

Instructions: University of Pennsylvania Law School

Office of Admissions and Financial Aid
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JD ADMISSIONS FOR VISITING STATUS

We welcome your interest in Penn Law and provide this information to guide you through the admissions process.

Applicant Eligibility Requirements

All applicants must hold a bachelor's degree to be eligible to enroll as a visiting student in the Juris Doctor (JD) program. Applicants for Visiting Student status are admitted in the fall semester or the spring semester on a full-time basis only.

Program Eligibility

Visiting students are not eligible to take courses outside of Penn Law at other Penn graduate schools on campus. The exception is visiting students may enroll in LAW 550, Business Management, and earn the Wharton Certificate in Management, on a space available basis.

Visiting students are not eligible to participate in on-campus recruiting.

Visiting (Non-matriculating) Student Admission

Outstanding students from other law schools may seek enrollment as second- or third-year visiting students at Penn Law. In such cases, the course credits are accepted toward the law degree to be awarded by the home school. Penn Law will accept Visiting Student applications from law students at ABA- and AALS-member schools only. Visiting Student applicants for the fall semester must apply by June 15 and complete their application by July 1. Visiting Student applicants for the spring semester must apply by November 15 and complete their application by December 1.

Visiting Student applicants are required to provide a completed application form, application fee, personal statement(s), résumé, academic transcripts from the current law school, and two letters of recommendation--preferably from law professors. The personal statement of non-matriculating applicants must discuss why the applicant wishes to visit at Penn Law. Additionally, non-matriculating applicants must provide a letter of good standing from the law school dean affirming the home law school's approval of the visit.

Non-matriculating applicants are not eligible for an application fee waiver.

Standards for Admission

The admissions process at Penn Law is highly selective. Last year, we received over 5,000 applications for the approximately 250 places in the first-year class. Students who apply to Penn Law come from every state in the nation, from many countries around the world, from more than 200 undergraduate institutions, and from a broad range of academic, ethnic, cultural, professional, and economic backgrounds.

There is no pre-law educational requirement or even a specific recommended course of study for admission to Penn Law. Strength of character, breadth of knowledge, and intellectual maturity constitute the base upon which our legal education builds. As such, Penn Law seeks to enroll individuals who have demonstrated outstanding academic success, who are intellectually curious, and who possess superior writing, oral communication, and analytical skills. Importantly, we also seek individuals who will positively contribute to the Penn Law community, and ultimately, to the legal profession, based on their diverse backgrounds, their personal and professional experiences, and any challenges or obstacles that they may have overcome.

The Admissions Committee considers numerous factors in the admissions process, including the student's academic record, course selection and grade trends, letters of recommendation, leadership, community service, extracurricular activities, professional and life experiences, and the applicant's examples of written expression such as the personal statement. Importantly, the Admissions Committee bases its decision on all material submitted on behalf of each candidate. We do not have numerical "cut-offs" in the application process nor do we employ the use of an admissions index.

Due to the large number of applications from all over the country and other parts of the world, the admissions committee does not grant evaluative interviews as part of the review process. However, we invite all applicants to visit Penn Law to become more familiar with the Law School, the university campus, and Philadelphia. Applicants are welcome to take a self-guided tour during our regular office hours. Please check our website for information on visiting: <https://www.law.upenn.edu/admissions/visiting/>.

How to Apply

Visiting student applicants will need to send their application and supporting materials directly to Penn Law. Materials may be sent by mail or by email to contactadmissions@law.upenn.edu. The application can be accessed in the Non-matriculating or Visiting Students section at <https://www.law.upenn.edu/admissions/jd/how-to-apply.php>.

Application Requirements and Instructions

Application Form

Please provide complete information for each question on the application in the spaces provided. You may attach additional pages to complete or elaborate on this information. Please answer all questions fully and accurately. A copy of your law school application will be retained for a minimum period of three years.

Please answer all questions on the application form unless otherwise noted.

Character and Fitness

In addition to a bar examination, there are character, fitness, and other qualifications for admission to the bar in every U.S. jurisdiction. Applicants are encouraged to determine the requirements for any jurisdiction in which they intend to seek admission by contacting the jurisdiction. Addresses for all relevant agencies are available through the National Conference of Bar Examiners (<http://www.ncbex.org/>).

If you answer "yes" to any of the Character and Fitness questions on the Application for Visiting Admission to the Juris Doctor Program, you must provide an explanatory statement. If you do not, the processing and review of your application will be delayed. We caution you to err on the side of full disclosure.

Application Fee

The application fee is \$80 (nonrefundable). You must pay the application fee by check or money order. The check or money order should be made payable to the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania.

Recommendation Forms and Letters

Letters of recommendation from individuals who can comment on your intellectual capacity and analytical and written communication skills are extremely useful in a rigorous selection process. Therefore, we require two letters of recommendation from individuals who have served as recent academic instructors or advisors. Note that we will accept up to four letters of recommendation; however, your application is deemed complete with two letters of recommendation. Letters of recommendation should be submitted directly to the Office of Admissions from the recommender or with your application in sealed envelopes.

Personal Statement

The Admissions Committee requires that every applicant submit an original example of written expression. The purpose of this personal statement is to provide you with as flexible an opportunity as possible to submit information that you deem important to your

candidacy. You may wish to describe aspects of your background and interests-- intellectual, personal, or professional--and how you will uniquely contribute to the Penn Law community and/or the legal profession. Your statement should also include the reason you are seeking visiting status at Penn Law. Please limit your statement to two pages, double spaced.

Application Status/Questions

The Penn Law Office of Admissions is committed to serving our applicants as efficiently and effectively as we can during the application process. Please be advised that it takes approximately one to two weeks from the date that we receive an application to process and complete the applicant file. We will notify you of the date upon which we receive your application and inform you of any missing documents within two weeks of the receipt of your application. We will also notify you of the date upon which your application is complete. Once your file is complete, it is referred to the admissions committee and files are evaluated on a rolling basis. The evaluation process may take up to **four weeks** from the date upon which the application is completed, though you may receive a decision much sooner. Applicants will be able to check the status of their application at any time using Application Status, Penn Law's online status checker. To access the online status checker, you can go to our website at <https://www.law.upenn.edu/admissions/jd/>. Please be sure that you have allowed adequate time for your application to be processed, completed, and evaluated before calling the Office of Admissions to check on the status of your decision.

Email Notification

Please note that an email address is required. We communicate via email with applicants regarding the status of their application; thus, it is imperative that you provide an email address on your application and it remains current throughout the admissions process. You will be notified by email when your application is received, again when your application file is completed, and possibly at other times to update you on the status of your application.

Please promptly notify us of any changes to your email address or any changes to your other contact information. Applicants should be aware of their service provider's procedures for spam filtering that may affect delivery of any email communications sent from the Office of Admissions. Steps should be taken to ensure that messages can be delivered promptly.