

Admissions Information Sheet:

Research Stream Graduate Program in Law

Osgoode Hall Law School's Graduate Program in Law includes a Doctor of Philosophy in Law (PhD) and research-stream Master of Laws (LL.M) degree. Both degrees involve coursework, but are primarily focused on independent research and writing. The single most important component in attaining each degree is a thesis or a major research paper for the LL.M degree, or a dissertation for the PhD degree, researched and written under the supervision of a faculty supervisor and a Supervisory Committee. In the case of a thesis or dissertation, students defend their thesis or dissertation in an before an Examination Committee.

Each student obtains guidance from a Faculty supervisor and in the case of candidates for the LL.M thesis or the PhD dissertation, a supervisory committee as well. In general, committee members assist the supervisor in providing guidance and feedback. For the LL.M thesis, the committee comprises the supervisor and at least one other member, usually an Osgoode faculty member. The supervision committee for PhD candidates comprises the supervisor and two other members. The supervisory committee approves the research proposal and the thesis or dissertation outline prepared by the student, and must approve and recommend the thesis/dissertation for examination.

2017 -2018 Application Deadline

The admission application process for both domestic and international applications to the Research Stream LL.M and PhD will begin in mid-October 2016.

The admission application and all supporting documentation must be received by the deadline, **Wednesday, February 8, 2017.**

File review and decision-making will begin as soon as a file is complete.

Please note: these instructions apply to applicants to the Osgoode Hall Law School Research Stream Graduate Program in Law at York University. *There is a different application and process for the Osgoode Professional Development LL.M Programs (including the Canadian Common Law and the International Business LL.M programs).*

Admissions Criteria

Admission to Osgoode's Graduate Program in Law is offered on a competitive basis. In evaluating applications, the following factors are considered:

- Academic record, including grades (usually a B average or higher) and awards;
- Merits of the applicant's research proposal outline;
- Research capacities and potential as revealed by previous academic writing and qualifications;

- Quality and strength of letters of reference. and
- Alignment of proposed research with Osgoode’s academic resources.

LL.M

To be eligible for admission to the LL.M Program, candidates normally must possess an academic degree in law, having achieved a level of proficiency that, in the opinion of the Graduate Program Director, makes successful completion of graduate studies likely. Normally this will be at least the equivalent of a B average. Candidates must also possess the ability to work with legal materials in the English language.

Entry to LL.M without an JD/LLB

A limited number of places in the LL.M program are available to candidates with outstanding academic records, but without an academic degree in law. Such students normally have completed a graduate degree in another discipline related to law.

Students entering the LL.M program in Law who do not have an LLB or JD must attend the non-credit course entitled Introduction to Graduate Legal Studies. They may also be required to take additional courses, at the discretion of the Graduate Program Director on the advice of the student’s supervisor. The LL.M degree does not offer any access to the legal profession in Canada.

The Part-time LL.M Program

Individuals who are interested in the part-time professional LL.M program should consult the website of the [Osgoode Professional Development Program](#) or contact the program at 416-673-4670 or by email at: admissions-opd@osgoode.yorku.ca. Osgoode Professional Development also offers other, full time, programs.

PhD

To be eligible for admission to the PhD Program, candidates normally must possess a graduate academic degree in law, with at least a B average.

Application process

The admissions process is now completely online through York University’s MyFile system. Students complete the Graduate Application Form, pay the application fee and then are able to upload all required documents using MyFile, the online admissions portal.

1. Apply Online – the admissions application can be accessed through the [York Admissions webpage](#) the click on the APPLY NOW button. You will be directed to complete the Graduate Application Form, which collects information such as your name and address, your previous education, your citizenship and language and the program of study/start date you are interested in.
2. Application Fee – the application fee is \$100CAD and can be paid online.
3. A few days after you completed the admissions application and paid the application fee, the information you need to upload your documents on MyFile will be sent to the email account you provided. You must upload all the documents listed below under “Application Requirements”.

Application Requirements

Below is information on the application requirements for the LL.M and PhD degrees. All application requirements are uploaded into your online application through the MyFile portal.

Please do not send any documents to the Graduate Program in Law office.

