

Comprehensive Guide to Eligibility of Foreign Attorneys to Waive into Different State Bars

By BCG Attorney Search

Summary: Learn more about which US states and territories allow foreign attorneys to waive into the bar and what their requirements are in this comprehensive guide.

For foreign attorneys wanting to practice in the United States, there is good news. [Over half of the jurisdictions permit non-American trained graduates to become members of their bar.](#) However, each state has different sets of requirements, which are detailed in the [Comprehensive Guide to Bar Admission Requirements](#) 2017. Because criteria vary state-to-state, we have created the following detailed breakdown based on the above document.

For more information about [bar reciprocity from state to state](#), see the following guide:
[A Comprehensive Guide to Bar Reciprocity: What States Have Reciprocity for Lawyers and Allow You to Waive into the Bar](#)

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Alabama

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission into the [Alabama bar](#) if they pass the examination. They are required to have legal education in [English common law](#), additional education at an ABA-approved law school, have already practiced law in a foreign jurisdiction, obtain a determination of educational equivalency, and be admitted in another U.S. jurisdiction.

Additionally, the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association stated, "Applicant must meet and show proof of the following requirements: (a) that the foreign law school from which the applicant graduated was approved in the foreign jurisdiction where it is located; (b) that the applicant has been admitted to the practice of law in the jurisdiction in which that university or college is located; and (c) at least one of the following: (i) that the [law degree program](#) completed by [the applicant includes a substantial component of English common law](#); or (ii) that the applicant has satisfactorily completed at least 24 semester hours of legal subjects covered by the bar examination in regular law school classes, under ABA or AALS standards; or (iii) that the applicant has been admitted to the practice of law before the court of highest jurisdiction in a U.S. jurisdiction, has been continuously engaged in the active practice of law for at least 3 years in that jurisdiction, and is a member in good standing of the bar of that jurisdiction."

Alaska

Foreign attorneys are eligible for admission into the Alaska bar after passing the examination. They are also required to have legal education in English common law, additional education at an ABA-approved law school, obtain a determination of educational equivalency, and be admitted in another U.S. jurisdiction.

According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "A graduate of a foreign law school in which the principles of English law are taught may be eligible to take the [bar exam](#) if he or she submits proof that 1) the law school from which he/she graduated meets the ABA's standards for approval; and 2) he/she has successfully completed 1 year at an ABA-approved law school, including successful completion of 1 course in U.S. Constitutional Law and 1 course in U.S. Civil Procedure, or is a member in good standing of the bar of 1 or more states, territories, or the District of Columbia and was admitted to the bar of that state, territory, or the District of Columbia after the written examination."

Arizona

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the Arizona bar.

Arkansas

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the Arkansas bar.

California

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the California bar. They are also required to have additional education at an ABA-approved law school, have already practiced law in a foreign jurisdiction, obtain a determination of educational equivalency, and be admitted in another U.S. jurisdiction.

According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "Foreign law school graduates must request an individual evaluation to determine legal education equivalency. [Graduates from foreign law schools may qualify to take the California bar exam if they obtain an LL.M. degree](#) or complete an additional 1 year of law study at an ABA-approved or California-accredited law school which includes a certain number of credits in bar examination subject matter. Foreign-educated law students who did not graduate are not eligible to take the exam and are required to either graduate with a J.D. degree at an ABA-approved or California-accredited law school or complete 4 years of law study at a law school registered in California and pass the First-Year Law Students' Exam. Foreign law school graduates who are admitted to the active practice of law in good standing in their countries do not have to complete any additional law study to qualify to take the bar exam."

Additionally, if a foreign law school graduate obtains an LL.M. or other graduate law degree from an ABA-approved law school, the graduate is eligible to take the California bar exam on this basis alone.

Colorado

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the Colorado bar. They are required to have legal education in English common law and have already practiced law in a foreign jurisdiction.

The National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association added, "[Applicants] must have been primarily engaged in the active practice of law for 3 of the previous 5 years in jurisdictions where

admitted."

