LLM-JD Transfer Program FAQs

**What is the program?**

Students who are currently completing their LLM degree at USC Gould, or students who have completed their LLM degree at USC Gould within the past 3 years, may apply as a transfer student to our JD degree. Successful applicants will enroll in the JD program full-time and may be eligible to complete the JD degree in two and a half years.

**APPLICATION**

**Who is qualified to apply?**

Only applicants who are currently enrolled in or have completed an LLM degree at USC Gould are eligible to apply. An LLB degree is not required.

Applicants must be in good academic standing with USC Gould, and without a record of any academic policy violations, to apply to the transfer program. We recommend that students only apply if their cumulative LLM GPA is 3.50 or above for both the Fall and Spring semesters. Past applicants have tended to be in the top 10% of their LLM class, with an average GPA of 3.67 for the year.

**Students must have earned at least 15 units of credit in JD courses.** Credit for courses taken with only LLM students will not apply toward this minimum.

Students who are planning to apply to the LLM-JD Transfer Program at USC Gould should be advised that USC imposes a limit on the number of CR/D/F units that you may elect during your LLM program. Students who exceed this limit will not be considered eligible.

- **Students may elect up to 20% of their total units to be graded on a CR/D/F or CR/NC basis.** We recommend that you take no more than 3 units of your 15 units of JD coursework on a CR/D/F basis.
  - For example, a student enrolled in 25 units during his or her LLM program can choose up to 5 units to be graded on a CR/D/F or CR/NC basis.
  - A student with 15 units in JD courses should not elect more than 3 of those units to be graded on a CR/D/F basis.

- **The limit does not include courses that are only graded on a CR/D/F or CR/NC basis.**
  - For example, if Legal Writing is graded only CR/D/F or CR/NC, those credits would not count toward your 20% maximum.

Students admitted under our program must begin their JD studies in the fall semester of the year of their admission. We do not allow students to defer admission.
How do I apply?

Students may apply through LSAC. The application will be available on April 1.

Please note that there is a $30 report fee assessed by LSAC to have your application transmitted to USC. USC does not impose a separate application fee.

When is the application deadline?

Your application and all supporting materials must be submitted online via LSAC no later than June 1, 2019 to meet our priority deadline and no later than June 15, 2019 to meet our final deadline. If your application is not complete as of June 15, 2019, we will not review it.

Please do not contact the JD Admissions office at any point during the admissions process.

What documents do I need to submit?

In addition to completing the application form, students are required to submit the following documents:

✓ Personal Statement

   Please include your personal, academic and professional background and your reasons for seeking a Juris Doctor degree. Limit to no more than three pages.

✓ Resume/CV

   Please list any distinctions, honors, awards, publications, and activities on your résumé, but please do not submit these documents as attachments with your application.

✓ Post-Graduation Plans Statement

   Please submit a 1-2 page statement that discusses your career goals and plans following graduation at USC Gould. You should include any offers of employment you have received and/or accepted and whether you plan to leave the U.S. following graduation. If your studies are being sponsored by your current employer and/or you will be required to return to your current employer, please note that in your statement.

✓ Optional Supplemental Statements

   Applicants may submit a 1-2 page optional supplemental statement on each of the following subjects:

   • If you believe you were raised in an economically disadvantaged household please explain in a separate addendum.
• If you believe your performance in your LLM program does not accurately represent your past performance or future promise, please explain in a separate addendum.

✓ Transcripts and Degree Verification

Students who previously submitted their transcripts and degree verification through LSAC for their LLM program need not submit new documents.

✓ Official LLM Transcript

Our office will provide final official transcripts for all current LLM students to the JD Admissions office.

For students who have previously graduated from USC, please request your transcript directly with the USC Office of Academic Records: https://arr.usc.edu/services/transcripts/generalinfo.html

✓ TOEFL and IELTS Exams

If you have taken the TOEFL or IELTS exams, you are required to report your scores to USC, which you may do through the LSAC application. Permanent residents and naturalized U.S. citizens are waived of the TOEFL or IELTS requirement.

