, including LL.M. and exchange students. Individual faculty members establish, announce, and implement a policy designed to ensure regular and prompt attendance for each course. With notice to students, faculty members may modify their methods for monitoring promptness and attendance during the semester. Viewing a class recording is not a substitute for class attendance and preparation, which is required for all class sessions (unless excused by the professor on an exceptional basis for good reason) and in order to remain in good academic standing with the law school.

Class Recordings

All law school courses occur in classrooms equipped with audiovisual telecommunications equipment that is capable of making an audiovisual recording of each class session as it occurs. In most cases, the school records, and archives, for a limited period of time, the class sessions occurring in certain classrooms. The purpose of the recordings is to permit students enrolled in each recorded course to access the recordings outside of the regularly scheduled class period, according to rules established by the professor. Students should be aware that professors can restrict access and require students seek permission and/or show a need for access to review recordings; professors may also decide not to record certain classes or courses.

Access to recorded classes will be controlled via a secure course management platform and will be restricted to students enrolled in the recorded course, the professor, and those University IT personnel necessary to maintain the system. All recordings will be deleted following the conclusion of the semester in which the recorded course occurs (unless all identifying student images are edited out of the recording, in which case the professor and school jointly may decide to retain the edited recording for other purposes).

By registering for or attending law school courses, students consent to the school's making and display of class recordings within the scope of this policy.

Course Registration

For detailed information on course registration policies, including add/drop, pass/fail, and auditing, see the [Student Academic Handbook](#).

English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

All admitted students should be sufficiently prepared for advanced legal study in English. Students who are not native English speakers and have not received a degree from a college or university where the language of instruction was English, a TOEFL, IELTS, or similar score that demonstrates advanced proficiency in English is required at the time of admission. Applicants must provide evidence of either a TOEFL score report of 88 or higher, an IELTS score of 6.5 or higher, or a Duolingo score of 120 or higher. In some cases, Penn State Dickinson Law may also request an informal oral proficiency interview prior to admission.

EFL support is available through our Legal English Program, which is offered to students at both locations. This program is directed by Professor Lindsey Kurtz, who offers a number of tutorials each semester.

External Course Enrollment

With approval of an appropriate [Associate Dean for Academic Affairs](#), LL.M. and exchange students may register for one graduate level course (400 or 500 level or above) at Penn State University outside of the law school. Students are permitted to take only one outside course per year for degree credit.

Students who choose to exercise this option will be required to continue their LL.M. coursework in their Penn State Dickinson Law home location, regardless of the location of courses being taken outside the law school. Students should inquire

with the Penn State University Bursar as to whether outside coursework will result in additional tuition costs. Courses taken outside the law school may not qualify as law school credits for purposes of bar exam eligibility.

LL.M. students may also pursue a joint degree leading to a Master of International Affairs (M.I.A.) offered by the School of International Affairs. Information about this opportunity will be shared with all students in an information session after their arrival.

Academic Advisor

All LL.M. and exchange students are assigned a full-time academic adviser, Dr. Kristin Hrehor, who they can consult with before their arrival and throughout the program.

Full-Time & Part-Time Enrollment

Full-time students must enroll in at least 12 credits but no more than 17 credits each semester. Non-international students may complete the degree part-time but must enroll in a minimum of 6 credits each semester. Part-time students should note that federal financial aid does not necessarily extend to part-time enrollment. International students must be enrolled as full-time, degree-seeking students at all times, which equates to 12 credits (or more) per semester. International students should consult [Penn State Global](#) when maintaining full-time enrollment is not possible due to reasons beyond the student's control.

Independent Study

With the approval of the appropriate [Associate Dean for Academic Affairs](#), LL.M. students may take independent study courses for up to three credits in any one semester, and no more than a total of four credits may be counted toward fulfillment of the LL.M. degree requirements. Students planning to sit for a bar exam should confirm if independent study credit is accepted in

fulfillment of eligibility requirements in the targeted jurisdiction. For more information, see [Independent Study Courses](#) on the Dickinson Law Intranet.

J.D. Application Track for LL.M. Candidates

Over the history of Penn State Dickinson Law's LL.M. program, some LL.M. students have determined that earning a J.D. would be better suited to their ultimate career goals. Accordingly, candidates for the LL.M. degree may seek to enter the J.D. program via the J.D. Application Track for LL.M. Candidates.