Connecticut

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission into the Connecticut bar by examination. They are required to have additional education at an ABA-approved law school and have already practiced law in a foreign jurisdiction. Graduates of foreign law schools are also eligible for admission into the Connecticut bar *without examination*.

According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "Foreign law school graduates must submit a petition for determination on foreign education and receive Bar Examining Committee approval prior to submitting an application for admission by examination, admission without examination, or admission by UBE score transfer. [The foreign education must be substantially equivalent in duration to the legal education provided by an ABA-approved law school](#). Foreign-educated applicants must complete an LL.M. degree program meeting specific requirements at an ABA- or Committee-approved law school prior to admission. An applicant who otherwise does not meet the education requirements may be eligible to sit for the exam if he/she meets certain conditions. Conditions include admission before the highest court of original jurisdiction in a U.S. state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or a U.S. District Court for 10 or more years, good standing in such jurisdiction, active practice of law in that jurisdiction for 5 of the last 7 years, and an intention to actively practice law in Connecticut and to devote a majority of his/her work to such practice."

Delaware

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the Delaware bar.

District of Columbia

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission into the District of Columbia bar by examination, and they are required to have additional education at an ABA-approved law school.

Graduates of foreign law schools are also eligible for admission into the District of Columbia bar *without examination*. To obtain this waiver, they must have previously been admitted into another U.S. jurisdiction. According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "The applicant has been a member in good standing for 5 years of a court of general jurisdiction of any U.S. state or territory."

Additionally, the NCBE and the ABA said, "Applicant may be permitted to take the bar examination upon successful completion of at least 26 semester hours of study in subjects tested on the bar examination in a law school that at the time of such study was ABA-approved. All such 26 semester hours shall be earned in courses of study, each of which is substantially concentrated on a single tested subject. Classes that began before March 1, 2016, will count towards this total if they were in subjects tested on the DC bar exam through February 2016. Classes beginning after March 1, 2016, will count towards the total if they are in subjects tested on the Uniform Bar Examination."

Florida

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission into the Florida bar by examination, but they are required to have been admitted to the bar in another U.S. jurisdiction.

The National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association stated, "After 10 years active

practice in another jurisdiction (District of Columbia or other states in the United States or in federal courts in the United States or its territories, possessions, or protectorates) in which applicant has been duly admitted, the applicant may file a representative compilation of work product for evaluation by the Board."

Georgia

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the Georgia bar. They are required to have additional education at an ABA-approved law school and have already practiced law in a foreign jurisdiction.

The National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association added, "Foreign law school graduates may also apply for a waiver of the requirement of graduation from an ABA-approved law school. Published waiver policy lists criteria considered by Board in determining whether waiver standard has been met."

Hawaii

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the Hawaii bar. They are required to have legal education in English common law and have already practiced law in a foreign jurisdiction.

The National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association said, "An attorney admitted to practice and in good standing before the highest court in a foreign country where English common law is the basis of that country's jurisprudence and where English is the language of instruction and practice in the courts of that jurisdiction shall be eligible for examination and admission if he or she presents satisfactory proof to have actively practiced law in that jurisdiction for 5 of the 6 years immediately prior to application."

Idaho

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the Idaho bar.

Illinois

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission into the Illinois bar by examination. They are required to have already practiced law in a foreign jurisdiction and obtain a determination of educational equivalency.

The National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association stated, "The foreign law school graduate must have been licensed to practice in the country in which the degree was conferred and/or in a U.S. jurisdiction for a minimum of 5 years; the lawyer must be in good standing as an attorney or equivalent in that country or U.S. jurisdiction where admitted; during each of no fewer than 5 of the 7 years immediately prior to making application in Illinois, the lawyer must have verifiably devoted an annual minimum of 1,000 hours to the practice of law in such country and/or U.S. jurisdiction where licensed; the applicant must achieve passing score on MPRE and meet character and fitness standards.

Indiana

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the Indiana bar.

