

Award Descriptions for JD and LLM Students

Delaware Law Awards and Programs

Widener University Delaware Law School is committed to recognizing the significant achievements of its strongest applicants by providing merit based scholarships. Our awards are intended to reward the many and distinctive academic, personal, and professional accomplishments of our entering students. Delaware Law merit based JD scholarships are awarded at the time of acceptance and renewable for up to three years for full-time students and four years for part-time students provided the student maintains satisfactory academic performance. These funds will only be applied to the fall and spring semester of the academic year.

First State Merit Scholarship

The State of Delaware holds the distinction of being the first state to ratify the United States Constitution. These merit based scholarship awards are named in recognition of our state's history. First State Merit Awards are offered to entering students with strong academic records established during their undergraduate years and, where applicable, through graduate study. Deserving candidates will have demonstrated leadership and service backgrounds.

Delaware Select Merit Scholarship

Delaware Law School is the only law school in the state of Delaware and part of a legal community nationally renowned for integrity, civility, thoughtful decision-making, and a commitment to the greater good. Strong candidates for these awards are ranked in the top of their undergraduate class, achieved an LSAT score that meets or exceeds the median LSAT score of the most recent Delaware Law School entering class, have demonstrated leadership and service backgrounds, and are likely to contribute to the Delaware Law School community in meaningful ways.

Dean's Select Merit Scholarship

Delaware Law School is led by Dean Rodney A. Smolla, a nationally recognized legal scholar and champion for student-centered and experiential legal education. Candidates selected for these merit-based awards are among the strongest applicants to Delaware Law School in both academic achievement and personal and professional accomplishments. Candidates will have demonstrated leadership and service backgrounds, extracurricular involvement at the undergraduate level, and be of strong character. A review of their accomplishments indicates that they are very likely to contribute to the law school and the communities we serve in significant and meaningful ways.

International Leaders Scholarship

Delaware Law offers the Scholarship for International Leaders to high-achieving, international students who wish to pursue a Masters of Law (LLM). The scholarship is based on academic excellence and financial need. Selected scholars must be dedicated to contributing positive international relationships in business, compliance, or other legal practices.

LLM International Grant

Delaware Law offers distinguished graduate programs in legal education. This grant is awarded to members of our international student community in conjunction with our global partner institutions.

Widener Scholars Program

To recognize outstanding law school achievement for the first year of JD study, the Widener Scholars Program awards several major scholarships. The scholarships are applied to the students' second year tuition and fees and may be continued for subsequent years if the recipient maintains suitable academic performance. The Financial Aid Office reviews all JD students after their first year to determine their eligibility for the Widener Scholars Program.

Widener Scholars Loan Program

Beginning with the second year of study, students whose academic performance meets the requirements will be offered Widener Scholar Loans. These loans carry a fixed interest rate of 5%, no interest accrues during enrollment and grace period, and payment is deferred until six months after graduation.

Delaware Law Endowed Scholarships Program

Alumni and friends of the Law School have donated many endowed scholarships. The scholarship committee, based on the criteria determined by the individual donors, awards these scholarships annually. Please see a list of the endowed scholarships currently available at <http://www.widener.edu/lawfinaid> Awards will be listed on the award letter by name.

The William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Programs

The Federal Direct Loan programs were created with the purpose of making long term loans available to students to help them meet educational expenses. Students borrow directly from the U.S. Department of Education at a fixed interest rate depending on the program.

Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan

The Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan program is a **non-need-based** program and does not require a credit check. Graduate students may borrow up to \$20,500 per year from this program. The aggregate for this program (including undergraduate debt) is \$138,500 of which no more than \$65,000 can be from the subsidized* loan program. The U.S. Department of Education calculates a fixed interest rate on an annual basis and that interest rate will apply for the life of the loan. The interest rate calculation is based on the 10 year Treasury Note sold at the last auction prior to June 1 plus 3.60 percent. Repayment begins six months after the student graduates or ceases at least half-time enrollment. Students may elect to make interest payments while in school, or have the unpaid interest capitalized once they enter repayment.

In addition to interest, the student pays a loan origination fee that is a percentage of the principal amount for each Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan received. The U.S. Department of Education deducts the fee before the student receives any loan money, so the loan amount the student actually receives (net) is less than the amount that must be repaid (gross).

Gross Amount of Disbursement – 1.062%** Origination Fee = Net Amount that will disburse to school.