Admission to the J.D. program via the J.D. Application Track for LL.M. Candidates is not guaranteed. Rather, it is a competitive process in which performance in the LL.M. program is taken into strong consideration, along with other application materials. Each applicant must have a clear and compelling rationale for the transfer request, including a well-defined career plan that demonstrates the importance of earning a J.D. degree in realization of those plans. An applicant's entire file is carefully evaluated with attention given to grades received during the LL.M. year and overall academic performance. Only applicants who appear capable of satisfactorily completing the J.D. program and being admitted to the bar will be permitted to transfer. Admissible applicants may be required to interview.

Eligibility

This application track is available only to second semester Penn State Dickinson Law LL.M. candidates. LL.M. students from other law schools are not eligible.

Students who have already earned their LL.M. from Penn State Dickinson Law or another law school are not eligible (but may still apply through the normal J.D. application process via LSAC).

Applicants must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.6 across at least two full-time semesters in the LL.M. program at Penn State Dickinson Law.

An LSAT or GRE is not required for Penn State Dickinson Law LL.M. candidates to apply to the J.D. program via this track.

Application Requirements and Components

Applicants must apply via LSAC, and provide all of the following components:

- (1) A completed **Penn State Dickinson Law J.D. Application Track for LL.M. Candidates application** that includes a personal statement with a clear and compelling rationale for the transfer request, including a well-defined career plan that demonstrates the importance of earning a J.D. degree in realization of those plans.
- (2) An LSAC Credential Assembly Service (CAS) report including:
 - An official Penn State Dickinson Law transcript showing two semesters of grades; and
 - Transcripts from all post-secondary schools (undergraduate and graduate) that you have attended and at which you earned credit.
 - **Evaluation forms from at least two Penn State Dickinson Law faculty** members with whom you completed a course. A link to the Evaluation Form will be available in the application; and
 - A letter of Good Standing from the Penn State Dickinson Law registrar.

Submitting Transcripts – International and Domestic

Spring semester grades are typically posted during the first week of June. Applicants should order an official transcript from the Penn State University Registrar after all their spring grades have posted. [Instructions for submitting transcripts to LSAC](#) are available on the LSAC website.

Penn State Dickinson Law transcripts must be ordered from the [Penn State University Registrar](#). Electronic transcripts are \$10.

All transcripts must be sent directly to LSAC for inclusion in your CAS report. We will not accept transcripts submitted directly from applicants. LSAC will accept paper or electronic transcripts.

Additional time may be needed to request, receive, and process international transcripts. Applicants are encouraged to contact undergraduate and graduate institutions attended outside the U.S. as early as possible to ensure they are received by LSAC and attached to the CAS report by the application deadline.

Application Timeline

The J.D. Application Track for LL.M. candidates will open in May and will close on June 15. All applications must be submitted by that deadline. The Office of Admissions will allow until June 30 to receive transcripts from international institutions. All other components of the application must be submitted by June 15.

Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

Decisions are made on a rolling basis. Applicants should expect a decision no later than July 15.

Location Change Request Policy

Penn State Dickinson Law operates as one law school with two distinct locations. During the application and selection process, prospective students have multiple opportunities to learn about both locations and indicate their preferred campus. Potential applicants are encouraged to explore both locations, engage with staff from each, and participate in virtual programming that highlights location-specific considerations. Prior to accepting an official offer of admission, students may submit a location request to the Graduate and International Programs Office. However, after accepting an offer of admission and beginning the visa application process (if applicable), LL.M. students

are not permitted to request relocation to the other campus.

Textbooks

Students have a variety of options to buy, sell, or rent textbooks. Students may purchase textbooks from [the Penn State bookstore](#) and have them delivered. Review instructions for ordering textbooks [here](#). Students in the Carlisle location may also borrow textbooks, upon availability, from Dickinson Law's Lending Library. Used textbooks may also be available via online vendors. However, textbooks cannot be accessed at the main libraries on each campus. As advanced reading is often required, *students must acquire all required textbooks ahead of the start of classes.*

ASSOCIATE DEANS OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS



Jeffrey Dodge
Associate Dean, Academic Affairs
Carlisle

[Meet Dean Dodge](#)



Michele Vollmer
Associate Dean, Academic Affairs
University Park

[Meet Dean Vollmer](#)

ASSESSMENT & GRADING

Auditing a Course

To audit a course, a student must first obtain approval from the course instructor and then receive permission from the appropriate [Associate Dean for Academic Affairs](#). Requests to audit must be submitted by the drop/add deadline published on the Academic Calendar. Audited courses appear on the student's schedule and transcript, with a grade of "AUS" for satisfactory attendance or "AUU" for unsatisfactory attendance. No academic credit is earned, the GPA is not affected, and audit credits are charged at the standard per-credit tuition rate.

