

# LL.M. in Agricultural and Food Law

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The LL.M. Program in Agricultural and Food Law at the University of Arkansas School of Law was the first of its kind when it was founded over 40 years ago. Today, it continues to lead the nation in this important area of law, connecting lawyers to our food system, from farm to plate.

We offer an expansive and fully integrated curriculum instructed by nationally recognized scholars and practitioners for full- and part-time students. Students attend on-campus or by distance. Our distance students have the opportunity to participate in live classes by videoconference, with recorded classes and online opportunities to provide flexible programming. Our LL.M. candidates are also supported by a network of almost 400 alumni who provide mentoring.

Along with providing an exceptional agricultural and food law curriculum designed specifically for LL.M. students, the University of Arkansas School of Law publishes the *Journal of Food Law & Policy* (<https://law.uark.edu/academics/journals/journal-food-law-policy.php>), is home to the nationally acclaimed Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative, (<https://indigenousfoodandag.com>) and provides outreach opportunities such as the Food Recovery Project (<https://law.uark.edu/service-outreach/food-recovery-project/>) for its students.

## Introduction to Agricultural and Food Law

Agricultural and food law is the study of the laws and policies that apply to our food system, from the farm to the consumer, and beyond. There is nothing more basic to human existence, yet there are few areas of law that are more complex.

From unique policies designed to support farmers to efforts to control the environmental harms caused by farming, agricultural law includes aspects of property law, constitutional law, commercial law, tort law, administrative law, employment law, and environmental law, all applied to the agricultural sector. Current issues include land tenure, social and environmental justice, and climate change solutions.

Beyond the farm, food law and policy continues the legal journey to include efforts to ensure a safe, healthy, and secure food system and to consider the ways in which we fall short in achieving those goals. It adds to our study with current topics such as food security and nutrition assistance, labeling law and commercial speech, food safety and liabilities for unsafe products, human rights and corporate responsibilities, international trade, intellectual property rights, right to food, and the regulation of new food products and technologies.

In the LL.M. Program, we combine agricultural and food law studies to provide a comprehensive analysis and a systemic look at our food system.

## LL.M. Admission Requirements

Applicants for admission to the LL.M. Program in Agricultural & Food Law must have earned a J.D. or LL.B. degree from a fully accredited school in the United States or a J.D., LL.B., or a substantially equivalent degree from a fully accredited school in another country. An applicant who has earned a J.D. or LL.B. degree from a law school in the United States that is not fully accredited but who has been admitted to a bar may be admitted in special circumstances upon the approval of the Graduate Legal Studies Committee.

All applicants should demonstrate academic excellence coupled with an interest in agricultural law or food law issues.

Factors considered by the Graduate Legal Studies Committee in evaluating an application for degree candidacy include:

1. The candidate's past academic performance, particularly his or her performance in relevant legal studies;
2. For applicants seeking an LL.M. in Agricultural and Food Law, any past background that would evidence a special interest in agricultural and food law; and
3. Such other factors as the committee may deem relevant in determining the likelihood of success of the applicant in the graduate law program.

The following information is required for a complete application:

- A completed application
- A Statement of Interest explaining the reasons why the applicant seeks to be admitted and demonstrating an interest in agricultural and food law;
- Official copies of transcripts from all post-secondary educational institutions attended (these must be sent from the school, directly to the LL.M. program);
- At least one letter of recommendation (two in the case of international students) from an individual who can attest to the applicant's academic and professional abilities (sent directly to the LL.M. Program).

The University of Arkansas School of Law's Graduate Admissions Committee will make all admissions decisions and may in some cases place conditions on a candidate's admission.

The Program has a rolling admissions policy, and applications will continue to be accepted until all candidate positions are filled.

Additional information and links to program application forms are found on the LL.M. Program's website at How to Apply (<https://law.uark.edu/academics/llm-food-ag/apply/>).

## J.D. Electives in Agricultural and Food Law

J.D. students in good standing at the University of Arkansas School of Law have the opportunity to enroll in many of the specialized LL.M. courses as electives in the J.D. program, as space permits.

J.D. students who take LL.M. courses as J.D. electives and later apply for and are accepted into the LL.M. Program can request that up to 6 credits of the LL.M. courses taken be counted toward their LL.M. degree provided that:

1. The LL.M. course was taken within three years prior to admission to the LL.M. Program;
2. The student received a grade of 3.25 or higher in the LL.M. course; and,
3. The Graduate Legal Studies Committee grants permission in consultation with the Professor of the LL.M. course(s).

