



**PennState**  
Dickinson Law

# Student Academic Handbook LL.M. Supplement, 2023-2024

International Programs & Graduate Education  
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Welcome to the LL.M. Degree Program.

This document serves as a supplement to the J.D. Student Academic Handbook, which is the primary source for Dickinson Law’s academic policies and protocols. LL.M. students are expected to understand and adhere with all academic policies and protocols. When not explained herein, students are directed to defer to the J.D. Student Academic Handbook. LL.M. 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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[Dickinson Law Diversity Plan](#)

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Questions may be directed to Associate Dean for Academic Affairs  
Jeffrey A. Dodge, at [jad6742@psu.edu](mailto:jad6742@psu.edu).

## 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 concentration in certain types of law or law-related topics. Students may pursue specific curricular or certificate tracks.

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 may opt to stay for a third semester of legal study with the intent of completing an experiential learning program or preparing for a U.S. bar exam.

To earn the LL.M. degree, students must successfully complete the following courses:

- Introduction to the U.S. Legal System (2 credits)
- LL.M. Legal Research (1 credit)
- LL.M. Legal Writing (2 credits)

## LL.M. ACADEMIC POLICIES

### *Academic Standing*

LL.M. 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'.

Academic standing for LL.M. students is evaluated throughout the student's program of study. If a student fails to achieve a grade average of at least 'C' in the first semester, excessively fails to attend class or fails to submit assignment, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will provide written notification to the student of failure to maintain

Additionally, LL.M. students must successfully complete one course from the following list:

- Civil Procedure
- Constitutional Law I
- Contracts
- Criminal Law
- Criminal Procedure
- Property

### *Certificate Programs*

In addition to completing basic degree requirements, LL.M. students may opt to pursue specific curricular tracks to fulfill prescribed course requirements associated with bar exam eligibility or complete a certificate program. To earn a certificate in a particular area of law generally requires 15 credits, including both required and elective courses, students are required to submit a Declaration of Intent Form to the Dickinson Law Registrar. More information on certificates is available at [Certificate Programs | Dickinson Law \(psu.edu\)](#)

good academic standing. The student will be granted an opportunity to be heard as to whether the student is able or willing to undertake continued study necessary to complete the LL.M. program. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, in consultation with the Director of International Programs and Graduate Education, will determine whether the student may continue in the LL.M. program or whether probation or dismissal from the program is appropriate. The student may appeal an adverse decision to the Dean.

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

### ***Class Attendance***

Prompt and regular course attendance is required of all Dickinson Law 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***

Most classes at Dickinson Law are recorded, and each professor has a policy governing student access to recordings. Students may ask their professors to provide access to class recordings via the request feature on the Canvas course page. Students are not permitted to make their own recordings of any part of a class by any means without prior express authorization of the faculty member. Unauthorized recording, distribution, or use of a class recording may be a violation of the Dickinson Law Honor Code.

### ***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. Applicants must provide evidence of either a TOEFL score report of 88 or higher, a IELTS

score of 6.5 or higher, or equivalent. In some cases, Dickinson Law may also request an informal oral proficiency interview.

### ***External Course Enrollment***

With the approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, LL.M. students may enroll in graduate courses offered at other Penn State campus locations, including the University's Master of Public Administration and Master of Business Administration degree programs offered at Penn State Harrisburg and through the University's World Campus. Additional costs may apply.

### ***Faculty Advisor***

All Dickinson Law students are assigned a full-time faculty member as an academic advisor. LL.M. students should consider the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs as their advisor.

### ***Full-Time & Part-Time Enrollment***

Full-time students must enroll in at least 12 credits but no more than 17 credits each semester. 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 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](#) in MyDL.

### ***J.D. Program Transfer***

LL.M. students may seek to transfer to the J.D. program, but should note that the admissions process is selective. Criteria for transferring to the J.D. program are set by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. 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. Applicants may be required to interview. Only a limited number of LL.M. students are permitted to transfer each year.

