Instructions -- SJD Information

Application for Admission to the SJD Program.

SJD applicants must hold a first degree in law from a university or college whose law degree requirements are comparable to Northwestern’s. In unusual cases, a vote of the faculty may waive this requirement for LLM applicants. Although there are no rigid standards for class ranking or grade-point average, accepted applicants generally have ranked at or near the top of their law school classes or have otherwise demonstrated exceptional academic promise.

Applications for admission are considered only for the current year and for full-time registration. There is no part-time or evening program or mid-year entry.

Admission to Northwestern Law’s SJD program is limited to non-US students who intend to teach law in their home country. Candidates are required to spend a full academic year in residency on campus. During this year, SJD candidates will be enrolled as a full time graduate student. Candidates may enroll in upper level law courses or in Senior Research according to the candidate’s advisor’s recommendation. The second period of the candidacy is a period of “Residence in Research”, in which the candidate will be conducting independent research and writing your dissertation. The second period does not include any formal course work.

The Rules and Regulations of the law school state that the candidate’s dissertation should involve “original research and must be completed in such a manner, as to both subject matter and literary form, as to be, in the opinion of the Faculty, a significant and scholarly contribution to a legal science.” Once the candidate’s advisor determines that the dissertation is in its final phases, the school will assemble a dissertation panel to review the candidate’s work and the candidate will hold a defense before the dissertation panel. The panel usually consists of three faculty members nominated for this purpose.

The cost of the SJD program mirrors the cost of the LLM program for the first year. Thereafter, the candidate would be paying the Residence in Research rate per semester until completion of the SJD degree requirements. For 2012-2013, the rates were as follows: SJD tuition was $27,281/semester and the Residence in Research fee was $7,599/semester. Northwestern does not offer any fellowships or financial aid for this program. Although tuition has not been set for the next academic year, we are anticipating a 5-6% increase over last year.

The Director of International Programs is available to assist candidates in identifying potential faculty supervisor. Once a supervisor has been tentatively secured (agreed to serve as your supervisor), the candidate will need to provide the following:

1. A complete SJD application.
2. Non-refundable $100 application fee by check made to “Northwestern University School of Law.”
3. Two letters of recommendations.
4. A TOEFL/IELTS score and/or LSAT score.
6. Statement of the candidate’s career objectives and how the SJD will advance your objectives.
7. An official set of transcripts along with their English translation.
8. Evaluative interview.

Bar Requirements

The SJD program is not intended to qualify foreign lawyers to take the bar examination or to practice law in the United States; in many states, including Illinois, this degree is NOT sufficient to take the exam. A copy of the Comprehensive Guide to Bar Admission Requirements may be obtained from the National Conference of Bar Examiners, ABA Order Fulfillment Department, 321 North Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610, phone 312.988.5000, or online at www.abanet.org.

Application Deadline: January 15th
Application Filing Period

The Admissions Committee may exclude from consideration any application received after the deadline or incomplete at that date. All prospective students for the SJD program are encouraged to submit their completed applications before April 1 of the year in which they wish to begin their studies. Early submission of application materials allows time for correspondence between the school and the applicant in case of deficiencies in the application. Applicants should note that the delivery of mail from abroad may be delayed.

Online Application

You may complete your law school application on the web at www.law.northwestern.edu/admissions.

Application Updates

While the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid seeks to keep the applicant informed of progress on the application and the receipt of documents, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all parts of the application reach the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid 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.

All correspondence should be addressed to Northwestern Law, Office of Admissions and Financial Aid, Degree Programs for International Students, 375 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60611-3069, USA; phone 312.503.8465; fax 312.503.0178; e-mail admissions@law.northwestern.edu.

Personal Statement

In place of a traditional personal statement, you will be asked to provide a statement of your career objectives and how the SJD degree will advance you in pursuing your objectives. Please follow the directions and answer each question separately in a one to two-page double-spaced essay.

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 mail them, unopened, to Northwestern.

In instances where a school does not furnish transcripts, school officials should certify courses completed and grades received as well as results of qualifying, comprehensive, or professional examinations where possible. If the applicant's college or university is not able to provide such a certification of academic record due to special circumstances, the applicant should obtain from school officials an explanation of the circumstances and submit it and a self-reported summary of studies, including, where possible, courses or seminars attended at the institution, grades received, examination results, and copies of certificates or instructor's evaluations. The Admissions Committee may request verification of self-reported academic records.