Iowa

Graduates of foreign law schools are eligible for admission into the Iowa bar *without examination*, and they are required to have been previously admitted into another U.S. jurisdiction.

According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "Applicant must have been engaged in a qualified, full-time practice of law under license of the U.S. jurisdiction for at least 5 of the last 7 years."

Kansas

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the Kansas bar.

Kentucky

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission into the Kentucky bar by examination. They are required to have already practiced law in a foreign jurisdiction and obtain a determination of educational equivalency. According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "An attorney who is a graduate of a foreign law school can apply for an educational evaluation to determine if applicant's legal education is substantially equivalent to the Kentucky law school education. If the law school is approved, the applicant may sit for the bar exam if he/she has been actively and substantially engaged in the practice of law for 3 of the last 5 years."

Louisiana

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the Louisiana bar. They are required to have additional education at an ABA-approved law school and obtain a determination of educational equivalency.

The National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association stated, "Foreign [attorneys](#) can apply to take the bar exam but must first have an educational equivalency evaluation conducted and complete 14 hours at an American law school."

Maine

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the Maine bar. They are required to have already practiced law in a foreign jurisdiction and obtain a determination of educational equivalency. Graduates of foreign law schools are also eligible for admission into the Maine bar without examination. Besides the aforementioned requirements, they must also be admitted to another U.S. jurisdiction. According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "[Candidates] must satisfy requirements of Regulation for Determining Equivalency of Foreign Legal Education and have practiced for 3 years in the jurisdiction where licensed. Must be licensed in a U.S. jurisdiction that has reciprocity with Maine."

Maryland

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission into the Maryland bar by examination.

According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "A graduate of a foreign law school may qualify for a waiver to take the Maryland Bar Examination if he or she has been admitted by examination in another U.S. jurisdiction; or, is admitted to a foreign jurisdiction AND has completed an additional legal degree at an ABA-approved law school where at least 26 credits in Maryland Bar Exam subjects are earned in the course of completing the degree."

Massachusetts

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the Massachusetts bar. They are required to have additional education at an ABA-approved law school and obtain a determination of educational equivalency.

Graduates of foreign law schools are also eligible for admission into the Massachusetts bar without examination.

According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "The Board in its discretion may excuse applicants possessing degrees from law schools in foreign countries, providing they have met the following requirements: a) obtained prior Board approval of their educational sufficiency and work history, b) provided verification that they have been admitted and are in good standing in another state, district, or territory of the United States and have engaged in the practice of law for 5 out of the past 7 years before making application, c) passed the MPRE, and d) satisfied the Board as to their moral character and fitness."

Additionally, the NCBE and the ABA stated, "A graduate from a foreign law school (other than those Canadian law schools that are pre-qualified) may be permitted to sit for the bar exam after taking further legal studies designated by the Board at an ABA-approved law school or a Massachusetts-accredited law school. Foreign law school graduates must obtain a determination of their educational equivalency from the Board prior to making application."

Michigan

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the Michigan bar.

Minnesota

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the Minnesota bar.

Mississippi

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the Mississippi bar.

Missouri

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the Missouri bar. They are required to have additional education at an ABA-approved law school, have already practiced law in a foreign jurisdiction, and be admitted in another U.S. jurisdiction.

According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "Graduates who have passed the bar exam in another state and hold an active law license are eligible to take the bar exam with either (1) full-time practice for 3 of the 5 years preceding application or (2) completion of 24 credit hours in residence at an ABA-approved law school within the 3 years prior to application. Graduates who are not licensed in another state must be admitted to practice law in the foreign country where the foreign law degree was conferred and be in good standing with either (1) full-time practice for 3 of the 5 years preceding the application or (2) completion of 24 credit hours in residence at an ABA-approved law school within the 3 years prior to application."

Montana

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the Montana bar.

Nebraska

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the Nebraska bar.

Nevada

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the Nevada bar. They are required to obtain a determination of educational equivalency.

New Hampshire

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission into the New Hampshire bar by examination. They are required to have legal education in English common law and obtain a determination of educational equivalency.

