

Application Instructions

J.S.D. Application Instructions

General Information

Berkeley Law enrolls a student body that is diverse with respect to legal background and proposed research. We seek to admit students who have the highest standards of professional excellence and integrity; who will bring vision, creativity, and commitment to their professional endeavors; and who will contribute to the learning environment of the law school by sharing their unique perspectives.

In evaluating J.S.D. applicants, substantial consideration is given to the personal statement, academic records, proposed research topic, writing sample, letters of recommendation, legal experience, and other significant professional achievements. The J.S.D. program is severely restricted in size, and admission is normally limited to individuals who are engaged in or are outstanding candidates for academic work or other careers that emphasize legal scholarship. Applicants must demonstrate a high potential for completing a scholarly dissertation of the required quality, and admission is contingent upon the strong support of a suitable faculty member who agrees to serve as the student's primary advisor.

Application Process Overview

Applicants must apply online through the Law School Admission Council's (LSAC) website at [LSAC.org](https://lsac.org), and electronic applications are required. Please DO NOT send a paper copy of your application form - this will significantly delay processing.

If you have any questions or technical difficulties using the online application system, contact the LSAC help desk at 215-968-1315 or llminfo@lsac.org. Berkeley Law cannot assist you with technical problems on the LSAC system.

If you cannot apply online due to lack of Internet access, you may request a paper application. Although paper applications generally take much longer to process than electronic applications, submitting a paper application will not in any way affect your admission decision. Contact the Advanced Degree Programs Office by writing to llm@law.berkeley.edu to request a paper application form. You can help streamline the process by applying as early as possible and by sending all of your application materials together in one packet, except your academic records and the Faculty Adviser Agreement Form, which should be sent directly from the issuing institution and the faculty member, respectively. We recommend use of a delivery confirmation or other tracking method to verify delivery.

Please note that all applications and supporting documents become the property of Berkeley Law and will not be returned. It is your responsibility to ensure that all items are submitted by February 1st. As such, you are encouraged to submit application materials well before the deadline to allow time for an exchange of correspondence with the Advanced Degree Programs Office. Applications will not be reviewed until all required items have been received. Late applications will not be considered.

Application Timeline

We begin accepting applications in September, after our application forms are made available.

Deadline - The deadline to apply for the J.S.D. program at Berkeley Law is midnight February 1st, 2021 Pacific Standard Time. We are aware that it takes a few weeks for LSAC to evaluate and assemble documents from the time they are received; as long as materials are sent by February 1st they are considered on time.

Communication - Once you submit your application, we will send an e-mail with instructions on how to check your application status online. We will also send an e-mail when your application is complete and ready for review. Please add our e-mail address (llm@law.berkeley.edu) to your address book to prevent such notices from being filtered as spam. Because we process a large number of applications, we ask that you do not telephone to inquire about your application status. Notices are sent by e-mail as decisions are made.

Application Review - While J.S.D. applications will be reviewed at the same time after the application deadline, we still encourage applicants to submit the application and supporting materials early, to avoid unforeseen complications.

Interviews - Select applicants may be invited for an interview prior to receiving a final admission decision.

Notification of Decision - J.S.D. applicants will receive their decision by the end of March. Admitted applicants will have three weeks to respond to Berkeley Law's offer of admission.

Submitting Your Application Form

There are five major steps in order to submit your application form:

- 1) Read these instructions thoroughly and check the box to indicate you have read them.
- 2) Answer the application questions and save your answers.
- 3) Upload your Personal Statement, C.V., Dissertation Proposal Summary, and Writing Sample to the Attachments section.
- 4) Preview your application pdf to confirm that all information is correct.
- 5) Pay the \$80 application fee.

Until you have paid the application fee, your application form has not been fully submitted. Berkeley Law cannot access your application before it is submitted, and it must be submitted electronically before midnight February 1st, Pacific Standard Time. After that time you will no longer be able to submit the application.