Applicants must submit the following items to the Dickinson Law Registrar by July 1 in order to apply for transfer to the J.D. program:

- official transcript of grades and credits earned during the two semesters in the Dickinson Law LL.M. program;
- letter of academic good standing sent from the Registrar's Office;
- one or more letters of reference from Dickinson Law professors;
- résumé or CV; and,
- a personal statement setting forth the reasons for wanting to transfer, including whether the applicant plans to take the bar exam and if so, the jurisdiction where the applicant plans to do so.

There is no application fee and applicants are not required to take the LSAT. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis after spring semester

grades are received. Transfer applicants are automatically considered for merit-based scholarships at the time of admission. Those students not permitted to transfer may officially apply for the three-year J.D. program via LSAC.

LL.M. students who successfully completed all degree requirements for the LL.M. degree and who are accepted into the J.D. program will retain the LL.M. degree. Those not accepted to transfer into the J.D. program will receive the LL.M. degree.

Required J.D. coursework that was successfully completed by the applicant while an LL.M. student will be applied to the J.D. degree. To obtain the J.D. degree, transfer students must complete at least 4 semesters in residence at Dickinson Law and complete all upper-level requirements for the J.D. degree.

LL.M. students accepted for transfer into the J.D. program will be treated similar to J.D. transfer students. Accordingly, grades earned while enrolled as a LL.M. student will not be calculated into the student's GPA as a J.D. student. Grades earned while enrolled as a LL.M. student will not be calculated into the student's class rank as a J.D. student.

LL.M. transfer students who have a cumulative GPA that would generate a rank equivalent to the ranks outlined for Academic Honors will be awarded honors according to their rank equivalency. The award of honors to a LL.M. transfer student shall not displace a non-transfer student who qualifies for honors recognition when transfer students are removed from the class rank calculation.

### ***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 may also borrow text book, upon availability, from Dickinson Law's Lending

Library. Used textbooks may also be available on Amazon and related online vendors. As advanced reading is often required, students must acquire all required textbooks ahead of the start of classes.

## ASSESSMENT & GRADING

### ***Disability Accommodations***

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. [Please see Disability Accommodations Process.](#)

### ***Exam Regulations***

Students should carefully review and follow the specific instructions and directions prepared by their faculty members for course assessments. When taking a timed, in-class assessment, students may elect to type (using a laptop computer) or handwrite their answers using the answer booklets provided in the room. For more information on exam regulations, see the [Student Academic Handbook.](#)

### ***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 may request the accommodations listed below.

### ***Third-Semester Continuation***

With approval the approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, LL.M. students may opt to stay for a third semester of legal study at Dickinson Law with the intent of completing an experiential learning program or preparing for a U.S. bar exam. International LL.M. students may have immigration restrictions. Scholarship support is subject to availability and is not guaranteed.

- *Additional Time.* Students enrolled in the LL.M. programs for whom English is not a first language may request additional time on timed, in-person assessments. In such cases, no student will be approved to receive more than 1.5 times the amount of time allotted to J.D. students for the timed, in-person assessment. Students are generally not given additional time for papers or take-home assessments.
- *Translation Dictionary.* Students enrolled in the LL.M. programs for whom English is not a first language may request the use of a hard-copy English language and/or translation dictionaries during time, in-person assessments. In circumstances where a hard-copy translation dictionary is not available, the student may request the use of a foreign language translating dictionary in electronic form, provided it has no memory capacity, contains no other functions besides language translation, and does not connect to the Internet. Legal dictionaries are not permitted for use during timed, in-class assessments.

### ***Grade Point Average & Ranking***

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

## **LL.M. Grading & Grading Scale**

### **Grading**

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:

Grade	Quality of Performance
A	Excellent
A-	Superior

B+	Very Good
B	Good
B-	Satisfactory
C+	Passing
C	Poor
D	Conditional Failure
F	Failure

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

### **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 Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, subject to the same credit limits as J.D. students.