Graduates of foreign law schools are also eligible for admission into the New Hampshire bar without examination.

According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "Foreign [law graduates](#) are only eligible for admission without examination if they meet other requirements for reciprocal admission for lawyers licensed in other states."

Additionally, the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association stated these requirements, "Graduate must be legally trained in common law, and a determination of educational equivalency is required. Graduate must be a member in good standing in home jurisdiction or in another state, after being admitted by exam."

New Jersey

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the New Jersey bar.

New Mexico

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission into the New Mexico bar by examination. They are required to have been admitted into another U.S. jurisdiction.

According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "Applicant may take the exam if he/she is licensed in another state of the United States and has practiced law there 4 of the 6 years prior to application."

New York

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission into the New York bar by examination. They are required to have additional education at an ABA-approved law school and obtain a determination of educational equivalency.

The National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association stated, "Applicant must complete period of law study equivalent in duration and substance to that specified in New York rules in law school recognized by a competent accrediting agency of the government of such foreign country. All applicants must have their transcripts evaluated by the Board of Law Examiners to determine if further study

is required in the form of a qualifying LL.M. degree from an ABA-approved law school in the United States."

North Carolina

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission into the North Carolina bar by examination, and they are required to also be admitted in another U.S. jurisdiction.

Graduates of foreign law schools are also eligible for admission into the North Carolina bar *without examination*.

According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "The applicant must meet the requirements set out in at least one of the following paragraphs: (1) hold an LL.B. or J.D. degree from a law school approved by the ABA at the time the degree was conferred; (2) have received prior to August 1995 an LL.B., J.D., LL.M., or S.J.D. degree from a law school approved by the council of the North Carolina State Bar at the time the degree was conferred; (3) have received prior to August 2005 an LL.M. or S.J.D. degree from a law school that was approved by the ABA at the time the degree was conferred; or (4) hold an LL.B. or J.D. degree from a law school that was approved for licensure purposes in another state of the United States or the District of Columbia and be licensed in such state or District. The applicant must also satisfy all requirements outlined in Section .0502, "Requirements for Comity Applicants," of the Rules Governing the Admission to Practice Law in North Carolina."

North Dakota

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the North Dakota bar.

Ohio

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the Ohio bar. They are required to additional education at an ABA-approved law school and obtain a determination of educational equivalency.

Graduates of foreign law schools are also eligible for admission into the Ohio bar without examination. To bypass the exam, they must be admitted into the bar in another jurisdiction as well as meet the other aforementioned requirements.

According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "If an applicant's legal education was not received in the United States, the education must be evaluated and approved by the Supreme Court as equivalent to ABA-approved law school education. For equivalency, an applicant must show successful completion of 30 credit hours at an ABA-approved law school in addition to a foreign law degree showing at least 3 years of full-time study. The application for admission without examination may not be processed until the education is approved. At least 3 additional years of full-time post-secondary education are required."

Oklahoma

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the Oklahoma bar.

Oregon

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the Oregon bar. They are required to have legal education in English common law, have already practiced law in a foreign jurisdiction, and obtain a determination of educational equivalency.

Graduates of foreign law schools are also eligible for admission into the Oregon bar without examination. To bypass the test, candidates must meet the aforementioned requirements and have been admitted to the bar in another jurisdiction.

See [Guidelines on Reciprocity or "Admission On Motion" among the States as per American Bar Association](#) for more information.

According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "Applicant must be admitted in a foreign country where common law of England is the basis of its jurisprudence, and where requirements for admission to the bar are substantially equivalent to those of Oregon, and the applicant must be a graduate of a law school determined by an Oregon equivalency panel to be equivalent to an ABA-approved law school."

Pennsylvania

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission into the Pennsylvania bar by examination. They are required to have additional education at an ABA-approved law school and have already practiced law in a foreign jurisdiction.