Requirements

- Transcripts
- Proof of English Language Proficiency
- 2 Writing Samples
- 2 Letters of Recommendation
- Resume or CV
- Statement of Interest
- Supplementary Information Form (SIF)

1. Transcripts

Transcripts (a record of grades) are required from each post-secondary college or university attended, whether or not you received a degree from that institution. This includes transcripts from time spent on exchange or similar arrangements. In the first phase of your application, you may use unofficial transcripts, uploaded into your application. Admission into the program will require that you submit Official transcripts.

2. Proof of English-Language Proficiency

Proof of English-language proficiency is required if the applicant does not either a) live in an English-speaking jurisdiction or b) hold a degree for which the language of instruction was English. Applicants can provide proof in the form of scores on one of a list of English proficiency examinations, including the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or the YELT (York English Language Test). Minimum requirements are listed on the [the York University Admissions webpage](#) under the Degrees Offered and Application Requirements tab.

3. Two Writing Samples

Students are required to submit two (2) writing samples for review. In selecting writing samples, students should submit work published in scholarly publications or academic papers written for a university course or seminar. Work prepared in the area of law or a closely related area is preferred. It is recommended that students consider papers which received high grades, involved research and writing and demonstrate their analytic skills and writing ability.

Both writing samples must be in English. **When uploading the writing samples into your online application, you will need to merge the two samples into one PDF document.** Each sample should be a minimum of approximately 5,000 words (15 double-spaced typescript pages) and a maximum of approximately 10,000 words (30 double-spaced typescript pages).

4. Two Letters of Recommendation

When completing the online application, applicants list their two referees and provide contact information. York University will then contact the referees via email and request that they fill out the reference form.

In choosing referees, applicants should select people who are familiar with their academic achievements and strengths in law or a related discipline. At least one of these referees should be from an academic, or someone who is in a position to evaluate your potential for success in research-intensive academic work.

5. Resume or CV

A Curriculum vitae or Resume should provide details on academic, extracurricular and professional activities. The document should normally be no more than three (3) or four (4) pages.

6. Statement of Interest

In the statement of interest, applicants will submit a brief thesis proposal and key words for their application. This component of the application is perhaps the most important. Applicants should submit approximately 2-3 pages detailing a research question, proposed methodology and theoretical orientation. The proposal should indicate the body of scholarship that the student wishes to engage with in the research, and a bibliography or reference list.

On a separate page, the applicant must submit a 200-250 word summary of the Thesis Proposal, and a list of 5 keywords or short phrases which best describe the proposed area of research.

Please note that the Statement of Interest should be between 5-10 pages, but not exceed 10 pages.

7. Supplementary Information Form (SIF)

Please download and complete the [Supplementary Information Form](#). After completing the form, save it as a PDF document and upload it into your application.

The Supplementary Information Form includes questions on why you applied to the program, category of admission, and possible supervisors. It also assists the Graduate Program in determining your eligibility for any Osgoode financial awards (scholarships and fellowships).

Faculty profiles can be found on the [Osgoode Digital Commons website](#). Click Browse Collections, then Faculty Research Profiles.

Results of Applications for Admission

Decisions are made on a rolling basis, with assessments starting as soon as each file is complete. Most of our decisions will be announced in early Spring 2017.

Admissions decisions will be updated on the [MyFile portal](#). We recommend that you check there regularly to find out the status of your application.

Degree Requirements

The requirements of the LL.M and the PhD are set out below.

LL.M Degree

LL.M students must take at least three courses, including both the Graduate Seminar and a Study Group, during the first year of the program. The third course is of their choice. However, students entering without an LLB or JD may be required by the Graduate Program Director to take additional courses on the advice of their supervisors.

The Thesis:

An LL.M thesis is an extended piece of writing that reflects original research conducted by the student. An LL.M thesis length is expected to be between 125-150 pages plus a bibliography (about 40,000 words of text). It must be defended in an oral examination. It is expected that the thesis will be of publishable quality, meaning that either a significant portion of the LL.M thesis or a distilled version of the entire thesis must be regarded as publishable as an article or chapter in a book.

