MASTER OF LAWS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The Washington University School of Law has a thriving Master of Laws (LLM) program for international students. Admission requirements include a basic law degree from a foreign university, a strong academic record, and a thorough grasp of English. Michele Shoresman, the assistant dean for graduate and joint degree programs (see her faculty activities summary on page 31), directs the program. Dean Shoresman's exceptional blend of energy, kindness, and extraordinary personal attention is well known to our international students and has helped make their experience meaningful and fulfilling.

Our international LLM students hail from all over the world. In the past two years, they have come from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Eritrea, France, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Moldova, Pakistan, the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Thailand, Ukraine, and Venezuela. They are recent graduates, government officials, private practitioners, academics, and others who come to Washington University for a variety of reasons—to immerse themselves in international law, to acquaint themselves with the U.S. legal system, to refine their English language skills, or to experience American culture.

Two competing models of graduate legal instruction for international students are prevalent in the United States. One model relies on special courses open only to foreign graduate students. Under the other model, foreign graduate students enroll in existing JD courses. At the Washington University School of Law, our goal is to have the best of both worlds. The majority of the instruction that international LLM students receive occurs through enrollment in regularly scheduled JD courses. In this way, these international students are fully integrated into the life of the law school, meet and get to know their American counterparts (who are typically their peers, since both groups consist mainly of young postgraduates), and have the entire JD curriculum at their disposal. At the same time, all the international LLM students take a year-long course, "Introduction to U.S. Law and Methods," designed solely for them. In that way, the students receive the basic instruction and practice that will enable them to handle the JD courses. Moreover, by being together in this intensive course for a year, they build lasting friendships and solidarity.

Special care is taken to include the international students’ spouses and significant others in a range of activities and to help provide social and cultural opportunities for them as well.

Ms. Leigh Hunt Greenhaw teaches "Introduction to U.S. Law and
One productive recent addition to the international LLM program is the Judicial Observation Program. Each year, international LLM students who choose to do so are paired with federal or state judges in St. Louis for six weeks during the summer. They observe the courts in action, prepare memoranda, and in the process gain an extra level of practical understanding.

As the international LLM program has grown, it has become a kind of extended family for our international students, both while they are here and after they graduate.

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writing practice in U.S. legal methods, exposure to preferred formats and styles for written communication in the United States, and instruction and practice in U.S. legal research. Traditional classroom instruction is supplemented by writing exercises, small-group tutorials, and individual consultation.

Two alumni—Michael Downey and K. Lee Marshall—assist Ms. Greenhaw in teaching the course. Their strong academic records and practical experience have enriched the instruction immeasurably.

The students choose their other courses from the JD curriculum. Some students prefer to focus on U.S. law, either generally or by concentrating on a specialty area like intellectual property, commercial law, or criminal law. Others prefer a heavy dose of international law. Still others choose a combination.

Whatever their curricular interests, the international LLM students receive a great deal of counsel. They meet frequently with Dean Shoresman and Ms. Greenhaw. Each semester they also meet with other faculty members for personalized curricular advice tailored to their particular interests, experiences, and talents. Each international student is also assigned a personal mentor, a JD student who has volunteered for that position. Throughout the year, there is also a steady stream of special seminars and field trips, social activities, and other events designed to integrate the students into the life of the law school, the University, and the local community—both academically and socially. Special care is taken to include the international students’ spouses and significant others in a range of activities and to help provide social and cultural opportunities for them as well.

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For more information on Washington University’s LLM program for international students, please visit the School of Law’s Web site at http://law.wustl.edu, and click on “Joint Degrees and LLM Programs.”