According to National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "Applicant must have completed law study in a foreign law school, have been admitted and in good standing at the bar of a foreign jurisdiction, and have practiced in the jurisdiction for 5 out of the last 8 years. Applicant must also complete 24 credit hours taken in specified subjects at an ABA-approved law school."

Rhode Island

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the Rhode Island bar, and they are required to have also been admitted in another U.S. jurisdiction.

According to National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "Foreign-educated applicants who are admitted in another U.S. jurisdiction may apply for admission under Article II, Rule 2(a) (attorney admission on examination)."

South Carolina

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the South Carolina bar.

South Dakota

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the South Dakota bar, and they are required to have also been admitted in another U.S. jurisdiction.

According to National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "An applicant for admission who is a graduate of a foreign law school not accredited by the ABA may apply for permission to take the South Dakota Bar Examination upon good cause if the graduate has passed the bar examination in another state and is a member in good standing of that state."

Tennessee

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the Tennessee bar. They are required to have additional education at an ABA-approved law school and obtain a determination of

educational equivalency.

Additionally, the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association stated, "Applicant must prove that undergraduate and law school education is the equivalent of that required by an applicant who attended an ABA-accredited law school or Tennessee law school approved by the Board of Law Examiners. Additionally, the applicant must have received an LL.M. degree for Practice of Law in the United States from an ABA-accredited law school or Tennessee law school approved by the Board. The program must be taught in English and must be attended on-site at the ABA-accredited or Tennessee law school."

Texas

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the Texas bar. They are required to have additional education at an ABA-approved law school and have already practiced law in a foreign jurisdiction.

According to National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "An applicant with an initial law degree from a foreign law school not based on English common law must, in part, be authorized to practice law and have a qualifying LL.M. degree. An applicant with an initial law degree from a foreign law school based on English common law must, in part, either have a qualifying LL.M. degree or satisfy a 3-year practice requirement."

Utah

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the Utah bar. They are required to have legal education in English common law, have additional education at an ABA-approved law school, and have already practiced law in a foreign jurisdiction.

Additionally, the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association stated, "A foreign lawyer with a law degree from an English common-law jurisdiction may sit for the bar exam after [practicing law](#) for 2 years in a common-law jurisdiction and completing 24 semester hours at an ABA-approved law school."

Vermont

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the Vermont bar. They are required to have legal education in English common law and obtain a determination of educational equivalency.

Graduates of foreign law schools are also eligible for admission into the Vermont bar without examination. According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association stated, "Foreign law school graduates can be admitted on motion if admitted in another jurisdiction."

Additionally, if a foreign law school graduate obtains an LL.M. or other graduate law degree from an ABA-approved law school, the graduate is eligible to take the Vermont bar exam on this basis alone. It is also noted that Vermont recognizes with regularity the sufficiency of a legal education received at McGill University in Quebec, Canada.

Virginia

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the Virginia bar.

Washington

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the Washington bar. They are required to have additional education at an ABA-approved law school and have already practiced law in a foreign jurisdiction.

If a foreign law school graduate obtains an LL.M. or other graduate law degree from an ABA-approved law school, the graduate is eligible to take the Washington bar exam on this basis alone.

According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "An applicant with a foreign law degree that would qualify the applicant to practice law in that jurisdiction is eligible if an LL.M. "for the practice of law" is obtained from an ABA-approved law school. The LL.M. must meet the requirements of Washington's APR 3. However, foreign lawyers from English common law jurisdictions are eligible without an LL.M. if they are currently admitted and have active legal experience in the common law jurisdiction for at least 3 of the 5 years immediately preceding the application."

West Virginia

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the West Virginia bar. They are required to have legal education in English common law, have additional education at an ABA-approved law school, and obtain a determination of educational equivalency.

Graduates of foreign law schools are also eligible for admission into the West Virginia bar without examination if they meet the aforementioned criteria and have been admitted into another U.S. jurisdiction.

According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "Applicant may sit for the examination or qualify for admission on motion if a law school graduate from a foreign country where the common law of England forms the basis of jurisprudence if educational requirements for admission in the said country are substantially the same as in West Virginia and applicant is admitted in good standing there, and if the applicant successfully completes 30 credit hours of basic courses at an ABA-approved law school."