The Major Research Paper (MRP)

As an alternative to the thesis, LL.M candidates may complete an MRP of some 60 – 70 pages in length (about 20,000 words) and two additional courses (five in total, including the compulsory Graduate Seminar and a Study Group). The MRP is graded by the supervisor and a second marker normally from the Graduate Program in law. Unlike the case of an LL.M thesis, there is no oral defence for an MRP candidate.

Time to Completion

The expected time for completion of the LL.M degree is one year (three academic terms), with the maximum time allowance being four years (12 terms).

Residency Requirement

Students should note a York University residency requirement for the LL.M degree is two terms. Residency requires students to be geographically available to visit the campus regularly, to attend classes and generally to be present at the University.

PhD Degree

PhD students normally must take at least three courses, one of which is the Graduate Seminar (the student may, with approval of the Graduate Program Director, substitute the Graduate Seminar with another course if they completed this Seminar in the LL.M program). PhD students must also participate in a Study Group of their choosing (this is the second course). Participation in the Study Group is required in the first year of PhD studies and in the second and third years thereafter, provided PhD students are registered full time. Participation in a Study Group is optional for PhD students in subsequent years of their program of study. A third course is chosen by students.

PhD students must submit an extended dissertation proposal, of some 60 – 70 pages length, normally by the end of their third semester. This proposal is examined by the student's supervisory committee. Except under circumstances requiring a delay, the examination and any required revisions to the extended dissertation proposal outline must be completed before a student is allowed to continue in the PhD program in year two.

The Dissertation

A PhD dissertation is an extended piece of work completed for the doctoral degree. It reflects both a substantial contribution to an existing literature and, at the same time, original research. A PhD dissertation length is expected to be between 300-350 pages and a bibliography (approximately 100,000 words). It is expected that the dissertation will be of sufficiently high quality to warrant publication by an academic publisher, and/or in venues, of repute.

Portfolio Thesis & Dissertation

With the permission of their supervisor, LL.M thesis candidates may submit one or two articles published or accepted for publication in lieu of a conventional thesis for examination.

With the permission of their supervisor, PhD dissertation candidates may submit between three to five articles (depending on the length and ambition of the articles).

Further explanation of the portfolio thesis and dissertation may be found on the Osgoode [webpage](#).

Time to Completion

The expected time for completion of the PhD degree is three years (9 terms), with the maximum time allowance being six years (18 terms).

Residency Requirement

Students should note a residency requirement for the PhD degree of two terms. For students entering the PhD program without an LL.M, the residency requirement is increased to four terms; for students advancing to the PhD from the uncompleted Osgoode LL.M, terms completed during the LL.M will count for two terms, leaving two further terms of residency. Residency requires students to be geographically available to visit the campus regularly. Students should note a York University residency requirement for the LL.M degree of two terms, to attend classes and generally to be present at the University.

Financial Support

Funding Packages

Funding to help meet the financial needs of graduate students is comprised of one or more of the following internal and external funding sources: fellowships, teaching assistantships, graduate assistantships, scholarships and awards, and research assistantships.

Full-time master's students who receive funding support from York can expect a funding package of approximately \$10,000 in their first year, met primarily through a fellowship. Full-time PhD students who receive funding support from York can expect a funding package of approximately \$22,500 in their first year.

Funding availability for international graduate students is limited. Full-time international master's students who receive funding support from York can expect a funding package of approximately \$19,000 in their first year, met primarily through a fellowship. Full-time international PhD students who receive funding support from York can expect a funding package of approximately \$33,500 in their first year.

Funding is contingent on continuous registration as a full-time student, continued satisfactory academic performance, and fulfilment of any funding-related employment obligations.

Please visit [Faculty of Graduate Studies – Funding and Awards](#) for more information, including internal and external scholarship opportunities.

Teaching Opportunities

Many students take advantage of the opportunity to teach while at Osgoode. Doctoral students are ordinarily expected to hold a Teaching Assistant position as a condition of their funding. LL.M students do not hold Teaching Assistantship positions unless there is no PhD student available for the position. Osgoode hires instructors for its Legal Process course, its Ethical Lawyering in a Global Community course, and to work with first year JD students. Graduate students in Law may also teach in the York graduate programs in Criminology, Law and Society, Philosophy and Business.