## **CO-CURRICULAR LEARNING**

### **Clinical Programs**

Dickinson Law operates three, [in-house legal clinics](#) focused on children's advocacy, community law, and medical law. Given the duration of the LL.M. degree program, participation in the clinics is limited. For more information, students may connect directly with the individual clinic directors.

### **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**

International LL.M. students are generally ineligible to conduct off-campus internships, whether paid or unpaid. Curricular Practical Training (CPT), employment which is an integral part of an established curriculum, is potentially available to F-1 students who have been enrolled full-time for one academic year. Given the duration and structure of the LL.M. degree program, CPT is generally not available to LL.M. students. [Please see Penn State Global for more information.](#)

### **Dickinson Law Review**

Founded in 1897 as *The Forum*, the *Dickinson Law Review* is the fifth-oldest legal journal in the nation and the flagship publication of Penn State Dickinson Law. This is a student-run journal that serves the legal community by publishing articles and commentary on timely legal topics. Given the duration of the LL.M. degree program, participation in the Dickinson Law Review is limited. Interested LL.M. students may contact the [Editorial Board](#) for more information.

### **Education Abroad & Exchange**

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. 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 the approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, LL.M. students may enroll in [experiential learning courses](#), including pro bono, clinical, and externship programs. International LL.M. students may have immigration compliance restrictions that could limit experiential learning options.

### ***Moot Court***

LL.M. students may participate in national moot court competitions. Team members, chosen each year through an intra-school competition, advance their writing, problem-solving, and

advocacy skills under the guidance of faculty members and experienced lawyers. Contact [Professor Mohamed Badissy](#) for more information.

### ***Summer Enrollment***

Dickinson Law does not regularly 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 the unique visa-related requirements for employment and Curricular Practical Training for those students.

## **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. You can call 1-814-865-6348 or email [DISSA-Adviser@psu.edu](mailto:DISSA-Adviser@psu.edu).

### ***Academic Holds***

International 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.).

### ***Economic Hardship***

At times, students face unforeseen economic. In some circumstances, students may seek permission to engage in off campus employment. Students should follow the [guidance](#) provided by Penn State Global.

### ***Employment***

Employment for F-1 and J-1 students is limited and working without permission is a violation of status and a deportable offense. On-campus

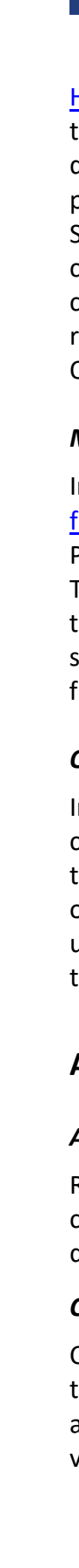
employment is permitted with certain restrictions. With permission, international students can work on-campus up to 20 hours during the semester and up to 40 hours during the winter and spring breaks. Students who were registered in spring and will continue to be enroll for the following fall may work full-time on campus (more than 20 hours per week) during the summer. [Please see Penn State Global for more information.](#)

F-1 and J-1 students may not work off-campus without permission from [Int'l Student and Scholar Advising](#). ISSA offers workshops every semester which explain the different types of off-campus work permission available to F-1 and J-1 students.

### ***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 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](mailto: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. The Office assist students in maintaining their status, but 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

## **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.

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 independent study 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.). [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 annually request a travel signature through [iStart](#).

### ***Course Catalog***

Visit the 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 in [My Dickinson Law](#).

### ***Daily Announcements***

Daily email announcements, called Practice Greatness are distributed to students, faculty, and staff. 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 Dickinson Law IT office is located in Room 010.

### ***Library Information***

The Penn State University Libraries consists of 36 libraries at 22 locations throughout Pennsylvania. The [H. Laddie Montague Jr. Law Library](#), located on the Dickinson Law campus, 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 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.

### ***My Dickinson Law (myDL)***

MyDL is the Dickinson Law intranet (linked from the website homepage) where students can access detailed information on school policies, requirements, faculty, courses, etc. Students receive access to MyDL when setting up their Penn State email.