Wisconsin

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission by examination into the Wisconsin bar. They are required to have legal education in English common law, have additional education at an ABA-approved law school, have already practiced law in a foreign jurisdiction, and obtain a determination of educational equivalency.

If a foreign law school graduate obtains an LL.M. or other graduate law degree from an ABA-approved law school, the graduate is eligible to take the Wisconsin bar exam on this basis alone.

Graduates of foreign law schools are also eligible for admission into the Wisconsin bar *without examination*.

According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "If eligible for admission on proof of practice elsewhere, having first been admitted to a reciprocal U.S. jurisdiction."

Additionally, the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association stated, "First degree of law and license to practice law from English common law jurisdiction and practice for at least 3 of last 10 years, or first degree of law from qualified and approved foreign law school and completion of an approved [master of law](#) program from an ABA-approved law school."

Wyoming

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the Wyoming bar.

Guam

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the Guam bar.

Northern Mariana Islands

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the Northern Mariana Islands bar.

Palua

If a foreign law school graduate obtains an LL.M. or other graduate law degree from an ABA-approved law school, the graduate is eligible to take the Palau bar exam on this basis alone.

Puerto Rico

Foreign-trained attorneys are not eligible for admission into the Puerto Rico bar.

According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "Applicant must validate his or her studies and obtain a law degree from a law school approved by the ABA and by the Supreme Court."

Virgin Islands

Foreign-trained attorneys are eligible for admission into the Virgin Islands bar by taking the examination or obtaining a waiver. Both options require applicants to have been admitted into another U.S. jurisdiction.

According to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and the American Bar Association, "Eligibility is limited to applicants who come in under special admission provisions as set forth in the rules."

For more information, you can contact the American Bar Association [online](#) or on their service line: 800-285-2221.

Frequently Asked Questions

Which US States Accept Foreign Law Degrees?

While foreign-trained lawyers are eligible to take the bar exam in 34 states, only five states have made the process straightforward. While California, New York, Washington, and Wisconsin make it easy, each state has its requirements. The rules for Georgia joining the list changed recently. What does it take to become a lawyer in the United States? Detailed information regarding the 5 states is provided below:

1. California

For foreign law school graduates to sit for the bar exam in California, they must qualify for either an LL.M. degree or one year of additional study at an ABA-accredited or California-accredited school in the subject matter of the bar examination, according to the California State Bar. A minimum of 20 units must be completed with a course in four sections, as measured by the California bar exam, for LL.M. degrees or an additional year of study. At least one of the four courses must be in areas of professional responsibility, California Business, and Professions Code, or the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct.

2. New York

Graduates of ABA-approved law schools that have earned an LL.M. degree are generally eligible for taking

the New York bar exam. Accordingly, the student's foreign law degree must be based on English Common Law principles, and it must be the equivalent of a law degree earned at an ABA-approved law school in the U.S. Accelerated or summer programs are not recognized. The Board must evaluate students' eligibility for admission. Students are advised to take the bar exam one year before seeking evaluation since it can take up to six months. To earn a master's degree, students must finish matriculation within 24 months after applying. The minimum credit requirement for an LL.M. program is 24 credits, each with 700 minutes of instruction.

3. Washington

To qualify for admission to the Washington State Bar, foreign law graduates with an LL.M. degree must complete specific forms of instruction. Students must earn an LL.M. degree from a law school approved by the Board of Governors with at least 18,200 minutes of instruction in domestic U.S. law and at least 12,000 minutes of instruction in foreign law. These 12,000 minutes are divided into four subjects: U.S. constitutional law, state and federal civil procedure, legal writing, and research.