Osgoode Scholarships

In addition to the York awards, Osgoode has a number of scholarship funds for incoming students. Students will automatically be considered for an Osgoode scholarship during the

admission process. There is no application. Information on Osgoode donor funded awards is available on our [website](#).

External Scholarships & Awards

All applicants should make reasonable efforts to secure funding from external agencies-both prior to coming to Osgoode and as continuing students. External awards include those from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), and the Province of Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS). Information on external awards are available on the [Faculty of Graduate Studies website](#).

Law students are also eligible to apply for the [Viscount Bennett Fellowship](#), a fellowship through the Canadian Bar Association.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The Graduate Program in Law is enriched by the presence of a number of students from countries other than Canada. However, it may be difficult for international applicants to assess the desirability and feasibility of pursuing graduate legal studies at Osgoode because these applicants are unfamiliar with conditions in Canada and with Canadian legal education. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Graduate Program for important information prior to submitting an application. Please send an email to gradlaw@osgoode.yorku.ca. It is hoped that the following information will assist such applicants.

Legal Education in Canada

Almost all Canadian students enter a first degree (LLB or JD) program in law with prior university training in another discipline. During the course of their LLB or JD Program, Canadian law students typically learn techniques of legal research, analysis and writing. Thus, students generally arrive at graduate school with the capacity to undertake serious, advanced research and a major writing commitment.

The potential ability to cope with such a writing commitment should therefore figure both in an international applicant's decision to seek admission and in Osgoode's decision to offer a student admission to the Graduate Program. The Graduate Program at Osgoode requires that applicants have high competence in the use of the English language and an aptitude for legal research. Applicants should provide as much evidence of their ability to meet these requirements as possible.

LL.M Applicants from India, Pakistan & Bangladesh

At present, the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) of York University requires applicants from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh to have a second-class honors Masters degree in order to be considered for a Masters program at York, including the LL.M. The Graduate Program in Law may nonetheless recommend to FGS admission of applicants without this formal qualification by applying to a special FGS sub-committee.

Seeking External Sources of Financial Assistance

Although the Graduate Program in Law has at its disposal a range of sources of funding, competition for these is keen. Accordingly, applicants are strongly urged to explore other possibilities, particularly the Commonwealth Scholarships or scholarship offered by your own government to promote study abroad. In some cases, Canadian government assistance programs may provide funds for students falling within their defined scope. Needless to say, the Graduate Program at Osgoode will do everything possible to help deserving students, within its available resources.

Practice of Law in Canada

Students considering permanent settlement in Canada must seek landed immigrant status. Students interested in securing admission to the legal profession in Canada (in contrast, for example, to the university academy) should generally seek to enroll in a Canadian LLB or JD program rather than a graduate (LL.M or PhD) program. However, some course-based LL.M programs may assist with practice accreditation requirements; consult [Osgoode Professional Development](#) (for more details. Further inquiries on this point must be addressed to the [National Committee on Accreditation](#) and the provincial governing body for the legal profession. In Ontario, the relevant body is the [Law Society of Upper Canada](#) .

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between research stream LL.M and the LL.Ms offered at Osgoode Professional Development (OPD)?
2. What are the eligibility requirements for admission to the research stream LL.M and PhD program?
3. How many applications do you receive and accept each year?
4. I don't have a law degree. Am I still eligible to apply for your graduate programs?
5. How much is the tuition for the LL.M and the PhD program?
6. Is there any funding available for the graduate program in law?
7. Can I do my LL.M or PhD part-time?
8. When is the deadline to apply?
9. Do I need to find a potential supervisor before I apply?
10. Can I send my official transcripts on behalf of my educational institution(s)?
11. What is a conditional offer of admission?
12. Will my recommendation letters be deemed official if I send them on behalf of my references?
13. I am internationally trained lawyer and I would like to practice law in Canada, is the research stream LL.M right for me?
14. I am an international applicant, is there a language proficiency requirement?
15. Are there any scholarships or financial supports for international students?
16. If I want to reapply, can I use my supporting documents from last year?
17. Am I eligible to apply even before I finish my JD or LLB?
18. When and how will I receive the decision on my application?
19. Can I receive an explanation if my application was unsuccessful?

