

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA SCHOOL OF LAW
GRADUATE PROGRAMS



LL.M. Programs

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

Is the LL.M. Right for You?

Information
Guide

Why get an LL.M. ?

The LL.M. Concentrations in Tax and Business Transactions are specialized degrees designed for legal professionals who want to continue working while they pursue their studies. In fact, the expectation is that students will remain employed in a position that permits them to apply what they are learning during the program. Many students bring their current and prior experience into the classroom to enrich the learning experience of their fellow students.

Alabama's Graduate Programs are different from:

- **Other full-time programs** because students continue to work while they study, are generally older and more experienced.
- **Most distance learning programs** because the instruction is offered through cutting edge technology that provides live lectures over the internet through video, audio and text chat. Although other distance learning technologies like video-streams, podcasts, discussion boards and email are used to enhance the educational experience, real time live lectures permit students to ask questions as they arise. The technology even permits the instructor to share his or her desktop applications like Powerpoint or Excel with students during class times.
- **Other part-time programs** because students in Alabama's programs generally enter in a two-year cohort and learn together through the course of the program. Students are part of virtual classrooms and so although they may come from throughout the country, they also get together and form study groups to discuss the program subject matter.
- **Other graduate tax and business programs** because it uses technology like online book ordering, posted course materials, access to electronic research databases and video/audio streaming to allow students with busy schedules to focus on learning.

FACT: The first cohort of Alabama's LL.M. in Tax Program was offered in 1977.

“Is an LL.M. Concentration in Tax or Business Transactions right for me?”

The University of Alabama’s LL.M. Programs have enabled hundreds of people to earn an advanced degree. Most prospective students know they are interested in earning an LL.M., but do not have the ability to leave work and family to attend a full-time program. Lawyers who wish to continue working while they earn a degree face a bewildering range of choices. This guide will help prospective students understand the advantages of the Alabama program.

We are confident that, when you decide to pursue a graduate law degree, you will choose The University of Alabama. If you have questions about our concentrations in tax or business transactions, please feel free to contact us. You will find contact information at the end of this guide.

“How are the classes presented?”

The hallmark of the Alabama’s graduate programs is the use of internet technology to offer **live** classes two evenings a week. Students and professors communicate with each other (live) through microphones and video-cameras connected to personal computers. The technology also makes it possible for students to chat online or in discussion groups or for a professor to share control of a desktop application (like Word, Excel or PowerPoint). Students may participate from any location as long as they have a high speed Internet connection. The program is supported by a website, which provides supplemental course materials, video-streams and pod-casts of previously-recorded classes. This innovative use of technology allows students more time to meet professional commitments. It maintains consistency and keeps students in contact with their instructors and peers—essential components of the learning experience.

The curriculum is designed to prepare students for a practice specializing in tax or business transactions. The two-year program cycle offers an in-depth *and* broad-based curriculum. Throughout the program students are encouraged to share their knowledge and experience with their peers through classroom discussions. Teaching methodologies include lectures, discussion and problem-based analysis.

“The program is an excellent way to expand one’s practice. You can work full time and earn the LL.M. The caliber of professors keeps the courses interesting.”

*Linda Dickert Wilson
LaVergne, Tennessee*

“Is an Alabama LL.M. Program the best choice?”

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The University of Alabama School of Law has educated leaders for 130 years and is ranked among the top public law schools in the nation.

ACCESS TO TOP FACULTY AND PRACTITIONERS

Thanks to the online technology, we are able to offer our students some of the best professors and practitioners in the country. Faculty members have both academic and practical experiences. They are adept at teaching about their areas of expertise from a practical perspective and are skilled at facilitating classroom interaction among experienced students.

AN OUTSTANDING PEER GROUP

Our LL.M. students are the most knowledgeable and demanding audience that a law school professor will face in the classroom. Working with other students in the classroom and in online study groups is an important part of any LL.M. program. You will learn as much from the experience and insights of your classmates as you will from the instructors, and you will be expected to contribute to the discussions. You will meet with other students at a first summer orientation session and at second summer comprehensive exam session both at The University of Alabama School of Law. You will be encouraged to network during and after your two-year program through these meetings and through our online technologies used to promote the academic community (discussion boards, profile web pages, social media sites, online Director’s chats and online study groups).

PRACTICAL APPLICABILITY AND RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Applying what you learn to challenges and opportunities in legal practice is essential to the LL.M. experience. At every point during the program, you will be able to apply what you learn immediately on your job. Unlike resident programs, with Alabama’s LL.M. programs, the workplace becomes a laboratory in which you test what you learn in the classroom. You and your firm will realize a quick return on your investment, as every week you become more qualified to deal with complex tax or business law questions that arise in your employment. Those pursuing an LL.M. at mid-career typically seek the education and credential as a springboard to a career transition. Other students, who are already dealing with tax and business issues in their work, find the degree better qualifies them to address those issues and helps them advance their careers. Because of the broad-based nature of the course work, a graduate of Alabama’s LL.M. in Tax Program is qualified to practice in most areas of tax, including business tax and estate planning. A graduate of Alabama’s LL.M. Concentration in Business Transactions is qualified to practice in most areas of business law from creation to dissolution.

Fact: Alabama’s LL.M. programs are among the most innovative in the country. Through the use of cutting edge technology, they bridge the gap between traditional distance education and live classroom instruction.