If you have not taken either the TOEFL or IELTS exam and would like to request a Waiver, please submit your request as an attachment with your online application.

✓ Financial Support Documentation

If admitted to the JD program, you will be required to provide financial support documents that show available funds of at least USD $89,064. U.S. citizens and permanent residents may be eligible for financial aid, and may work with our financial aid advisor.

Is the LSAT required?

The LSAT is not required to apply for the JD transfer program. However, if you have previously completed the LSAT you are required to report your score on your application. If you have not previously taken the LSAT, we recommend that you do not take it.

Can I submit a letter of recommendation?

Letters of recommendation are not required and submitting an application without these letters will not hurt your chance of admission. We recommend that you only provide a letter in exceptional circumstances where you have worked very closely with an employer or professor, for example, in a
research setting. Please do not request a letter from a professor with whom your only interaction is taking his or her class, as such letters are not helpful to the Admissions Committee.

**How many applicants are accepted to the program?**

The number of LLM applicants who are admitted each year depend upon a variety of factors, including the number of JD applicants to the program. There is no upper limit or cap on the number of LLM students the school will accept, the JD Admissions office will extend offers to those that they feel are most qualified for admission.

*Historical numbers for past USC Gould LLM applicants*

- In 2018, 15 students applied and 1 USC student was enrolled
- In 2017, 22 students applied and 1 USC student was enrolled
- In 2016, 20 students applied and 4 USC and 2 non-USC students were enrolled
- In 2015, 9 students applied and 2 were enrolled
- In 2014, 12 students applied and 4 were enrolled
- In 2013, 8 students applied and 1 was enrolled
- In 2012, 5 students applied and 2 were enrolled
- In 2011, 10 students applied and 2 were enrolled
- In 2010, 9 students applied and 4 were enrolled

**Who reviews the applications?**

The JD Admissions office reviews the applications. Please note that our office is not responsible for making admissions decisions.

**When are admissions decisions made?**

The JD Admissions office requires an applicant’s official transcript be submitted before making a decision on their application. Accordingly, the decision process can take several months as grades for the spring semester sometimes are not finalized until June. You should be aware that you may not receive a response until early July, and plan accordingly.

**Does the JD Admissions office grant interviews?**

Applicants may be required to participate in a panel interview with the Dean of Admissions, Dean of Students, and Dean of Career Services. However, they do not take requests for interviews.
THE JD PROGRAM

Does the JD program have certain unit requirements?

Yes. To graduate with a JD degree, students must complete 88 units in law courses, 35 of which must be in upper-division, numerically graded courses.

What happens to my LLM credits?

It depends. Up to 28 credits from the LLM program may be counted towards the 88 unit minimum (but not the 35 upper-division courses). At the time that we receive your application, we will let you know which courses may be eligible to receive advanced standing credit. Courses open exclusively to LLM students are not eligible for transfer credit.

Does the JD program have certain course requirements?

Yes. Almost every transfer student will be required to complete a two-semester Legal Research, Writing and Advocacy (“LRWA”) course.

- If you have taken LLM Legal Research: you will be required to take LRWA for a numeric grade both semesters.
- If you have taken LLM Legal Research and LLM Legal Writing A: you will be required to take LRWA for CR/D/F the first semester and for a numeric grade the second semester.
- If you have taken LLM Legal Research, LLM Legal Writing A, and LLM Legal Writing B: you will not be required to enroll in LRWA, but may take it on a CR/D/F basis.

Students will also be required to enroll in the following first-year courses on a numeric basis if they did not previously complete the LLM version of the course:

- Constitutional Law
- Contracts
- Criminal Law
- Procedure
- Property
- Torts

Finally, all students must complete one or more experiential law course(s) totaling 6 units. The courses must be one of the following:

- Simulation course
- Law clinic
- Field placement (i.e., externship)

The JD Registrar office will guide transfer students on the courses that will satisfy this requirement.
Am I able to earn a certificate?