4. Wisconsin

In 2012, Wisconsin granted bar exam eligibility to foreign law graduates with an American LL.M. To qualify, students must complete an LL.M. program at an American law school with 700 hours of instruction for one semester hour. There must be two semesters and at least 13 weeks each in the program within 24 months of graduation. At least two credit hours must be taken in ethics, legal research and writing, and American legal studies. Furthermore, a minimum of six semester hours is required for students in fundamental substantive courses.

5. Georgia

To take the state bar exam, foreign-trained attorneys must fulfill three requirements. First, they received their legal education from a law school in a foreign country that has been sanctioned or recognized by the government; or that has been recognized by an evaluation body, or is chartered to award the first qualification in law by a local authority. Second, he is eligible to practice in a foreign country. Third, the applicant has been awarded an LL.M degree that enables him to practice law in the United States. Students should be prepared for admission to the bar and effective and responsible participation in the legal profession in the United States.

Can A Law Degree Be Used Internationally?

Law degrees are extremely challenging, and getting your law degree overseas can make them even more exciting! An international law degree can prepare you for a career in international law, but keep in mind that law degrees do not always translate. A different set of rules governs the practice of law in each country, as well as in some states and provinces. In countries like the United States, law degrees abroad are often bachelor's degrees, which do not allow one to practice law. You cannot automatically practice law just because you have one of these degrees! Therefore, you should research your options and think hard before taking the next step.

Can Foreigners Be Lawyers In Us?

A law degree can be used internationally. The majority of US states allow graduates trained outside the country to become members of their bar. There are, however, differences in requirements from state to state, which is detailed in the Comprehensive Guide to Bar Admission Requirements.

The U.S. qualification is more achievable than you think, even if you are a foreign law graduate, lawyer, or U.S. LL.M. student. You are likely eligible to sit for your state bar exam with your current credentials.

Particularly in New York and California, foreign law graduates and lawyers are permitted to sit for their bar examinations without regard to their nationality or residence.

For candidates that did not earn a J.D. in the United States, it is an advantage not to have to memorize statutory provisions and case law. Candidates are tested on their ability to think like a lawyer during the exams. Legal law must be understood and applied properly in a hypothetical situation.

What Is The Program For Foreign Lawyers?

A typical path to becoming a lawyer in the U.S. entails attending law school, passing the bar exam, and completing a few additional requirements. However, some law professionals have studied abroad. Foreign-trained lawyers can sometimes find it difficult to practice law in the U.S.

As each state has different requirements, the way you go about it depends on where you live and where you want to work. A prospective lawyer must take the bar exam in the state where they hope to practice. The most flexible requirements can be found in New York and California.

In states where only an LL.M. is required, your priority should be to complete the specified graduate education in your area of study. You should check the requirements in each state for the LL.M. before choosing one. States that allow foreign-trained attorneys to sit for the bar exam require specific courses and subjects.

For foreign-trained attorneys, some states offer accelerated J.D. degrees to get them to the point of eligibility for the local bar exam. The only way to practice law in all the other states that do not recognize foreign legal education is to earn the J.D. from an ABA-approved law school.

The Bar Exam

Most bar exams are held over two days. The first day of the class is a multiple-choice test covering laws that are not necessarily unique to any one state.

During the second day's test, you will examine the law in the state where you intend to practice. Multistate Professional Responsibility Exams are also required in most states.

Students who graduate from law school in the U.S. come out with a particular set of skills and a set of knowledge that helps them study for and pass the bar exam. For this reason, foreign-trained lawyers may not have all of these same tools, so their passage rate may be lower.

A foreign student should plan to take a full commercial bar review course, and they should also consider private bar tutoring.

If You Do Not Become an Attorney

Without becoming a fully admitted state bar member, you can also utilize your foreign law degree. You might also consider becoming a foreign legal consultant (FLC).

An FLC is a foreign-trained lawyer who is setting up a limited practice in the United States. Rules are governing foreign legal consultants in 31 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Some states also offer temporary transactional work, pro hac vice admission to the bar, and the opportunity for foreign lawyers to serve as in-house counsel. Foreign-trained attorneys have the most opportunities once they become admitted to the bar, but other opportunities are also available.