1. What is the difference between research stream LL.M and the LL.Ms offered at Osgoode Professional Development (OPD)?

The research stream LL.M is ideal for people who want to pursue a career in academia or for advanced specialization in specific fields of law. The research stream LL.M program is very research intensive and is based on a conventional supervisory model, which allows you to do your LL.M under the supervision of a faculty member with the relevant expertise and whose profile would match your areas of interest.

For LL.Ms offered by Osgoode Professional Development, please visit their [website](#).

2. What are the eligibility requirements for admission to the research stream LL.M and PhD program?

LL.M Program: To be eligible for admission, the candidates normally must possess an academic degree in law with at least the equivalent of a B average. Candidates must also possess the ability to work with legal materials in the English language.

PhD Program: To be eligible for admission to the PhD Program, candidates normally must possess a graduate academic degree in law (LL.M) with a minimum of a B average. Candidates must also possess the ability to work with legal materials in the English language.

Details on language requirements for admission can be found on the admissions [webpage](#).

3. How many applications do you receive and accept each year?

We receive a much larger volume of applications than we can accept into the program. We admit up to 15 LL.M candidates and up to 10 PhD candidates, with funding, each academic year. Please note that we have a very limited number of funded spaces for international applicants.

4. I don't have a law degree. Am I still eligible to apply for your graduate programs?

Direct entry to LL.M without an LL.B/J.D.: A limited number of places in the LL.M program are available to candidates with outstanding academic records, but without an academic degree (LL.B/J.D) in law. Such students normally have completed a graduate degree in another discipline related to law. Students entering the LL.M program in Law who do not have an LLB or JD must attend the non-credit course entitled Introduction to Graduate Legal Studies. They may also be required to take additional courses, at the discretion of the Graduate Program Director on the advice of the student's supervisor.

PhD: As a rule, an LL.M is a precondition to admission to the PhD.

5. How much is the tuition for the LL.M and the PhD program?

Graduate tuition at York University is competitively low, as part of our commitment to access to education. Tuition at York University is paid per term, and there are three terms per year. You can see both domestic and international tuition rates, applicable to Osgoode's Research Stream programs, at the Office of Student Financial Services [webpage](#).

Every graduate student must maintain continuous registration (i.e. register and pay fees for fall, winter and summer terms) until the dissertation, thesis or major research paper submitted has been accepted for the award of the degree.

6. Is there any funding available for the graduate program in law?

Osgoode Hall Law School offers significant funding assistance for tuition and living expenses for almost all of our full-time graduate students.

Funding to help meet the financial needs of graduate students is comprised of one or more of the following internal and external funding sources: fellowships, teaching assistantships, graduate assistantships, scholarships and awards, and research assistantships.

Full-time master's students who receive funding support from York can expect a funding package of approximately \$10,000 in their first year, met primarily through a fellowship. Full-time PhD students who receive funding support from York can expect a funding package of approximately \$22,500 in their first year.

Funding availability for international graduate students is limited, but takes account of the higher tuition rates paid by international students (see the Office of Student Financial Services [webpage](#)). Full-time international master's students who receive funding support from York can expect a funding package of approximately \$19,000 in their first year, met primarily through a fellowship. Full-time international PhD students who receive funding support from York can expect a funding package of approximately \$33,500 in their first year.

All graduate student funding is contingent on continuous registration as a full-time student, continued satisfactory academic performance, and fulfillment of any funding-related employment obligations.

Please visit [Faculty of Graduate Studies – Funding and Awards](#) for more information, including internal and external scholarship opportunities. Many of our students receive significant fellowships and scholarships to assist with the cost of their education.

7. Can I do my LL.M or PhD part-time?

The research stream LL.M and PhD programs are full-time programs, and do not admit part-time students. Students in the later years of their PhD program may request a move to part-time status.

The Osgoode Professional Development program does have some part-time programs. Individuals who are interested in the part-time professional LL.M programs should consult the website of the [Osgoode Professional Development Program](#) or contact the program at 416-673-4670 or admissions-opd@osgoode.yorku.ca.