Disability Accommodations

Penn State Dickinson Law is fully committed to (a) making its programs accessible to all qualified individuals, regardless of disability, and (b) making reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students with temporary or permanent medical conditions or physical, cognitive, or psychological disabilities may be able to receive accommodations to eliminate barriers to their success. Accommodated students do not receive any advantage over others; rather, accommodations allow such students to not be at a disadvantage relative to other students as a result of conditions beyond their control. [Follow these steps](#) to request accommodations related to any disability.

Exam Regulations

All students are required to review and abide by the official [Assessment & Exam Regulations](#) posted on the Dickinson Law Intranet.

All questions about exam administration and regulations should be directed to the Registrar, Assistant Registrar and/or Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at your location, not faculty members. Students may not contact faculty members about anything related to exams, both

as it relates to the exam process and content. Doing so violates the Exam Regulations and potentially pierces the anonymous grading process.

English Language Accommodations

As part of the application process, all LL.M. students submit information demonstrating their English language proficiency. As such, all admitted students should be sufficiently prepared for study in English at Dickinson Law. However, LL.M. students for whom English is not a first language may request the use of hardcopy/paper 1) English language and/or 2) translation dictionary during timed, in-class assessments. Legal dictionaries are not permitted for use during timed, in-class assessments.

Contact the Office of Academic & Student Services with questions regarding language-related exam accommodations and to request approval for accommodations.

Grade Point Average & Ranking

Grade point averages are calculated and noted on the student transcript. LL.M. students are not ranked.

Grade Appeals

Grading is the exclusive responsibility of each course instructor. Absent a calculation error or other mistake by the instructor which the instructor determines justifies submission of a grade change, grades are final. For information on grade appeals, see the [Student Academic Handbook](#).

LL.M. Grading & Grading Scale

Each course is graded according to the criteria established in the course syllabus. Some courses may require students to write papers, some may have multiple shorter examinations, and some may have only a final examination. LL.M. students receive letter grades for their classes. LL.M. student grades are not calculated into the J.D. grading curve. LL.M. students are evaluated separately from J.D. students according to the following grading standards and scale:

For more information on grading and evaluation protocols, see the [Student Academic Handbook](#).

Grade	Quality of Performance
A, A-, B+	Exceptional achievement
B, B-, C+	Substantial achievement
C	Acceptable achievement
D	Inadequate achievement
F	Failure

Pass/Fail Enrollment

LL.M. students may not take required classes on a pass/fail basis. Students may, however, take non-required courses on a pass/fail basis with the approval of the appropriate [Associate Dean for Academic Affairs](#), subject to the same policies as J.D. students.

CO-CURRICULAR LEARNING

Clinical Programs

Penn State Dickinson Law operates several in-house legal clinics. Given the duration of the LL.M. degree program, participation in the clinics is limited. At University Park, for example, the Center for Immigrant Rights Clinic is particularly popular among LL.M. students. Students are invited to attend an information session specifically for LL.M. students each fall, where they can learn about the various clinic opportunities available to them and how they can apply. The following clinics are available to LL.M. students:

- Arts, Sports & Entertainment Law Clinic [UP and Carlisle]
- Center for Immigrants' Rights Clinic [UP]
- Civil Rights Appellate Clinic [UP and Carlisle]
- Intellectual Property Clinic [UP and Carlisle]
- Rural Economic Development Clinic [UP and Carlisle]

Education Abroad & Exchange

Penn State Dickinson Law has a robust education abroad and exchange program portfolio. Given the duration of the program, LL.M. degree students are not able to participate. However, a number of summer opportunities are available through partner institutions for those students seeking further study after graduation. Please consult with the Graduate and International Programs Office about these opportunities.

One-semester exchange students from Penn State's international partner institutions are invited to take LL.M. courses and participate in events planned for LL.M. students.

Experiential Learning

With limited availability, LL.M. students may participate in some experiential learning courses—including clinics and pro-bono work. Opportunities are competitive and may be restricted by immigration regulations.

Moot Court

LL.M. students are eligible to participate in some moot court competitions. Each year, team members are selected through an intra-school competition and work under the guidance of faculty and experienced lawyers to enhance their writing, problem-solving, and advocacy skills.

Students interested in joining a team should watch for opportunities announced in law school announcements.