Example: \$10,250 x 98.938% = \$10,141(rounded)

Students must complete a Master Promissory Note (MPN) for a Direct Subsidized/Unsubsidized Loan on <https://studentloans.gov> to borrow funds through this program.

** The Budget Control Act of 2011 eliminated the Federal Direct Subsidized Loans for Graduate and Professional students for periods of enrollment beginning on or after July 1, 2012.*

*** For loans disbursed on or after October 2, 2018.*

Federal Direct GradPLUS Loan Program

Widener University Delaware Law School recommends that students needing additional funding after borrowing the maximum Federal Direct Unsubsidized loan apply for a **Direct Graduate PLUS Loan**.

The Graduate PLUS Loan does require a credit check. *The credit check is based on credit history, not credit score. Lack of a credit history does not negatively affect your ability to be approved.* Students not able to borrow on the strength of their own credit history will be offered an endorser (co-signer) option. Please refer to the credit section of this guide for information on reviewing and understanding your credit.

A student may generally borrow up to their cost of attendance minus all other aid received. The U.S. Department of Education calculates a fixed interest rate on an annual basis and that interest rate will apply for the life of the loan. The interest rate calculation is based on the 10 year Treasury Note sold at the last auction prior to June 1 plus 4.60 percent. Students may elect to make interest payments while in school, or have the unpaid interest capitalized once they enter repayment. Repayment begins six months after graduation or when a student ceases half time enrollment for all GradPLUS loans disbursed after July 1, 2008.

There is a origination/default fee charged at each disbursement. The U.S. Department of Education deducts the fee before the student receives any loan money, so the loan amount the student actually receives (net) is less than the amount that must be repaid (gross).

Gross Amount of Disbursement – 4.246**% Origination Fee = Net Amount that will disburse to school. ** For loans disbursed on or after October 2, 2018.

Example: \$16,000 x 95.75% = \$15,320

Students who wish to borrow from Graduate PLUS Loan Program will need to “Apply for a PLUS Loan” on <https://studentloans.gov> and then select “Graduate/Professional”. In addition, new borrowers will need to complete a Master Promissory Note (MPN) on the same site. Students **should not** complete a Direct GradPLUS Loan MPN and/or the “Request for a Graduate PLUS Loan” (which includes a credit check authorization) more than six months prior to the anticipated disbursement date as the credit check may expire and funds fail to disburse.

Federal Work – Study Program

Under the Federal Work–Study Program eligible students can work on campus or off campus at a public or private nonprofit organization or government agency and the work must be in the public interest. Eligibility is limited to students who complete their application by the *priority filing deadline* and demonstrate **sufficient financial need**. The number of awards made each year is dependent upon the availability of funds. Priority is given to returning students. Returning students interested in this program should indicate their interest in question 31 on the FAFSA.

Veteran Benefits

You may be eligible to receive educational benefits through the Veterans Administration depending on the length of your military service and the start and end date of that service. Veterans interested in any chapter of Veterans Affairs Education Benefit should contact the VA to determine eligibility and/or the process to transfer from the Montgomery GI Bill to the new program. For more information contact the Veterans Administration at 1-888-442-4551 or www.benefits.va.gov/gibill. Delaware Law participates in the Yellow Ribbon program at 100% for veterans who are 100% eligible for Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits and the Yellow Ribbon Program requirements.

Private/Alternative Loan Programs

Private/alternative loan programs are available to assist students for expenses not covered through other financial aid programs. Widener University Delaware Law School recommends that students first attempt to access a Federal Direct Unsubsidized or GradPLUS loan prior to applying for a private/alternative loan. These loans require a credit check and students not able to borrow on the strength of their own credit **may be** offered a co-signer option. A student may generally borrow up to their cost of attendance minus all other aid received. *Interest rates on these loans vary (most change on a quarterly basis) and generally have no interest rate cap.* Students may elect to make interest payments while in school or have the interest capitalized. *It is important that a student borrower investigate both the interest rate and fee structure before choosing a lender.*

Outside Scholarships

Many organizations, outside of Widener University Delaware Law School, offer scholarships, fellowships or low-interest loans to assist students in funding their legal education. Please check our website for a file containing detailed information on over 200 scholarships offered by organizations other than Widener University Delaware Law School. The Financial Aid Office also recommends that you take advantage of the free internet scholarship search engines available. A student should never pay an organization or individual to perform a scholarship search or a deposit for a scholarship.