Admission to the MSL Program

Northwestern Law School is proud to offer the Master of Science in Law degree (MSL), designed to provide focused legal training in intellectual property, regulatory analysis, and entrepreneurship for students with backgrounds in science, technology, engineering, and medicine. The MSL program will expose its technically-trained students to the legal and regulatory structures that they do or will encounter in their respective careers.

To be eligible to apply for admission to the MSL program at Northwestern Law, applicants 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. The program is open to domestic and international students.

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.

MSL Program

The MSL degree requires 28 semester units of credit. The full-time program takes one year to complete; the degree can also be completed on a part-time basis in up to four years. Please note that international students requiring visas will not be eligible for the part-time option.

After studying a core curriculum that will familiarize students with basic concepts of law and regulation - including, business formation, contract design, liability and risk, IP fundamentals, and legal/regulatory process - MSL students focus their studies in any one or a combination of the following areas: Intellectual Property & Patent Design, Business Law & Entrepreneurship, and Regulatory Analysis & Strategy.

The MSL Application

A completed application for the MSL degree requires the following items:

- Statement of Interest
- One letter of recommendation
- A current resume or Curriculum Vitae
- An unofficial* copy of the applicant’s undergraduate transcripts and graduate transcripts (if applicable). *For international applicants, official copies of applicant's transcripts are required along with a TOEFL or IELTS score report, or a TOEFL/IELTS waiver
- Other optional information the applicant may choose to submit, including:
  - Unofficial standardized test score reports (GMAT, GRE, LSAT or MCAT)
  - Additional letters of recommendation

Application Updates

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. Upon submission of an application, applicants will be provided with instructions on how to check the status of their applications via an online tool. Applicants who do not provide an e-mail address will be responsible for tracking their application status by directing inquiries to the Office of Admissions. The Admissions Committee does not review incomplete applications.

Application Deadlines

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, during 3 rounds.
Applications for the first round are due by **January 15**.
Applications for the second round are due by **April 15**.
  - April 15 is final deadline for applications from international students.
Applications for the third round (domestic students only) are due by **June 15**.

*Applicants will be informed of the Admissions Committee’s decisions within three weeks of each application deadline.*

**Statement of Interest**

The Statement of Interest section is an opportunity for applicants to introduce themselves to the Admissions Committee. Each statement should be no more than 1,000 words and should include information that addresses all three of the following areas (four if the applicant does not have a STEM academic background):

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

**Letter of Recommendation**

A completed application requires a confidential letter of recommendation from a previous or current professor, employer or other person familiar with the applicant's qualifications for the MSL program. 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 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 weblink and instructions for how to upload the recommendation letter directly to us. Please note that because only one recommendation is required, files will be considered complete once we have received the first letter of recommendation. While applicants are free to submit additional recommendations, the Office of Admissions will not hold files for pending recommendations.

**Transcripts**

Domestic students who received their undergraduate and graduate degrees from education institutions within the United States should upload a copy of all unofficial transcripts to complete their applications. Prior to enrollment, all admitted students must arrange to submit an original, sealed copy of all undergraduate and graduate transcripts to the Admissions Office.

International students or any other student who received an undergraduate or graduate degree from an educational institution outside the US (including its territories and Canada) are required to submit official transcripts. Applicants who have attended more than one college or university should make a copy of the request form for each institution attended. Official academic records should give results for all coursework as well as results of comprehensive or yearly examinations. Transcripts that do not bear the registrar's signature and/or the institution's seal are not official and are unacceptable. All transcripts should be in
English translation. The applicant should 1) mail them, *unopened*, to the Admissions Office and 2) forward copies of the same records to the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) International Education Services (IES) for evaluation. Please apply for AACRAO IES evaluation of your credentials through [ies.aacrao.org](https://ies.aacrao.org) by selecting "Individual" from the drop down menu and following the instructions provided therein.

**Resume/Curriculum Vitae**

A description of prior employment and/or 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)**

Students are not required to take a standardized test to apply for the MSL program. However, the Admission Committee will consider standardized test scores as part of an application if the scores reports are submitted to Northwestern Law prior to an admissions decision. The Committee will consider one or more of the GMAT, GRE, LSAT and MCAT.

*Please note* that because *standardized test score reports, and other optional information* (including additional letters of recommendation) are not required for applicants, applications will be considered complete even if standardized test score reports or other optional information are forthcoming.

**English Language Requirements**

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 admission: TOEFL or IELTS is required for admission to the MSL program for international students who are not native speakers of English. 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. Unless waived (as described below), foreign applicants who are not native speakers of English should take the TOEFL or IELTS examination and have an official copy of the score report sent from ETS or IELTS directly to Northwestern Law Admission 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.

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](https://ies.aacrao.org). 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 whether to grant waivers on a case-by-case basis, in its sole discretion.

**English as a Second Language (ESL) Program**

The Law School’s English as a Second Language Program helps students improve their English language skills and, more generally, assists students with the challenges of being advanced English language learners at a US law school. Services and programs include but are not limited
to discussion groups, listening/pronunciation sessions, writing coaches, essay grammar workshops, and diagnostic writing assessments.

Applications Fees and Deposits

*There is no fee to file the MSL application with the Law School.*

The Law School charges the following nonrefundable fees:

- Tuition Deposit (required of all accepted students who wish to hold a place in the class; applied toward tuition and fees) - $750
- Late tuition payment penalty fee - $200

Tuition

Tuition for the MSL program is listed at [www.law.northwestern.edu/admissions/tuitionaid/](http://www.law.northwestern.edu/admissions/tuitionaid/). Tuition increases should be anticipated each year.

Grants

The law school grants a limited number of MSL scholarships for full-time students, which are awarded on the basis of merit. Grants are for one year only and are not renewable. Students are asked to complete a scholarship application form after admission decisions have been 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. 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_instruct_info/private_loans.html](http://www.northwestern.edu/sfs/loan_instruct_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 on completing the financial aid application can be found at [www.law.northwestern.edu/admissions/tuitionaid/](http://www.law.northwestern.edu/admissions/tuitionaid/).

US citizens/permanent residents and international students with qualified co-signers should complete a 2015-2016 Need Access application online ([www.needaccess.org](http://www.needaccess.org)) to be considered for all loan programs. The application will become available online after January 2.

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](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Individuals may also need to submit a signed copy of their 2014 federal tax return and W-2s to Northwestern. Individuals will be contacted via email should our Financial Aid Office require these forms.

Bar Examination

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

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.
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.

It is Northwestern University policy to ensure that no qualified student with a disability is 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 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.