MINIMAL TIME AWAY FROM WORK

You do not have to interrupt your career to participate in the program. Students in the program are asked to spend 4 hours a week in the live online class. Internet technology makes it possible to do the rest of your work at a time most convenient to you. While the program is intense, it is thoughtfully designed so that all of the components—curriculum, training, examinations and networking—blend to create a well-orchestrated learning experience.

INCREASED COMPETENCE

If you already use tax in your practice, an LL.M. program can help you fill in the gaps, learn the details of corporate tax, and give you a firm grounding in the fundamentals of estate planning. The concentration in business transactions program begins with formation and choice of business entity, then addresses financing in the growth phase, possible reorganizations and mergers as the business matures and then finally the law effecting recession and dissolution.

VALUE

Thanks to the online technology, students avoid costs associated with residence programs, such as relocation, room and board; and they do not lose time away from their families and careers. Established in 1977, the LL.M. in Tax program has consistently delivered a world-class program at an affordable cost much less than comparable programs.

DEDICATED STAFF AND SUPPORT

The LL.M. staff understands the professional demands that working students face on a daily basis. By managing all aspects of student-related administration, the staff reduces the time students will need away from work.

“How can I fit this program into my busy schedule?”

The LL.M. programs are designed to make it possible for students to remain productive and perform at a high level on the job while attending classes. This is accomplished in several ways:

- Through online technology, Alabama’s LL.M. students are spared routine and administrative tasks that normally fall to students, including registration, and distribution of textbooks and other class materials.

“Even before completion, Alabama’s LL.M. in Taxation program already has been a big boost to my business law practice. The Law School and its staff do a great job in allowing busy, practicing attorneys to participate in the program. I strongly have recommended the program to my friends and colleagues, and I will continue to do so.”

*Michael D. Cross, Jr.
Alpharetta, Georgia*

- E-mail and online technologies also allow students to study and interact with students and instructors at times that are most convenient to them.
- Video-streams and podcasts available on the program website supplement the live class sessions.
- Classes are scheduled on weekday evenings, leaving daytime hours free to work and weekend hours free for study and family.

We do expect a significant amount of time and effort from each student. Most students dedicate up to 20 hours a week to their studies, in addition to time in the classroom. Many report that the experience forces them to become efficient in managing their time, and that this is indeed an important skill they develop during the program.

The subject matter and workload of the LL.M. programs are both challenging. If you enroll in the program, you will have to manage the impact on both your job and your personal life. You can manage the impact on your work by setting clear expectations about your schedule with your supervisor or colleagues and delegating some of your responsibilities. Managing the impact on your personal life often means setting aside blocks of time for individual study and meetings (real or virtual) with study groups. Because you may be expected to maintain regular hours on the job, most of the demand will be on your personal time. However, most students find it is possible to maintain an active family life while enrolled in the program.

Continuing Legal Education Credit

Although you should check with your state's Bar Association, participation in the LL.M. program will save you time and money by also satisfying all of your state's annual CLE requirements.

Financial Support

Although the Law School does not offer scholarships, federal financial aid may be available to you.

"The University of Alabama School of Law's LL.M. in Taxation program has really enhanced and changed the direction of my tax practice. It has been two years since I received the degree and it really was money well spent. I consider myself fortunate that I could complete the program and continue to practice law at the same time."

Steven W. Grant
Chattanooga, Tennessee

Other Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: What are the application requirements?

A: Candidates for the LL.M. degree must have a law degree and an academic record reflecting an ability to perform graduate level work. The Graduate Admissions Committee of the Law School will review all applications for admission. The Committee will evaluate each candidate based on the likelihood of success in the program. As the primary indicator of success in the program, the Committee will consider prior performance in undergraduate and law school. However, the Committee will also take into account relevant practical experience. While the Law School does not require letters of recommendation and interviews for the graduate programs, the Committee may request them under some circumstances.

Q: When are classes offered and how long are they?

A: Monday -Thursday evenings from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. (CST).

Q: How many courses/semesters are in the program?

A: The degree is awarded upon the completion of 24 semester hours of graduate course work. The course schedule allows completion of the degree in six semesters, covering two calendar years. The normal course load is two courses per semester, including summer terms. Some semesters may include three courses but in that case, two are one-credit-hour mini-courses that meet for one-half the semester each.

Q: When do I apply? When does the program begin?

A: The deadline for applications for the 2012-2014 cycle is May 1, 2012. Classes will begin in August with a required Orientation session at The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

Q: Do I have to come to campus at the University of Alabama School of Law?

A: Yes. Each two-year cohort begins with an Orientation session at the Law School in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. During this session, students learn how to use relevant technology and have an opportunity to meet professors, staff and each other. Then again at the end of the second summer, students come to the Law School to take comprehensive exams covering the basic required courses and to take an advanced research seminar.

Q: Where else can I get more information about the LL.M. Programs?

A: For more information about The University of Alabama School of Law's LL.M. Programs visit: www.law.ua.edu/llmdegrees.

Q: What is the cost of the program?

A: The rate for the 2012-2014 cycle has not yet been determined by The University of Alabama. Updated information will be posted on the website but you may also contact us directly.

Contact Information

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For more information on The University of Alabama's LL.M. Programs, visit us online at:
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