

Admission to the MSL Program

Northwestern Pritzker School of Law is proud to offer the [Master of Science in Law](#) degree (MSL), which provides focused training in intellectual property, regulatory analysis, and business/entrepreneurship for students with backgrounds in science, technology, engineering, math, and medicine (STEM+). The MSL Program exposes technically-trained students to the legal and regulatory structures they encounter in their careers.

The MSL Program is offered in both a full-time and a part-time format. The full-time program is open to domestic and international students. The part-time program is open to domestic students and to international students who do not require visas. The part-time program is not available to international students who require visas. In addition, we offer a special BS-MSL Program for Northwestern students from the McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science; for more information, please refer to the McCormick BS-MSL Application Process section below.

To be eligible to apply for admission to the MSL Program at Northwestern Law, all applicants (except for those applying to the McCormick BS-MSL Program) must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university or have completed the equivalent of six semesters from an accredited college or university and expect to graduate during the current academic year. Applicants must have a STEM background, either in the form of an educational degree or in substantial work experience in a STEM field.

The Admissions Committee will base its selection decisions on each applicant's "fit" with the MSL Program, looking at a number of factors, including the applicant's statement of interest, academic record, application information, letter(s) of recommendation, extracurricular activities, work experience, leadership ability, personal circumstances, and other information.

There is **no fee** to apply to the MSL Program. Although the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid seeks to keep students informed of their application status and the receipt of documents, it is each student's responsibility to ensure that all parts of the application are received by the deadline. The Admissions Committee does not review incomplete applications. Upon submission of an application, applicants will be provided with instructions on how to check the status of their applications via an online tool.

Admissions are accepted on a rolling basis during three rounds of admission:

- Applications for the first round are due by **January 15**.
- Applications for the second round are due by **April 15**. *This is the final deadline for international applicants.*
- Applications for the third and final round are due by **June 1**.

Different deadlines apply to the McCormick BS-MSL Program. Please refer to the special instructions section below for specific deadlines and details.

Applicants will be informed of the Admissions Committee's decisions within three weeks of the application deadlines.

A student who is accepted into the program can secure his/her place in the class with a nonrefundable deposit of \$750, which will ultimately be applied toward tuition and fees. Each application round will have a deposit deadline, which is typically within one month of the admissions decision.

Tuition for the MSL Program is listed at <http://www.law.northwestern.edu/admissions/tuitionaid/tuition/>. Tuition increases should be anticipated each year.

The MSL Application Process: All Applicants

The MSL application requires a number of different parts, and these parts vary depending on whether the applicant is a domestic or international student, and whether the applicant is applying to the general MSL Program or the special BS-MSL Program with Northwestern's McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science.

All applicants must submit the following items:

- A Statement of Interest
- One letter of recommendation
- A current resume or curriculum vitae

- Transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate institutions attended (see below for additional details)

Applicants are free to submit additional optional information, including:

- Unofficial standardized test score reports (GMAT, GRE, LSAT, or MCAT)
- Additional letters of recommendation

Statement of Interest

The Statement of Interest section allows applicants to introduce themselves to the Admissions Committee. The statement should be 500-800 words total and should include information that addresses all three of the following topics (four if the applicant does not have a degree in a STEM subject):

- *Why you are interested in studying in the MSL Program.*
- *How your past academic and professional experiences prepare you to study in this program.*
- *How you hope to use the knowledge gained from the MSL Program to achieve your career goals.*
- *If you do not have a degree in a STEM field, please explain your STEM background and/or professional experience in a STEM field.*

Letter of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation should come from a previous or current professor or employer, or another person familiar with the applicant's qualifications for the MSL Program. The letter should be on official university or company letterhead. The process for obtaining a recommendation letter is as follows:

1. Identify a recommender;
2. **Let the recommender know that you would like to use him/her as a recommender and obtain that person's agreement to serve as your recommender;**
3. After steps #1 and 2 are completed, provide the recommender's contact information on the online application form.

