

# University of Pennsylvania Law School

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## ■ Introduction

Penn Law, one of the nation's most distinguished law schools, offers talented students a first-rate education in an intellectually stimulating, cross-disciplinary environment. The Law School takes advantage of its role as a professional school at Penn, an Ivy League institution, and one of the world's preeminent research universities. Our faculty collaborate with world-renowned scholars in other departments throughout the university. Our students enrich their legal education with study in other disciplines via courses, certificate programs (including one at the Wharton School for Business), and formal joint-degree programs, either those currently defined or those self-initiated by the motivated student.

The rich university community is complemented by a collegial environment. We pride ourselves on our well-known reputation as a supportive environment for students as they engage in the rigors of legal study. Students develop close relationships with their faculty and colleagues. Penn Law staff is committed to getting to know students as individuals and to working with them to support their law school experiences.

Minutes from downtown Philadelphia, Penn Law enjoys a university campus neighborhood and close proximity to one of the nation's most lively urban areas, providing an exciting, invigorating, and affordable world.

## ■ Faculty

Penn Law's outstanding faculty are national leaders in every major area of the law. More than 70 percent hold advanced degrees in addition to their JD degree, over 50 percent hold secondary appointments or have an affiliation with other schools within the University of Pennsylvania.

Their scholarship is recognized worldwide. Students have opportunities to engage in research in the classroom, as research assistants, and in faculty presentations.

Faculty commitment to students and the Law School's low student-to-faculty ratio allow the development of close personal and professional relationships, which often develop into lifelong mentorships.

## ■ Libraries

Biddle Law Library is one of the world's premier law libraries. Our librarians help students make full use of the Biddle's and university's collections. They also teach legal research courses and provide research assistance to support students in their intellectual endeavors.

## ■ Curriculum

Penn Law's first-year curriculum includes the standard first-year law school courses and also allows students the choice of two first-year electives. Students receive small-group individualized legal writing and research instruction.

In the upper years, the work is elective, allowing an opportunity to concentrate in particular areas or to study more broadly. Penn Law students can take up to four courses at Penn's other graduate and professional schools as part of their JD degree.

Penn Law offers students a wide choice of clinical courses. Penn Law students also enjoy participating in our ABA award-winning pro bono program; in fact, in recent years over 50 percent of students exceeded the mandatory 70 hours of pro bono service.

In addition to the JD, we offer the Master of Laws (LLM), Master of Comparative Law (LLCM), and Doctor of Juridical Science (SJD).

## ■ Special Programs

As noted, Penn Law is unique in its interrelatedness with the other graduate and professional programs on campus.

Students can engage these departments through individual courses; through certificate programs in Business and Public Policy (Wharton), Gender and Sexuality Studies (School of Arts and Sciences), Non-profit/NGO Leadership (School of Social Policy & Practice), Environmental Policy or Environmental Science (School of Arts and Sciences), Middle East and Islamic Studies (Middle East Center), and International Business Law (ESADE [Barcelona], Bocconi [Milan], Freie [Berlin], and Paris XII); or through formal joint- and dual-degree programs. Three-year programs include JD/MBA (Wharton), JD/MSEd (Education Policy), JD/MSE (Higher Education), JD/MGA, JD/MA (International Studies, Lauder Institute), JD/MBioethics, MA/MS (Criminology), and JD/MS (Social Policy). Other master's and PhD programs offered are JD/MCP (City Planning), JD/MES (Environment), JD/MPH (Public Health), JD/AM (Islamic Studies), JD/MSW, JD/MBA, JD/MA (Global Business Law [Panthéon-Sorbonne Law School and Institut d'Études Politiques]), and JD/PhD (American Legal History, Philosophy). Students have also pursued JD/MD (Medicine), JD/MS (Historic Preservation), JD/MA (Philosophy), JD/EdD (Education), and PhD in Communication and in Near Eastern Languages and Civilization.