Please note: Submitting the application form and sending documents to LSAC's Credential Assembly Service are two separate processes; you do not have to wait until LSAC receives your hard copy materials before submitting the application form. We recommend that you submit the application form as early as possible even if LSAC has not yet received your supporting documents so that we can access your information and begin processing the application.

LLM Credential Assembly Service

LSAC's LLM Credential Assembly Service (LLM CAS) simplifies the J.S.D. application process by centralizing the submission of application materials. Utilizing the LLM CAS, applicants need only send one set of documents to LSAC, who will assemble and distribute reports to the participating law schools of your choice.

LLM CAS consists of three parts: the Electronic Application Service, Document Assembly Service, and the International Transcript Authentication and Evaluation Service.

Electronic Application Service - Berkeley Law requires use of the Electronic Application Service (\$35USD), which allows you to transmit your application online.

Document Assembly Service - Berkeley Law requires use of the Document Assembly Service (\$50USD plus \$30 report fee), through which LSAC will collect transcripts, letters of recommendation, and English proficiency exam score(s) and distribute them to the law schools of your choice. This service does not include authentication or evaluation of transcripts.

International Transcript Authentication and Evaluation Service (\$135USD in addition to the Document Assembly Service and report fee) - Use is optional for applicants educated outside the US. This service is highly recommended but not required, and includes authentication and evaluation of transcripts, degrees/diplomas graduation certificates, and rank statements.

In order to access and submit our online application, you must purchase either the Electronic Application Service and Document Assembly Service (\$85USD) or the Electronic Application Service, Document Assembly Service, AND International Transcript Authentication and Evaluation Service (\$220USD total). Your Credential Assembly Service account will be active for five years.

We strongly advise applicants to register for the LLM Credential Assembly Service and submit their materials well in advance of the application deadline. LSAC recommends applicants register four to six weeks before their first application deadline. Although Berkeley Law's deadline to postmark materials is February 1, it is recommended to have materials sent as early as possible to allow sufficient time for processing.

Please do not send English proficiency exam scores, letters of recommendation, and any transcripts submitted through LLM CAS to Berkeley Law; instead, you must send these promptly to LSAC so that they can be processed and transmitted to Berkeley Law before the application deadline. Further details about this service may be found on LSAC's website at <https://www.lsac.org/llm-other-law-program-applicants/application-process-llm-other-law-programs/llm-credential-assembly>.

Application Checklist

See below for further details on each required item. Please do not send paper copies of any materials uploaded to the online application or sent to LSAC.

- Application form - submit online via LSAC by February 1, 2021
- Official academic records - see below for submission instructions
- Two letters of recommendation - see below for submission instructions
- TOEFL/IELTS score - request that the score report be sent to LSAC
OR request an English Language Requirement Waiver
- Personal Statement - upload to online application

- Curriculum vitae (c.v.) or résumé - upload to online application
- Dissertation Proposal Summary - upload to online application
- Writing sample - upload to online application
- Faculty Advisor Agreement Form - faculty member should submit directly
- \$80USD application fee - pay by credit card while submitting online application

Academic Records

Applicants must submit official academic records showing graded course work, dates of enrollment and award of degree(s). A certified copy of the actual degree or state examination for all university and law school study is also required, if this information is not included on the transcript.

Current Berkeley Law LL.M. Students: Your prior academic records will be sent by LSAC through an electronic LLM CAS report. You should also send a digital copy of your fall grades to llm@law.berkeley.edu as soon as they are available; your application will not be completed until we receive these grades. If you did not apply for the LL.M. program through LSAC please to llm@law.berkeley.edu and request assistance with adding your previous academic records to the new application.

Berkeley Law LL.M. Graduates who applied for the LL.M. program within the past five years: Your prior academic records should still be on file with LSAC and sent through an electronic LLM CAS report. You will also need to [request that a transcript for your LL.M. degree be sent](#) to the Advanced Degree Programs Office. If you did not apply for the LL.M. program through LSAC please to llm@law.berkeley.edu and request assistance with adding your previous academic records to the new application.