Once a recommender's contact information is submitted, we will *immediately* send an automatic email to the recommender, along with a link and instructions for how to upload the recommendation letter directly to us. This email must go directly to the recommender; do not send the email to yourself and then forward it to the recommender.

The Admissions Committee will begin review of completed applications on the submission deadline. Optional materials received after the submission deadline may not be included in review.

Resume/Curriculum Vitae

A description of prior employment and education, as well as achievements and publications, should be included in a 1-2 page resume/CV written in English.

Standardized Test Scores and Other Optional Information

While students are not required to take a standardized test (apart from TOEFL or IELTS for international students; see below) to apply for the MSL Program, the Admissions Committee will consider standardized test scores that are submitted as part of the application. Test scores – such as one or more of the GMAT, GRE, LSAT, and MCAT – often help to flesh out or fortify an application.

Transcripts

All applicants should upload an unofficial copy of undergraduate and graduate transcripts to complete their applications. Prior to enrollment, all admitted students must arrange to submit original, sealed copies of undergraduate and graduate transcripts to the Admissions Office.

Domestic and international applicants who have received an undergraduate or graduate degree from an educational institution outside of the US (including its territories and Canada) have the additional requirement of providing an outside evaluation of their transcripts from the World Education Services (WES). The Admissions Committee strongly encourages all students who received a degree from outside the US to begin the WES process as part of their application to the MSL; the process typically takes 7-10 days and the WES evaluation can expedite the admissions process. In any event, for admitted students, the WES evaluation must be received by our Admissions Office within one month of the enrollment deposit deadline or prior to completing visa application paperwork for international students. Applicants can apply for WES on the WES website and should choose the "course by course" evaluation option. For more information about WES evaluation, please visit www.wes.org; check the "Required Documents" information specific to your country of study.

Scholarships

The Law School grants a limited number of MSL scholarships for full-time students, awarded on the basis of merit and need. Scholarships are for one year only and are not renewable. After admission decisions have been communicated, admitted students will be asked to complete a scholarship application form.

Applicants may be eligible for additional scholarship awards if they: are currently working toward a STEM PhD; have already earned a STEM PhD; are postdoctoral fellows who are not Northwestern University tuition benefit-eligible; or are applying to the McCormick BS-MSL Program.

In the above cases, the Admissions Committee will inform eligible students of the relevant application procedures after admissions decisions are communicated.

Loans

Many MSL students - both full and part time - can qualify for student loans. US citizens and permanent residents are generally eligible for federal student loans (<http://www.law.northwestern.edu/admissions/tuitionaid/aid/>).

US citizens and permanent residents who wish to apply for a federal student loan should also submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine their eligibility for federal loan programs. The FAFSA form is available online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Individuals may also need to submit a signed copy of their 2016 federal tax return and W-2s to Northwestern. Individuals will be contacted via email should our Financial Aid Office require these forms.

Applicants who are not eligible for federal student loans may qualify for a university-administered or other private loan program (as outlined at www.northwestern.edu/sfs/loan_instruc_info/private_loans.html). Loans for international students require a credit-worthy US citizen/permanent resident co-signer. If there is no co-signer, applicants should investigate loan opportunities in their home countries.

Instructions for completing the financial aid application will be provided via email to admitted students after their admissions decisions are made.

Bar Examination

The MSL degree does not qualify its graduates to take a bar examination or to practice law.

Special Instructions/Information for International Applicants to the General MSL Program

English Language Proficiency

In addition to the above items, international applicants to the program must submit a TOEFL or IELTS score report, or a TOEFL/IELTS waiver to demonstrate adequate English language proficiency.

Students in the MSL Program must have a high level of English proficiency, and the Admissions Committee relies on a test of English proficiency for students who are not native speakers of English. Applicants can request a waiver of the test on specific grounds explained below.

To demonstrate English language proficiency, students can choose from one of two options: TOEFL or IELTS.