Penn Law has a unique program for students through its Center on Professionalism. The program provides opportunities for students to develop a set of professional skills that will complement the analytical skills they learn in the classroom. Through small group work, team-building, self-assessment, and a coordinated series of cross-disciplinary programs, the Center gives students insight into their professional foundations and expands their knowledge of the complement of skills necessary for leadership in the profession.

Students' opportunities at Penn are limited only by their imaginations—we work with students to create possibilities that meet their intellectual curiosity and professional goals.

## ■ Student Body

Students come from all over the country and from more than 200 undergraduate institutions, creating one of the nation's most diverse student bodies. About 11 percent hold advanced degrees and, on average, 68 percent do not enroll directly from undergraduate studies. Approximately one third of our student body is composed of students of color. The diversity of our community creates a dynamic and engaging classroom environment and enriches every aspect of the school.

## ■ Student Activities

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The nation's oldest law review, now the *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, was founded in 1852. Penn Law also publishes the *Journal of Constitutional Law*, the *Journal of International Law*, the *Journal of Business Law*, and the *Journal of Law and Social Change*. Students also self-publish two additional journals: the *Journal of Animal Law and Ethics* and the *East Asia Law Review*.

Students participate in numerous moot court and mock trial activities and in a chapter of the Inns of Court.

The student government is particularly active, and council representatives serve as voting members of many faculty/student committees.

There are more than 70 student organizations.

## ■ Admission

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The demand for a Penn Law legal education has risen dramatically in recent years. In the 2007–2008 admission cycle, over 5,800 applicants sought admission for the JD program. Sixteen percent of those applicants were accepted, with a median LSAT score in the 98th percentile.

While academic excellence is of primary importance for admission, we take all factors in each application into consideration and do not have numeric cutoff points for LSAT or GPA. Instead, we read each individual file, including letters of recommendation, personal statements, and the résumé, to get a full picture of the applicant.

We begin processing applications on October 1. Applications received by November 1, and completed by November 15, will be considered for our early decision (binding) program; these applicants receive a decision by the end of December. The regular admission deadline is February 15. Our program is limited to fall semester, full-time students.

Current first-year JD students enrolled in a full-time program who have achieved excellent records at other law schools may apply as transfer students after completion of

their first year only; we do not accept midsemester or second-year transfer students. All applicants must apply by July 15. Decisions are made on a rolling basis, beginning in mid-June.

## ■ Housing

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Penn Law students select from the wide range of affordable living arrangements both on campus and in private housing.

## ■ Expenses and Financial Aid

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The Law School maintains a substantial program of need-based grant and loan aid, with approximately 80 percent of the student body receiving financial assistance.

Penn Law extends merit-based scholarships to a select group of applicants. Every applicant is considered.

Penn Law nominates students with a demonstrated previous involvement in public service, who are committed to public sector employment following graduation, for the Toll Public Interest Scholarship. Penn Law has a strong loan forgiveness program to assist graduates who choose public sector work.

## ■ Career Services

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The Career Planning and Professionalism Office has a successful record of assisting law students in finding employment coast-to-coast and counseling students and alumni on employment opportunities. The office offers specialized counseling for public interest work, first-year job searches, judicial clerkships, and alternate careers.

In recent years, 65–82 percent of graduates start their careers in private practice, 15–22 percent take judicial clerkships, 4–8 percent work in government or public interest positions, 1–2 percent engage in university or law school teaching or study, and 2–4 percent accept opportunities in the business world.

## Applicant Profile

Penn Law has chosen not to include an applicant profile because a grid that contains only LSAT scores and GPA would not capture the other qualities that make our students so dynamic. We value their diverse backgrounds, rich life experiences, leadership, community service, professional

accomplishments, advanced degrees and coursework, motivation, initiative, and exemplary writing skills. While admission to Penn Law is highly selective, the admissions committee takes all of the factors mentioned above into consideration when reviewing applications.