Berkeley Law LL.M. Graduates - class of 2013 or later who did not apply for the LL.M. program within the past five years: Our admissions process became paperless in 2012, so we should still have your academic records on file. After you submit the application online, please write to llm@law.berkeley.edu and request that we add your previous academic records to the new application. You will also need to [request that a transcript for your LL.M. degree be sent](#) to the Advanced Degree Programs Office.

Berkeley Law LL.M. Graduates - before 2013: Either have your prior academic records sent to LSAC's LLM CAS as described below, or contact the [Office of the Registrar](#) to request that they copy the transcripts in your student file that were submitted as part of your LL.M. application. You will also need to [request that a transcript for your LL.M. degree be sent](#) to the Advanced Degree Programs Office.

Non-Berkeley Law LL.M. Students or Graduates: Submit your academic records to LSAC's LLM CAS. These records must be sent directly to LSAC from the appropriate issuing institution, and applicants must use LSAC's Transcript Request Form, which will be available at the completion of your LLM CAS registration. All official documents must be received by LSAC in a sealed institution envelope. Documents sent by the applicant or without the Transcript Request Form will not be accepted. Transcripts received by LSAC become its property and cannot be returned to the applicant or the issuing institution. If the institution offers to print transcripts in either the native language or in English, order both to be sent to LSAC. If the institution does not offer English translation, it is the applicant's responsibility to make sure an English translation is sent to LSAC. The translation may be done by anyone as long as it is a literal translation, and need not be certified. Students currently enrolled in an LL.M. program should also send a digital copy of your fall grades to llm@law.berkeley.edu as soon as they are available; your application will not be completed until we receive these grades.

For more information on sending academic records to LSAC's LLM CAS, go to <https://www.lsac.org/llm-other-law-program-applicants/application-process-llm-other-law-programs/application-0>.

Letters of Recommendation

Berkeley Law requires two letters of recommendation. If you have already secured a Berkeley Law faculty adviser, one letter should be from them. It is preferable that the other letter comes from one of your law professors. If you have been out of school for five or more years, professional references from a current or former employer may be appropriate, in addition to the letter from your faculty supervisor or law professor.

There are two ways to submit letters of recommendation - either to LSAC's LLM CAS or directly to the Advanced Degree Programs Office.

Current Berkeley Law LL.M. Students: Your letters of recommendation may be submitted to LSAC's LLM CAS OR sent directly to the Advanced Degree Programs Office as described below.

Berkeley Law LL.M. Graduates who applied for the LL.M. program within the past five years: Your letters of recommendation may be submitted to LSAC's LLM CAS OR sent directly to the Advanced Degree Programs Office as described below.

Berkeley Law LL.M. Graduates - class of 2013 or later who did not apply for the LL.M. program within the past five years: Your letters of recommendation should be sent directly to the Advanced Degree Programs Office as described below.

Berkeley Law LL.M. Graduates before 2013: If your academic records are being sent to LSAC's LLM CAS, your Letters of Recommendation may also be submitted to LSAC OR sent directly to the Advanced Degree Programs Office; if you are requesting copies of the transcripts in your student file, your Letters of Recommendation should be sent directly to the Advanced Degree Programs Office as described below.

Non-Berkeley Law LL.M. Students or Graduates: Submit your Letters of Recommendation to LSAC's LLM CAS as described below.

To send Letters of Recommendation to LSAC - 1) Log in to your LLM CAS account and click on Letters of Recommendation. 2) Add your recommenders' names and contact information. 3) Assign the appropriate letters to each school using the letter ID number. 4) An email will be sent to each of your recommenders requesting them to complete and upload a letter for you, or you may print the required recommender forms to provide to your recommenders if they prefer to submit a letter by paper.

