

New York Bar: Skills Competency and Professional Values Bar Admission Requirements (Rule 520.18)

The following information is published on the [New York Board of Law Examiners website](#):

In December 2015, the Court of Appeals adopted Section 520.18 to the Rules for the Admission of Attorneys and Counselors at Law (22 NYCRR 520.18). This new provision requires applicants seeking admission in New York to establish that they have acquired skills and professional values necessary to competently practice law. Applicants may satisfy this requirement by completing one of five separate pathways described in section 520.18.

For applicants who qualify for the bar examination based upon having attended an ABA-approved law school and having satisfied the requirements of section 520.3 or based upon their foreign legal education alone under section 520.6, this requirement will first apply to those who commence their legal studies after August 1, 2016.

As to foreign-educated applicants who are required to complete an LL.M. program at an ABA-approved law school in order to sit for the bar examination under section 520.6, the new requirements will apply to those who commence their LL.M. program after August 1, 2018. A copy of the Notice to the Bar announcing the New Skills Competency Requirement and the newly enacted Section 520.18 of the Rules of the Court of Appeals

For the Admission of Attorneys and Counselors at Law is available at: <http://www.courts.state.ny.us/ctapps/news/nottobar/nottobar121615.pdf>.

FAQs for New York's Skills Competency and Professional Values Bar Admission Requirement are available at: <http://www.nycourts.gov/ctapps/news/skills.pdf>

Georgetown Law: Skills Competency and Professional Values "Pathway 1" for Master of Laws (LL.M.) students

As noted above, the requirements of Section 520.18 apply to foreign-educated LL.M. students planning to sit for the bar examination under Section 520.6 who commence their LL.M. programs after August 1, 2018. Therefore, the requirements of Section 520.18 apply to anyone starting the LL.M. program in Fall 2019 and thereafter.

What does this mean for foreign-educated LL.M. students planning to study at Georgetown?

First, please note the following:

520.18 does not impact students' abilities to sit for the bar exam. To sit for the bar exam, students must meet the requirements of section 520.6, which remain the same as they have been since 2012:

- 1) take at least 24 credits of classroom instruction during the LL.M.;
- 2) take 2 credits each in basic American legal system, US Legal Research & Writing, and professional ethics and values;

3) take at least 6 additional credits in subjects tested on the bar exam.

In order to complete the process of admission to the New York Bar, however, in addition to passing the bar exam, applicants (both LL.M. and J.D. graduates) must also complete the following:

- New York Law Course and New York Law Exam
- Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam
- 50 hours of qualifying Pro Bono work
- **Complete one of five “pathways” specified under Section 520.18 [new]**

See [our webpage](#) describing these New York Bar requirements and the Georgetown Law classes that count towards the requirements of Section 520.6.

How can I complete one of the “Pathways” demonstrating that I have met the skills competency and professional Values admission requirements of Section 520.18?

Many of our incoming foreign-trained LL.M. students will have already satisfied one of the Pathways prior to enrolling at the Law Center.

- Those who have completed a paid or unpaid full-time apprenticeship for at least six months, under the supervision of attorney(s) who has been admitted/authorized to practice and in good standing for at least two years in the jurisdiction where the work takes place – either in the U.S., or in a foreign country – will satisfy Pathway 4. See [here](#) for the official rule.
- Those who have already been authorized to practiced law in the United States or any other country, and have practiced in good standing for at least one year full-time or two years half-time prior to enrolling in the LL.M. program, will satisfy Pathway 5. See [here](#) for the official rule.

If you do not fall within Pathways 4 or 5 at the time you begin the LL.M. program, you can still become eligible for admission to the New York Bar in one of the following ways:

- You may complete an apprenticeship or practice experience that meets the requirements of Pathway 4 or 5 *after* you complete the LL.M. program. If you choose to take the New York Bar exam in July following your graduation, you will have three years from sitting for the second day of the Uniform Bar Exam to fulfill the Pathway 4 or 5 requirements. (Or, if you choose to take a later bar exam, you can begin your qualifying experience before taking the bar exam and finish it within three years of sitting for the exam). See Rule [520.12\(d\)](#), Time to File Admission Application.
- You may choose to participate in the Law Center’s Pathway 1 option for LL.M. students. To choose this option, you will need to enroll in a special track within the General Studies LL.M. This track, a focus on U.S. Law & Legal Methods, is designed to impart the same set of skills & competencies that Georgetown Law’s J.D. students will acquire during their J.D. degree in satisfaction of Rule 520.18.
 - Those who choose the U.S. Law & Legal Methods track must pursue the General LL.M. degree. It is not possible to complete this track within a specialized LL.M.
 - Those who choose the U.S. Law & Legal Methods track will automatically fulfill the eligibility requirements of Section 520.6 to sit for the bar exam. (Students who do not choose or need Pathway 1 will also still be able to take the classes required under 520.6.)

- o Those who choose the U.S. Law & Legal Methods track will be automatically enrolled in a specified curriculum and will be able to select a small number of elected courses as well. This includes mandatory participation in the LL.M. Summer Experience, starting in July. The course schedule for students in Pathway 1 will be as follows:

Summer (4 credits)

Class 1: Foundations of American Law (2 credits)

Class 2: Professional Responsibility (2 credits)

Fall (13 credits)

Class 1: U.S. Legal Research, Analysis, and Writing (2 credits)

Class 2: Introduction to U.S. Constitutional Law (3 credits)

Class 3: Introduction to U.S. Civil Procedure (3 credits)

Class 4: Corporations (3 credits)

Class 5: Elective (2 credits)

Spring (13 Credits)

Class 1: Simulation Course: Negotiations (3 credits)

Class 2: Evidence (3 credits)

Class 3: Introduction to Contracts (3 credits)

Class 4: Elective (2 credits)

Class 5: Elective (2 credits)

We realize that Section 520.18 introduces a new element into foreign students' process to gain admission to the New York Bar. In addition to reviewing the information above, please review both the [New York Court of Appeals' Notice to the Bar](#) outlining these rules, and the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about the Rule. We have also placed information on our [New York Bar webpage](#) and for our admitted students on the Admitted Student Website, outlining Pathways 1, 4 and 5 and Georgetown's Pathway 1 curriculum more specifically. Please review of all this information that we have put together for you. If you still have questions about these options after reviewing these materials, you may email llmadvising@georgetown.edu.