SPECIAL ADVICE FOR INTERNATIONAL LL.M. STUDENTS

Here are some Frequently Asked Questions that we often receive from incoming international students.

Should I take U.S. Legal Research, Analysis and Writing?

We strongly recommend all students, common law and civil law educated, to enroll in this course. It is very useful for all students since it focuses on one of the most important legal skills: legal communication, specifically, legal communication in the U.S. style. It can provide techniques that will help you to write your exams and papers, and it is also required for the New York Bar exam. We offer the course in both fall and spring semesters, as well as during the LL.M. Summer Experience Program.

Should I plan to take the New York Bar Exam?

Some internationally educated lawyers are eligible to sit for the New York Bar Exam based on their first degree in law (for example, those educated in the United Kingdom or some other jurisdictions whose jurisprudence is based on English Common Law and whose legal education is determined to be substantially equivalent to that of a U.S. JD degree. See http://www.nybarexam.org/Foreign/ForeignLegalEducation.htm for more information). Most internationally educated lawyers, however, must earn an LL.M. in the United States in addition to their first degree in law, in order to become eligible to take the New York Bar Exam; and during the LL.M., they must take some courses specifically required by the NY Bar.

Many of our international students are interested in taking these classes during their LL.M. studies in order to become eligible to take the NY Bar. However, this often means that they must take fewer specialized classes or may not be able to pursue one of our more specialized degree or certificate programs because the requirements of the degree or certificate are not compatible with the requirements of the New York Bar. Here are some things to consider if you are thinking of taking the New York Bar exam required courses during your LL.M. and sitting for the exam after graduation:

- While membership in the New York Bar can be an added credential on your resume, it is likely not an essential credential for the majority of our graduates. Very few of our international graduates will have a long-term career in the United States. Ask yourself, and the lawyers in your home community, whether U.S. bar membership is essential to a career as an international lawyer in the country or region where you will spend your career.
- Some students hope to spend a year working in the U.S. after their LL.M. for the Optional Practical Training period. Not all students who wish to find OPT placements will be able to do so, but for those who do obtain a job during OPT, very few of these positions will require bar membership.
• That said, if you do decide to take the New York Bar, please see www.nybarexam.org and also our Graduate Programs webpage for more information on the required courses and options during your LL.M. We offer all of the classes necessary to meet the requirements.

**I applied to the General LL.M., and now I am more interested in the IBEL degree (or: Does the name of my degree matter, and can I switch?)**

We often discuss this question with alumni around the world who are partners at major firms, and with potential employers. While some specialized degrees, such as the LL.M. in Taxation, are clearly recognized by practitioners in the field, our sources tell us that most other degree names do not make a difference in a student’s employability, especially when it comes to a general LL.M. or something slightly more specialized like our International Business and Economic Law degree. The good news is that you do not need to worry about it too much right now. If you are not sure at this time whether one of these degrees is better for you than another, you should concentrate on choosing classes, not because they fit within a particular degree or certificate but because they are of interest to you and relate to your plans for a further career. We can talk about the name of the degree after you get here. (However, if you are interested in switching into a very specialized program like Environmental and Energy Law, Taxation, National Security, or Global Health Law, you should speak with an advisor as soon as possible, and you may have to go through a second review by the admissions committee).

**There are so many great classes. Can I take more than 13 credits per semester?**

Georgetown has an extensive curriculum, and inevitably, you will have to make some hard choices about which classes to take. However, the 13-credit maximum is set for a reason: This is more than enough to keep you busy during the semester. There is also a lot of learning and valuable professional and personal experience that will occur outside the classroom, so you should be aware that you would give up some of those experiences if you take a course load that is too heavy.

**What limitations and flexibility do I have on course selection and my degree?**

There are very few limitations! You are eligible to request courses from the entire graduate and "upper-level" (second and third year courses) of the J.D. curriculum (except clinics). It is not necessary, e.g., to be in the Securities and Financial Regulation program to request a course in finance and securities, and you can take upper-level J.D. course such as Bankruptcy and Creditors’ Rights or Environmental Law. Please note there is a small number of classes where priority in registration is given to students in a related specialized degree program (e.g. National Security LL.M. students will have priority in registering first for certain seats in some National Security-related courses), but all LL.M. students may request those classes if there is room after the degree students have registered.

Also, as noted above, the Georgetown LL.M. is quite flexible you can change your specialization or add a certificate after you arrive, so we recommend you choose the courses that interest you the most without regard to whether they are part of the LL.M. degree you applied for. Many of
our students change their degrees while here and add or drop a certificate. The important thing is to choose courses you want; do not focus on the name of the degree.

**Do I need to take International Law I since it is required as a “prerequisite” for many international classes?**

Many of our international students have taken a public international law course during their first law degree. This satisfies the requirement of our International Law I course, so students who have already taken such a class during their first degree do not need to take this course again – unless you want to. As a 3-credit course, however, it takes a lot of time and registering for it means there is one less course you can otherwise take.

**What about other “prerequisites?”**

If a course has a “prerequisite” listed, you can register for the class now. As with the International Law I prerequisite, you often can meet a prerequisite based on a similar course in your home country, or through professional experience. Faculty usually permit students to meet a prerequisite by concurrent enrollment in the required course. At the first class session, faculty discuss the background you will need to be successful in the course.

It is important that you do understand what background is required (either prerequisites or “recommended” prior coursework) and decide whether you have previous relevant academic or professional experience which will allow you to be successful in the course. For example, if you have never taken a U.S. Corporations class or had practice experience in corporate law, you many not want to enroll in a class on advanced topics in corporate law such as Mergers and Acquisitions. If you decide to take the course, you can then request a waiver of the prerequisite from the faculty member. We recommend you make the request during the first week of the semester after you have attended the first class – and after you have decided you want to enroll in the course.