The LSAC Letter of Recommendation Form must accompany each letter submitted to LSAC. Letters without a signed form will be returned to the sender. Letters processed by LSAC become its property and cannot be returned or copied.

For more information on submitting letters of recommendation to LSAC's LLM CAS, go to <https://www.lsac.org/llm-and-non-jd-applicants/llm-non-jd-application-process/application-requirements/letters>.

To send Letter of Recommendation to the Advanced Degree Programs Office - The Letter of Recommendation Waiver Form found in the Forms section of the online application includes submission instructions. If you choose to waive your right to inspect your letters, sign the form and provide it to your recommenders. By agreeing to waive your right to inspect the letters, your recommenders are free to write candidly; as a result, letters with enclosed waiver forms are generally viewed with greater credibility than those without waivers. Your recommenders may submit their letters directly to the Advanced Degree Programs Office, or they may return them to you in a sealed envelope for forwarding.

English Language Requirement

Berkeley Law requires Official Score Reports of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) before admitting an applicant whose primary language is not English. For the 2021 application, we are also accepting the TOEFL iBT Special Home Edition and the IELTS Indicator, but are not accepting the TOEFL ITP Plus for China. Scores for these alternative tests should be submitted to LSAC in the usual method as described below.

Applicants whose primary language is English (including US and Canadian citizens) should submit a waiver request as instructed below; Berkeley Law will not assume English proficiency for any applicant.

TOEFL - The minimum score required is 100 on the internet-based TOEFL or 600 on the paper-based test. There is no subscore requirement. Information about test dates and registration procedures is available at most university and US consulates and on the TOEFL website at www.toefl.org.

TOEFL scores that are more than two years old at the time of application cannot be considered; applicants must retake the test to submit a more recent score. Applicants should register for the TOEFL in time to ensure that the Official Score Report will be issued by the February 1st application deadline.

LSAC has arranged to receive TOEFL scores electronically; to have your TOEFL score report sent to LSAC, place an order to its institution code 8395.

IELTS - The minimum score required is 7 on a 9 point scale (overall score) on the Academic Modules. There is no subscore requirement. To register for the IELTS, consult the IELTS website at <http://ielts.org> to locate the office of the test center where you plan to take the test.

LSAC has arranged to receive IELTS scores electronically; to have your IELTS score report sent to LSAC, you MUST indicate before or at the time of your exam that your score be forwarded to LSAC for electronic download.

For more information on submitting a TOEFL or IELTS score report to LSAC's LLM CAS, go to <https://www.lsac.org/llm-and-non-jd-applicants/llm-non-jd-application-process/application-requirements/english>.

English Language Requirement Waiver Requests - You may request an English Language Requirement Waiver if any of the following criteria apply:

- 1) you have attended a US university for full-time study for a minimum of one academic year with a 3.0/B average or higher, OR
- 2) you have earned a degree from a foreign university in which the sole language of instruction is English, OR
- 3) you are a native English speaker.

To request a waiver, check the "Yes" button for Question 1 under English Requirement and choose the appropriate reason from the drop down options. If your waiver is based on education in English, you must submit official academic records through LSAC to verify your eligibility. We do not waive the English Language Requirement based on work experience in English.

Applicants whose primary language is English (including US and Canadian citizens, if eligible) should submit a waiver request; Berkeley Law will not assume English proficiency for any applicant.

Personal Statement

One written essay is required of all applicants. Because only a limited number of qualified applicants may be admitted each year, the Admissions Committee gives careful consideration to each applicant's Personal Statement.

The Personal Statement should describe your legal interests, the particular area of study you intend to undertake as a J.S.D. student, the reasons you wish to study at Berkeley Law, and your professional plans or goals following completion of your degree. You may also use the statement to describe aspects of yourself that are not apparent from your other application materials. The Personal Statement should be written without assistance from others, and should be limited to three pages of double-spaced text.

