

SPECIAL VISITING STUDENT FOR THE MA BAR INFO SHEET

Updated December 2021

This information sheet provides guidance for LL.M graduates who are aiming for the Massachusetts bar after graduating from their LL.M program. It is designed for alumni who did not choose their courses with Massachusetts bar eligibility in mind during their LL.M program and now need to fulfill a bar course requirement by taking one or more courses on a non-degree basis in order to sit for the bar exam in Massachusetts.

The application deadline for the Massachusetts bar exam is 75 days before the bar exam. **Foreign-trained Massachusetts bar exam applicants must have completed all eligibility requirements *before* applying to sit for the bar exam.**

Many BU LL.M courses that are required for the Massachusetts bar, including Constitutional Law, are generally held in the spring semester. The spring semester ends *after* the deadline for applications to sit for the July exam. Therefore, if you need to take a spring semester course in order to qualify for the Massachusetts bar exam, the earliest bar exam you would be able to sit for in Massachusetts would be February of the following year.

1. VISA ISSUES

Taking a law school course after graduation on a non-degree basis may not be possible due to visa restrictions. You must have a visa that allows you to study part-time on a non-degree basis at BU Law. If you enroll part-time as a non-degree student, you will not be eligible for student (F1) visa status, which requires full-time enrollment. Questions about visas should be directed to the International Students and Scholars Office (<https://www.bu.edu/isso/>).

2. MA BAR RULES

LL.M graduates who are interested in joining the Massachusetts bar should carefully read an updated version of the BU LL.M Massachusetts Bar Handbook, which can be obtained by emailing Claire Lee at clee7@bu.edu.

All foreign-trained applicants to the Massachusetts bar must be licensed attorneys in their home country (membership in another U.S. bar does not count). In addition, they must have passed courses covering both U.S. constitutional law (*Introduction to American Law* and *Introduction to the American Legal System* do not fulfill this requirement) and professional responsibility. Applicants must also take additional courses depending on whether the applicant is from a common or civil law jurisdiction. Our Handbook goes into detail about these course requirements and lists the BU Law courses that have met the approval of the Massachusetts Board of Bar Examiners (BBE).

BBE Rule V.3.2 says that all required courses must be part of the foreign applicant's LL.M program. The BBE allows LL.M graduates to return to the law school where they received their LL.M degree to take one or more required classes but does not generally allow LL.M graduates to take required courses at another law school (if you would like to study outside of BU Law, you should contact the BBE for approval).

All required courses must be for degree credits (i.e., no auditing). Taking a course pass/fail is acceptable as long as the student passes the course.

3. BU LAW COURSES

BU Law courses are only held during the fall or spring semester, but not both. The majority of LL.M-only classes are held in the spring semester, including Constitutional Law and Professional Responsibility. Courses may also have very limited availability, especially JD classes.

BU Law course schedules can be found online at: <https://www.bu.edu/law/current-students/llmstudent-resources/american-law-program/course-schedules/>.

4. THE PROCESS OF REGISTERING FOR COURSES

LL.M graduates who wish to take a course on a non-degree basis should first read the LL.M Massachusetts Bar Handbook and contact Claire Lee (at clee7@bu.edu) with any questions about bar requirements.

After LL.M graduates understand the bar requirements, they should meet with their Program (Mary Zeven for the Banking and Financial Law Program, Maureen Leo for the American Law Program and Christina Rice for the Graduate Tax Program) to discuss course scheduling/availability and to register for required course(s). Every effort is made to ensure that returning students are able to take the courses they need to fulfill bar requirements.

LL.M graduates will also need to apply to the law school to become a **Special Visiting Student**. To apply, please email the LL.M Office of Admissions (bullm@bu.edu).

Any LL.M graduate who is interested in returning to BU Law is strongly advised to communicate with the BBE in advance of registering for any course(s) to confirm that he or she would be eligible to ultimately sit for the bar exam upon successful passage of the required course(s). Guidance on how to communicate with the BBE and receive a determination of eligibility to sit for the bar can be found in the LL.M Massachusetts Bar Handbook.

Please remember: *in order to discuss course schedules, availability or registration, you should contact your LL.M program.*