IMMIGRATION COMPLIANCE

International students are supported by the Office of International Students and Scholars at Penn State Global for all immigration matters. Office hours are 8:00am to 5:00pm. EST Monday through Friday (closed 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm). Please do not hesitate to reach out to Penn State Global with any questions or concerns you might have. Students may “Submit a Question” in iStart, call 1-814-865-6348 (Option 1), or schedule an appointment in Starfish, which can be accessed via the Student Portal. (Note: Individuals on OPT/STEM OPT can request a meeting via Submit a Question in iStart or by emailing ISSA-Adviser@psu.edu.)

Academic Holds

LL.M. students may have a hold placed on their ability to register if they do not respond to requests to abide by Penn State regulations and policies (e.g., failure to complete mandatory document check-in, failure to upload a local address, failure to provide a financial guarantee, etc.).

Health Insurance

Health insurance is mandatory for all international students. Each international student will be automatically enrolled in the [Penn State Student Health Insurance plan](#) (“SHIP”). To waive

Summer Enrollment

Penn State Dickinson Law does not offer summer courses. An exception is a one-credit summer externship class. Enrollment in that course is limited to international J.D. students to satisfy unique visa-related requirements for employment and Curricular Practical Training requirements.

out of this requirement, one must submit a waiver request at the start of the semester documenting proof of insurance coverage that meets Penn State’s insurance requirements. SHIP does not cover visual or dental insurance. Health insurance charges are added to your semester bill. Please direct questions to the Student Health Insurance Office at UHS-insurance@psu.edu.

Maintaining Status

International students are supported by the [Office of International Students and Scholars](#) at Penn State Global for all immigration matters. While the Office assist students in maintaining their status, ultimately, maintenance of status is each student's responsibility. Students should carefully read information on [Maintenance of Status](#).

Online & Distance Education

International students may not take more than 3 credits each semester in online or distance education. An online or distance education course is one in which students are separated from the faculty member or each other for more than one-third of the instruction and the instruction involves the use of technology to support regular and substantive interaction among students and between the students and the faculty member, either synchronously or asynchronously. Students planning to sit for a bar exam should confirm if



online or distance education credit is accepted in fulfillment of eligibility requirements in the targeted jurisdiction.

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Students who have been in F-1 status for at least one academic year are eligible for OPT, which is temporary employment in their field of study for purposes of gaining practical experience. Students are eligible for an additional year of OPT at each higher degree level (i.e., Master's, PhD.). J-1 visa holders may have different restrictions on their eligibility for academic training. [Please see Penn State Global for more information.](#)

Travel Notification

Before F-1 and J-1 students travel outside of the United States, they should make sure to have a valid form I-20/DS-2019 with signature for re-entry. Students may request the required travel signature through [iStart](#).

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Academic Calendar

Review the [academic calendar](#) to check when classes and exams begin, the deadlines to add or drop classes, and a list of school holidays.

Canvas

Canvas is Penn State's learning management system where one can access academic assignments and course materials. Professors usually use Canvas to communicate remotely with their students.

Course Catalog

Visit the Penn State Dickinson Law [website](#) for course descriptions. Not all courses are offered on a regular basis and may not be available in any particular semester. Information on course offerings, schedules, and other course registration information can be found on the [Dickinson Law Intranet](#).

Daily Announcements

Daily email announcements are distributed to students, faculty, and staff via their PSU email accounts. Students should be sure to read these announcements every day to remain up to date on current happenings and important deadlines at the law school. Current and past announcements are posted in a searchable format on the Announcements Blog.

Email & IT Support

Students are requested to regularly check their Penn State email accounts for communications from Penn State and Penn State Dickinson Law. All important information will be sent to one's Penn State email account. The Carlisle IT office is located in Room 010. The University Park IT office is located in the basement of the Katz building.

Library Information

The Penn State University Libraries consists of 36 libraries at 22 locations throughout Pennsylvania. The [H. Laddie Montague Jr. Law Libraries](#), located on both campuses, provides a wide range of resources to support class work, address legal research questions, and conduct legal scholarship. The library also provides course supplements, such as Quimbee and West Study Aids. The law librarians can assist students with using the various legal research databases available at Penn State Dickinson Law including LexisAdvance, Westlaw, BloombergLaw, HeinOnline, and the Penn State e-Journal and e-Books catalogue. Students can also access many other legal databases, such as CALI, Fastcase, Case Text, and Ravel Law using their school account.

LionPath

LionPATH is Penn State's primary platform through which students may access information about billing, ordering textbooks, and other important account issues.

Dickinson Law Intranet

The Dickinson Law Intranet is where students can access detailed information on school policies, requirements, faculty, courses, etc. Students receive access to the Dickinson Law Intranet when setting up their Penn State email.