

SOUTHWESTERN

LAW SCHOOL Los Angeles, CA

Master of Laws Programs Policies

Faculty policy.

Revision history: Formerly a part of the annually revised Student Handbook; established as a standalone policy in August 2022; technical edits performed in August 2023; technical edits performed in June 2024; edits made in August 2025.

Related policies: Academic Policies and Procedures; Student Health-Related Leave of Absence and Return Policy; International Students Policy

Scheduled Review Date: July 2027 (LL.M. Offices; Vice Deans' Office)

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Southwestern offers two LL.M. degree programs: the General LL.M. for those who wish to design a curriculum that will most benefit their objectives and the LL.M. in Entertainment and Media. Until the programs obtain accreditation by a Department of Education-recognized accreditor, students in these programs cannot be awarded federal financial aid. Admissions into the General LL.M. for 2025–2026 have been suspended, except for the Siderman-Fulbright Human Rights Fellowship.

Students enrolled in an LL.M. degree program are subject to all other Southwestern policies not explicitly referred to in the Master of Laws Program Policies.

A. Master of Laws Program, the General LL.M.

The Master of Laws, General LL.M. degree program allows students to choose and direct their educational focus. This opportunity to select an emphasis of study enables program participants to best meet individual professional goals. Students work closely with faculty to

develop a comprehensive curricular plan from available classes in day, evening, and Online J.D. programs.

1. Degree requirements

To qualify for the General LL.M. degree, students must complete 24 credit hours of post-J.D. coursework, 12 of which must be earned at Southwestern. The courses each candidate undertakes will depend on the individual's chosen area of concentration. Generally, courses previously taken for credit for a J.D. or equivalent degree will not be counted toward the LL.M. degree. A maximum of 30 credit hours may be applied to the LL.M. degree. Additional units may be taken, but will not be considered part of the LL.M. degree.

2. Unit guidelines and length of course of study

Students work closely with the LL.M. program director (Program Director) and faculty to develop a comprehensive curricular plan and may take classes in the day or evening program. International students may take up to three distance education units per semester, provided this is not inconsistent with their visa requirements. Full-time students must enroll in at least eight units and, at most, 16 units each semester. International students must maintain full-time status. Part-time students must enroll in at least two units and, at most, seven units each semester. Full-time students generally complete their degree requirements within one academic year, and part-time students generally complete their degree requirements within two academic years. All LL.M. students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment in the program. Failure to enroll in any semester will be treated as a withdrawal unless a student has been granted a leave of absence.

Students who are United States citizens may be granted special permission to extend their course of study to a maximum of four years due to special circumstances upon approval by the Program Director. International students enrolled in the LL.M. program must maintain full-time enrollment status throughout their course of study; however, special permission to drop below full-time status for one semester may be authorized by the Program Director depending on the student's visa status.. (See the *International Students Policy* for more information.)

3. Leave of absence

Students who are United States citizens may take up to a one-year leave of absence as outlined in [Academic Policies and Procedures](#) and the *Student Health-Related Leave of Absence and Return Policy*. International students may be eligible to take a single one-semester leave of absence, but only following current U.S. immigration law. A leave of absence must be authorized by the Program Director, and its availability may be limited by the student's visa status. Strict requirements to leave the country and return would be applicable, so students are advised to consult with the Program Director before attempting a gap in their LL.M. study.

4. Grading, academic success, and bar eligibility

General LL.M. students must complete the program at Southwestern Law School under the following standard letter-based grading system: A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F.

Students enrolled in the program will receive a letter grade as warranted by their examination or another performance criterion determined by each corresponding class's supervising professor(s).

Students enrolled in the LL.M. program must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.330 to earn the LL.M. degree. Any student who fails to maintain a 2.330 GPA in a semester will be placed on academic probation and academically disqualified after two consecutive semesters reflecting a GPA lower than 2.330.

Students are graded using the same standards as J.D. students and must receive a passing grade in all courses. LL.M. students are not ranked with and do not affect the ranking of J.D. students.

5. Transfer students

Individuals who have attended an LL.M. program at another American Bar Association accredited law school may apply for admission to the General LL.M. program and, if accepted, may be awarded up to 12 credits to be transferred from their original LL.M. program.

B. Master of Laws in Entertainment and Media

Through its LL.M. degree in Entertainment and Media Law, Southwestern is committed to identifying and admitting a select and diverse number of attorneys and legal scholars who are demonstrably motivated and qualified to undertake intensive studies in this field and to equip them—through theoretical, experiential, and clinical education programs—to become outstanding professionals within the selected area of specialization.

1. Degree requirements

To qualify for the LL.M. degree in Entertainment and Media Law, students must complete at least 24 credit hours. At least 18 of those 24 credit hours must be earned at Southwestern and be comprised of entertainment and media law courses as designated by Southwestern. Courses taken for credit for a J.D. degree (whether at Southwestern or otherwise) and courses at an institution other than Southwestern will not count toward the LL.M. degree, except as determined by the Associate Dean of Southwestern's Donald E. Biederman Entertainment, Media, and Sports Law Institute. However, only 24 credits will count toward the LL.M. degree.

2. Unit guidelines and length of course of study

Students work closely with the Program Director and faculty to develop a comprehensive curricular plan from available day, evening, and Online J.D. programs. Full-time students must enroll in no fewer than eight units and no more

than 16 units each semester. International students must maintain full-time status. Part-time students must enroll in no fewer than two units and no more than seven units each semester. LL.M. students enrolled full-time generally complete their degree requirements within one academic year, and part-time students generally complete their degree requirements within two academic years. All LL.M. students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment in the program. Failure to enroll in any semester will be treated as a withdrawal unless a student has been granted a leave of absence.

U.S. students may be granted special permission to extend their course of study to a maximum of four years due to special circumstances upon approval by the Program Director. International students enrolled in the LL.M. program must maintain full-time status throughout their course of study; however, special permission to drop below full-time status for one semester may be authorized by the Program Director depending on the student's visa status. (See the *International Students Policy* for more information.)

3. Leave of absence

U.S. students may take up to a one-year leave of absence per Southwestern's leave of absence policy as outlined in [Academic Policies and Procedures](#) and the *Student Health-Related Leave of Absence and Return Policy*. International students may be eligible to take a single one-semester leave of absence, but only following current U.S. immigration law and as authorized by the Program Director. Strict requirements to leave the country and return would be applicable, so students are advised to consult with the Program Director before attempting a gap in their LL.M. study.

4. Grading, academic success, and bar eligibility

Students enrolled in Southwestern Law School's program for the LL.M. degree in Entertainment and Media must complete the program at Southwestern Law School under the following standard letter-based grading system: A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F.

Students enrolled in the program will receive a letter grade as warranted by their examination or another performance criterion determined by each corresponding class's supervising professor(s).

Students enrolled in the LL.M. program must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.330 to earn the LL.M. degree. Any student who fails to maintain a 2.330 GPA in a semester will be placed on academic probation and academically disqualified after two consecutive semesters reflecting a GPA lower than 2.330.

Students are graded using the same standards as J.D. students and must receive a passing grade in all courses. LL.M. students are not ranked with and do not affect the ranking of J.D. students.

5. Transfer students

Individuals who have attended an LL.M. program at another American Bar Association accredited law school) may apply for admission to the LL.M. in Entertainment and Media program and, if accepted, will be awarded up to 6 credits to be transferred from their original LL.M. program.

C. Policy Revisions

Southwestern reserves the right to change or modify any aspect of this policy at any time, with or without prior notice.