Letter of Recommendation

Applicants must submit a confidential letter of recommendation from a previous or current employer or from a member of the applicant's law faculty.

English Language Requirements

Students in the Degree Programs for International Students must have a high level of English proficiency in order to read the large amount of course material, to research and write papers and exams, and to participate in class discussions. Foreign applicants who are not native speakers of English should take the TOEFL examination and have an official copy of the score report sent to the Admissions Office. Since it may take two months or more for the score report to reach the law school, an applicant should take the TOEFL no later than December of the year prior to enrollment. An application will not be complete and ready for review until the law school receives the official score report. Northwestern looks for a TOEFL score of at least 105 on the Internet-based test and IELTS score of at least 7.5. The law school will accept scores up to two years after the test date. We no longer accept the paper-based TOEFL (PBT) Examination. We only accept the Internet-based (IBT) TOEFL Examinations. For further information about the TOEFL examination write to TOEFL Services Educational Testing Service, PO Box 6151, Princeton, NJ 08541-6151, USA or call 1.609.921.9000.
If you have completed a first degree/undergraduate degree in law at an institution where the language of instruction is in English, you must notify the Admissions Committee by requesting a waiver of the TOEFL requirement. Please submit a brief letter, electronic attachment, or e-mail to the committee indicating the institution’s name, location, and length of the degree program completed. Waivers are granted on a case by case basis. If you are requesting a TOEFL waiver, you must first participate in an evaluative interview.

**Curriculum Vitae/Résumé**

Applicants to the SJD program are required to submit a one to two-page curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé written in English.

**Interviews for SJD Applicants**

SJD applicants must interview either on campus or via Skype connection with an Admissions staff member. Interviews provide the Admissions Committee with additional information about your interpersonal and communication skills, maturity, and motivation. Interviews also help us preserve the strong sense of community and cooperative culture for which we are known. Finally, interviews provide you an opportunity to learn more about Northwestern Law.

**Dissertation Proposal**

According to the Rules and Regulations of the law school, your dissertation should involve "original research and must be completed in such a manner, as to both subject matter and literary form, as to be, in the opinion of the Faculty, a significant and scholarly contribution to a legal science." Once your professor determines that your dissertation is in its final phases, we will assemble a dissertation panel to review your work and you will hold your defense before the dissertation panel.

**Reapplicants**

If you are reapplying to the law school, you must submit a complete application, nothing from a previous application is kept on file. This full application will include the application form, an updated personal statement, a new letter of recommendation, an updated curriculum vitae/résumé, official transcript and an official TOEFL score report sent from ETS. The fee for reapplication is the same as that for first-time applicants: $100.

**Tuition and Financial Aid**

Tuition for all of our programs is listed at [http://www.law.northwestern.edu/admissions/tuitionaid/](http://www.law.northwestern.edu/admissions/tuitionaid/). Tuition increases should be anticipated each year. In addition to tuition, the Law School charges the following non-refundable fees:

- Application fee $100 (mail to Admissions Office – 375 E. Chicago Ave. Chicago, IL, 60611)
- Deposit $750 (required of admitted applicants who accept a space in the entering class)
- Late payment penalty fee $200

**Loans**

Instructions on completing the financial aid application can be found at [www.law.northwestern.edu/admissions/tuitionaid/](http://www.law.northwestern.edu/admissions/tuitionaid/). Under current federal regulations, only US citizens and permanent residents are 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_instruc_info/private_loans.html](http://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.

US citizens/permanent residents and international students with qualified co-signers should complete a 2014-2015 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 2013 federal tax return and W-2s to Northwestern. Individuals will be contacted via email should our Financial Aid Office require these forms.
Employment

There are no teaching or research fellowships for graduate students at the law school, and Department of Homeland Securities regulations may prohibit students from seeking outside employment during their studies. The Degree Programs for International Students demand time-consuming study and research, and experience has shown that it is difficult for students to complete the academic work if they are employed. Students with questions about employment should discuss them with the program director of the Degree Programs for International Students.

The law school's Center for Career Strategy and Advancement employs a full-time counselor who assists students in their postgraduate career planning.

Visa Requirements

To qualify for a visa, foreign students admitted to the Degree Programs for International Students must demonstrate their ability to fund one year of graduate study at the law school. Most students choose to enter the United States under an F-1 student visa or a J-1 exchange visitor visa. For additional information about visa options and regulations and immigration policies, contact a US embassy.

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.