Yes, you may earn a certificate in Business Law, Media & Entertainment Law, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Technology & Entrepreneurship Law, and Transnational Law and Business, if you did not previously earn the certificate during your LLM degree.

Students who previously took some courses related to a certificate but did not complete the certificate may be able to apply some courses towards the JD certificate. Please note that the course requirements for the certificate differ between the LLM and JD programs. Please review the certificate requirements on the Portal or at [http://gould.usc.edu/academics/certificates/](http://gould.usc.edu/academics/certificates/) for JD certificate requirements.

Am I eligible to participate in an honors program like a journal or moot court?

Yes. LLM transfer students can apply to participate in Moot Court or one of the journals, the Southern California Law Review, the Southern California Interdisciplinary Law Journal, and the Review of Law and Social Justice Journal. Students may write on only after completing a year of LRWA, and are not eligible to be board members.

Am I eligible to participate in OCI?

If you are admitted to the JD program, you will be able to participate in the On-Campus Interview ("OCI") program that occurs in August. Please note that the timeline between your notice of acceptance and OCI may be very short—just a few days, so you should be prepared to apply to OCI quickly. You should also prepare a writing sample for OCI, if you did not enroll in a Legal Writing course during your LLM studies.

OCI offers JD students the opportunity to interview with a number of employers, mostly local firms, for positions beginning the summer of the following year. During OCI, the JD Career Services office will guide you through the process of applying to firms and preparing for the interviews. You will be able to bid on the interviews available; the selection process is a combination of employer prescreening and lottery. Typically, OCI is only offered to rising second year JD students.

Will the JD transfer increase my chances of getting a job?

Foreign attorneys and graduates of foreign law schools face a number of hurdles when looking for employment, permanent or otherwise, in the U.S. Having a JD may make you more competitive for certain firm positions; however, you may still face barriers if you are not a citizen or permanent resident. Students who are currently on a F-1 visa will be required to find an employer that is willing to sponsor an H-1B work visa to stay in the U.S. past their OPT period. This process has become more and more difficult, with fewer employers who are willing to sponsor students. Additionally, you should note that the visa process is a lottery, so finding an employer who is willing to sponsor you may not guarantee a visa.
The legal market in the U.S. has been depressed for several years, and while it is improving, there are a number of JD graduates and other attorneys who are still looking for jobs, with whom you are competing. You should be clear that simply earning a JD will not guarantee you a job. There are additional time and money expenditures involved with attending the JD program. You should carefully consider the pros and cons of the program and how it may fit in with your long-term goals.

**Were past LLM-JD transfer students successful?**

All of the LLM-JD transfer students from prior years successfully passed a bar exam (CA or NY). While a few LLM-JD transfer students have found work in the U.S. after earning their JD degree, most have returned to their home countries in connection with their work.

**OTHER**

**Do I need to apply for OPT? What happens to my OPT if I am accepted?**

We recommend that all students who are applying for the transfer program also apply to OPT. Because the admissions decision can be released after the 60 day grace period ends for your F-1 visa for the LLM program, we recommend that you apply for OPT so as not to lose status during this time.

If you are admitted into the program, you can apply for a separate OPT term after your JD degree. If you have any additional questions, you may contact the Office of International Services: ois@usc.edu

**Can I receive scholarships or financial aid?**

Unfortunately, students who are not citizens or permanent residents are not eligible to apply for federal financial aid. Scholarships are not available to transfer students.
APPLICATION CHECKLIST

✓ Completed application
✓ Undergraduate Transcript
✓ LLM Transcript (if current student, this will be provided by the G&IP Office)
✓ Personal Statement
✓ Resume/CV
✓ Post-Graduation Plans Statement
✓ Optional Supplemental Statements
✓ OPT Application
✓ Financial Support Documentation

Final deadline to submit: June 15, 2019

Please direct all inquiries to: shall@law.usc.edu