## Nine-Hour J.D. Students

A School of Law student who is within nine hours of completing the total credit hours required to earn a J.D. degree may be admitted conditionally to the graduate law program. This allows students to begin their LL.M. coursework during their final semester of law school. Credits are assigned to either the J.D. program or the LL.M. program but cannot be counted

toward both degrees. In order to be admitted to the nine-hour program, a J.D. student must:

1. Obtain advance approval from the Graduate Legal Studies Committee;
2. Obtain advance approval from the director of the graduate law program for credits to be applied toward the LL.M. degree; and
3. Earn a grade of 2.50 or higher in each course to be applied toward the LL.M. degree.

A student who satisfies these requirements and who is subsequently awarded a J.D. degree will be admitted to the graduate program as a degree candidate, unless the Graduate Legal Studies Committee determines that there are substantial grounds for revocation of the conditional admission.

## Non-Degree Program

J.D. students, practicing attorneys, and graduate students in related disciplines may be allowed to enroll in some of our specialized LL.M. classes for non-degree credit. Students wishing to transfer credits to their degree program, must contact their Dean or Department head for approval prior to enrollment. Attorneys seeking Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credit should contact their jurisdiction for credit requirements and certification forms.

Interested students and attorneys should email [llm@uark.edu](mailto:llm@uark.edu) for the current class schedule and information about enrollment.

## Degree Requirements

To receive an LL.M. degree in agricultural and food law, a candidate must:

1. Complete a total of 24-credit hours pursuant to a course of study approved by the director of the LL.M. program including the following required courses: LAWW 7860V Food Law and Policy, LAWW 7960V Agriculture and the Environment, LAWW 73102 Agricultural Perspectives ;
2. Maintain a cumulative grade-point average of 2.50 or better (on a 4.00 scale); and
3. Conduct research in a specialized area of agricultural and food law and produce a written product for graded credit. The required written product can be of the sort that is published in a law journal or, with the permission of the director of the LL.M. program, a less traditional product that demonstrates rigorous legal analysis, significant academic content, and quality legal writing skills.

Candidates may enroll on a full or part-time basis but may not enroll for more than 15 hours in any semester without the approval of the director of the LL.M. program. All coursework, including completion of the research requirement must be completed within four years of matriculation unless an extension for good cause is granted by the Graduate Legal Studies Committee.

All candidates are subject to the LL.M. Program Honor Code.

## Dual Degree Program

The School of Law cooperates with the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness in the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences to offer a dual-degree program leading to the LL.M. in agricultural and food law and Master of Science in agricultural economics degrees.

Each program applies its own admission standards. For further information on the master's in agricultural economics, visit Dual M.S. LL.M. (<https://agribusiness.uark.edu/academics/graduates/joint-llm-ms.php>), Bumpers College Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness.

## Course of Study

The LL.M. program offers more than 24 credits of specialized agricultural and food law courses each year. The director approves each student's course selection. Three of these specialized courses are required: LAWW 7860V Food Law and Policy ; LAWW 7960V Agriculture and the Environment, and LAWW 73102 Agricultural Perspectives. A final research project, Advanced Writing in Agricultural and Food Law is also required.

Most students take 24 credits of these specialized courses to complete their degree. However, with the approval of the director, a student may substitute courses offered in the J.D. program (if not taken previously as a J.D. student) or courses offered for graduate credit elsewhere within the University of Arkansas provided that they are substantially related to agricultural or food law. LL.M. students may be allowed to earn up to six credits through alternative courses. An effort is made to accommodate each student's particular areas of interest, and the director works closely with each student to develop their preferred curriculum. Credit may not be granted for courses taken at other law schools.

## Costs and Funding

The LL.M. Program in Agricultural and Food Law is one of the most affordable LL.M. opportunities available.

For on-campus students, the university provides an online calculator for tuition and fees information at the Treasurer's website (<http://treasurernet.uark.edu/Tuition.aspx?pagestate=Calculate>). Distance students are given the in-state tuition rate regardless of their state of residency and also pay lower fees.

The Graduate School at the University of Arkansas and the School of Law provide for Graduate Assistantships to be awarded to a limited number of LL.M. candidates. These assistantships provide for a full tuition waiver plus a stipend of \$5,000 less withholding per semester in exchange for the candidate's work in a variety of legal and teaching capacities. Competition for the Graduate Assistantship positions is high, and the awards are primarily merit-based.

Graduate Assistantships awards are made by the Graduate Admissions Committee after a candidate has been admitted to the LL.M. Program.

## LL.M. Courses

Each semester, the LL.M. Program offers an extensive curriculum of courses that have been developed specifically for the program. The courses that are offered each semester are tailored to student interest, with "selected topics" courses created each semester to address emerging issues and current trends. Experiential opportunities are provided through externships and practicums.