The minimum score for the TOEFL internet-based exam is 100 (we do not accept the paper-based TOEFL). The minimum average score for the IELTS is 7.5. Applicants who take the TOEFL or IELTS examination should have an official copy of the score report sent from ETS or IELTS directly to Northwestern Law Admissions Office (code is 1565). Since it may take two months or more for the score report to reach the law school, an applicant should take the English proficiency examination no later than February 15 of the year of enrollment. An application will not be complete for review until the law school receives the official score report. The law school will accept scores up to two years after the test date. For further information about the TOEFL examination, contact TOEFL Services Educational Testing Service, PO Box 6151, Princeton, NJ 08441-6151, USA, or call 1.609.921.9000.

If you do not receive the minimum score on one of the English proficiency examinations, you can request an evaluative interview from the Admissions Committee. Interviews are allowed at the discretion of the committee in cases where the test score is not indicative of the applicant's ability.

An applicant may apply to the Admissions Committee for a waiver of the English proficiency examination in one of two circumstances: (1) completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree program at an institution where the language of instruction is English or (2) in exceptional circumstances, after an evaluative interview, which can be conducted on campus, via phone, or via Skype. To apply for a waiver of the English proficiency examination requirement, applicants should submit the [online request form](#). If the reason is that the applicant has received a degree at an institution where English is the language of instruction, the waiver request application should include the institution's name, location, and a complete description of the degree program completed. The Admissions Committee will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to grant waivers, at its sole discretion.

The Law School has an English as a Second Language Program (ESL) to help students improve their English language skills and, more generally, to assist students with the challenges of being advanced English-language learners at a US law school. In addition, many MSL students choose to attend the Legal English and Foundations Program (LEAF) in the summer before they begin the MSL Program.

Visa Requirements

Applicants who require a visa (F-1 or J-1) to study in the United States may request a certificate of eligibility from Northwestern University. To qualify for this I-20 or DS-2019, international students must be admitted to the MSL Program and must demonstrate their ability to fund one year of graduate study at the law school. For additional information about visa options and federal regulations, you may contact the International Office at Northwestern University.

Deadlines

International applicants to the general MSL Program may submit their applications in one of two application rounds:

- Applications for the first round are due by **January 15**.
- Applications for the second and final round are due by **April 15**.

Special Instructions/Information for Domestic and International Applicants to the BS-MSL Program with the McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science

In addition to the items listed above required of all applicants, students applying to the McCormick BS-MSL Program must submit the following item:

- one additional letter of recommendation (a total of two letters)

International applicants for the McCormick BS-MSL Program are automatically granted a TOEFL / IELTS waiver and do not need to submit these scores.

Deadlines

Domestic and international applicants to the McCormick BS-MSL Program may apply in one of two rounds:

- The first application deadline is **December 15**.
- The second application deadline is **March 15**.

Northwestern University Disclosure

Northwestern University reserves the right to change without notice any statement in this publication concerning, but not limited to, rules, policies, tuition, fees, curricula, and courses.

It is the policy of Northwestern University not to discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, or veteran status in matters of admissions, employment, housing, or services or in the educational programs or activities it operates, in accordance with civil rights legislation and University commitment. Any alleged violations of this policy or questions regarding the law with respect to nondiscrimination should be directed to Director of Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services, 720 University Place, Evanston, Illinois 60208-1147, phone 847-491-7458; Office of the Provost, Rebecca Crown Center, Evanston, Illinois 60208-1101.

Northwestern University policy ensures that no qualified student with a disability will be denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subject to discrimination in any University program or activity. In response to a request made by a qualified student with a documented disability, the University will arrange, at no cost to the student, for the provision of educational auxiliary aids, including sign language interpreters, real-time captioners, note takers, readers, and tutors, determined by the University to be necessary to afford such student the opportunity for full participation in University programs.

In exceptional circumstances, Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive any documentation normally required for admission. It also reserves the right to admit or deny an applicant admission whenever it believes that it has sufficient evidence for the decision. At the discretion of the University, supporting documents that are received more than one month after the application form may not be incorporated into the admission decision.