8. When is the deadline to apply?

The application deadline for the 2017-18 academic year is **Wednesday, December 14, 2016**.

9. Do I need to find a potential supervisor before I apply?

No. However we do ask you to review the Faculty profiles located on the [Osgoode Digital Commons website](#). (Click Browse Collections, then Faculty Research Profiles) to see if the research and scholarship of any Osgoode faculty members aligns with your research interests. We ask each applicant to identify three potential supervisors in the **Supplementary Information Form** component of the admissions application.

All students are assigned an individual supervisor before beginning the program, a process which takes into account the research interests of faculty and student, and the existing supervision, teaching and service load of the Faculty member. Applications are only accepted if, among other things, a faculty member who considered the file has expressed interest in acting as supervisor. The fit between

an applicant's planned thesis or dissertation topic and the expertise of available supervisors is a very important aspect of the admissions process.

10. Can I send my official transcripts on behalf of my educational institution(s)?

No. But as part of the admissions process you can upload unofficial transcripts into your admissions application. If and when you are accepted into the program, you will be required to submit official transcripts (directly from the educational institution).

11. What is a conditional offer of admission?

Students admitted with a conditional admission offer must meet the condition within the approved time-line to get their admission condition waived or they will be blocked from registering.

During the admissions application process, applicants can upload unofficial transcripts to their application. Once an applicant is admitted to the graduate program, they are required to submit their official transcripts.

12. Will my recommendation letters be deemed official if I send them on behalf of my references?

No. Applicants must provide contact information for their referees via MyFile, the online admissions portal. York University will then send a request for a reference directly to your referee.

13. I am internationally trained lawyer and I would like to practice law in Canada, is the research stream LL.M right for me?

No. The degrees offered by the Graduate Program in Law do not qualify students to practice law in Canada. Students interested in practicing law in Canada should review the licensing rules of the Law Society of the province in which they intend to practice. The Osgoode Professional Development program has some LL.M programs designed specifically for internationally trained lawyers wanting to practice in Canada. Please check their [website](#) for further information.

14. I am an international applicant, is there a language proficiency requirement?

Proof of English language proficiency is mandatory for applicants whose first language is not English; who do not live in an English-speaking jurisdiction or do not have a degree from an institution that provides instruction in English. Please check the Admissions website for the most up to date information on language requirements.

15. Are there any scholarships or financial supports for international students?

There is more information on funding for international students at the [Osgoode graduate admissions website](#), as well as at the [Faculty of Graduate Studies](#) website (click on International Student Award Opportunities).

International students in Osgoode's research stream graduate program have access to various forms of financial support for their studies. This funding can be internal to York or external and may include scholarships (such as the Ontario Graduate Scholarships), fellowships, teaching assistantships, research assistantships, and course directorships.

Although the Graduate Program in Law has a range of funding courses. Accordingly, applicants are strongly urged to explore other possibilities, particularly the Commonwealth Scholarships offered by your own government to promote study abroad.

16. If I want to reapply, can I use my supporting documents from last year?

Please contact the law graduate program office at gradlaw@osgoode.yorku.ca for more information.

17. Am I eligible to apply even before I finish my JD or LLB?

Yes, you may apply if you are currently completing your JD or LLB. You must upload your unofficial transcript showing your course enrollment and grades to date when you apply. If admitted, you must send the official transcript indicating that your degree has been conferred as soon as it is available.

18. When and how will I receive the decision on my application?

Check the status of your application on your [MyFile account](#), where you uploaded your admissions documents.

File review and decision-making will begin as soon as files are complete. All supporting documentation (e.g transcripts, references etc) should be uploaded as early as possible, and before the December 14th, 2016 deadline. Decisions will be made on a rolling basis and applicants should receive notification in the early spring.

19. Can I receive an explanation if my application was unsuccessful?

You may contact the Office of the Graduate Program in Law at gradlaw@osgoode.yorku.ca for more information on your application. There are a number of reasons why an application may be unsuccessful. We can also give you a general idea of why your application was unsuccessful and provide some feedback on how you can improve your application should you choose to apply in future. Decisions on admissions are not appealable.