



Will an LL.M. help my legal career

I

Q: Will an LL.M. help my legal career?

A: An LL.M. degree is very helpful, and sometimes required, for international students who already possess a law degree from their country of origin but want to practice law in the United States. For example, in California, law students who received their legal education outside of the United States must establish their eligibility to take the California bar by showing they have successfully completed the equivalent of two years of undergraduate studies and four years of legal studies in the United States. If the student received his/her legal education from a country that does not utilize the common law of England as its basis of jurisprudence, then the student will only receive credit for the undergraduate requirement and not receive any credit for the legal studies requirement. Some international students find that having an LL.M. from the United States is a very helpful way to increase their marketability.

For U.S.-educated attorneys, an LL.M. degree is most valuable for those who are interested in certain practice areas such as tax or trusts and estates. In these cases, an LL.M. in Tax from a prestigious university such as Georgetown or NYU is very helpful and will give you a definite edge over the competition. Otherwise, obtaining an LL.M. from a more prestigious school simply in order to enhance your academic credentials and help you get a job may not be the wisest of choices.