The Personal Statement must be uploaded to the attachments section of the online application. Please DO NOT also send a paper copy of this document. Supported file formats are: DOC, HTM, HTML, TXT, WP, WPD, RTF, WPS, WPT, DOCX, PDF.

C.V. (Curriculum Vitae)

The Curriculum Vitae should provide a synopsis of your professional and academic background and skills. This summary should include professional experience, research experience, publications, presentations, awards, honors, and affiliations.

The C.V. must be uploaded to the attachments section of the online application. Please DO NOT also send a paper copy of this document. Supported file formats are: DOC, HTM, HTML, TXT, WP, WPD, RTF, WPS, WPT, DOCX, PDF.

Dissertation Proposal Summary

Applicants should submit a brief (one page, double-spaced) summary of the specific research project they would like to work on while at Berkeley Law. Please note that we are requesting a short synopsis, not a full proposal. Admission to the J.S.D. program will be bound to the dissertation topic identified during the application process.

The dissertation proposal summary must be uploaded to the attachments section of the online application. Please DO NOT also send a paper copy of this document. Supported file formats are: DOC, HTM, HTML, TXT, WP, WPD, RTF, WPS, WPT, DOCX, PDF.

Writing Sample

We require that J.S.D. applicants also submit a significant piece of writing, which displays the candidate's analytical and expository skills on a legal policy or similar topic. Suitable pieces of writing include an LL.M. thesis (or portion thereof), an article written in conjunction with a class, or a similar item. There is no formal length requirement for the writing sample; it should be substantial enough to display the analytical and expository skills relevant to scholarly work.

The writing sample should be uploaded to the attachments section of the online application. Please DO NOT also send a paper copy of this document. Supported file formats are: DOC, HTM, HTML, TXT, WP, WPD, RTF, WPS, WPT, DOCX, PDF.

Faculty Advisor Agreement Form

Your prospective faculty advisor must sign this form, acknowledging his/her understanding of J.S.D. program requirements and his/her role as adviser, and confirming his/her commitment to working with you for the duration of the program, if admission is granted. The form should be submitted directly to the Advanced Degree Programs Office by the faculty member. Instructions are included on the form.

Application Fee

Each application must be accompanied by the nonrefundable application fee of \$80 USD, which should be paid by credit card via the online application. Please note that the only opportunity to pay the application fee by credit card is during the online application process.

If your fee is to be paid by a sponsoring agency or if currency regulations in your country require separate or delayed payment, please inform the Advanced Degree Programs Office.

Interview

You may be invited for an interview with a member of the admissions committee prior to receiving a final admission decision. Note that only select applicants will be interviewed, and please refrain from requesting an interview. Applicants selected for interviews will be contacted directly.

Financial Aid

Fellowships are available and awarded to admitted students after admission decisions are made. A separate application is required. For the most updated information on financial aid, go to <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/academics/doctoral-programs/jsd/tuition/fellowships/>.

Reapplying

Applicants who have previously applied and wish to reapply must submit a new application form and pay the \$80USD application fee, in addition to purchasing LSAC's Document Assembly Service if they haven't already. Previous application documents not sent to LSAC's LLM CAS are retained for one year and may be used again if you so request. If you wish to reuse materials in your new application, e-mail the Advanced Degree Programs Office at llm@law.berkeley.edu specifying which materials. If your TOEFL/IELTS scores are more than two years old at the time you submit your application, you must take the test again and submit a new score report. Previous application materials will NOT automatically be associated with your current application, unless requested.

Misconduct & Irregularities

Ethical conduct is expected and required in all of your interactions with LSAC and law schools. Misconduct and irregularities in the admission process can have serious consequences. Go to <https://www.lsac.org/applying-law-school/misconduct-irregularities> for more details.

Contact Information

For more information, visit our website at <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/academics/doctoral-programs/jsd/>. If you have questions, please contact the Advanced Degree Programs Office at llm@law.berkeley.edu.