

University of California, Berkeley, School of Law

2850 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 500

Berkeley, CA 94705-7220

Phone: 510.642.2274 • Fax: 510.643.6222 • Email: admissions@law.berkeley.edu

Website: www.law.berkeley.edu



THE BASICS

The **University of California, Berkeley, School of Law** (most commonly known as Boalt Hall, although the school now prefers Berkeley Law), began as the university's Department of Jurisprudence in 1894, and was accredited by the ABA in 1923.

The school is located in the college town of Berkeley, CA, about a half-hour away from San Francisco and fifteen minutes north of Oakland. Students universally love their location, and call it one of the best parts of attending school there. The cost of attendance is considerable: California residents can expect to pay almost \$64,500 a year, while out-of-state students pay close to \$72,500.

The student body size is about average, and hovers around 900 students. It counts a number of important personages among its alumni, including a Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, activists, CEOs and founders of Fortune 500 companies, and politicians.

Boalt Hall has a very strong reputation within California, particularly in the Bay Area, and also enjoys solid representation and name-brand recognition nationally. Although most Berkeley Law grads stay in California after graduation, many also find employment in the east.

The school has a solid array of academic and extracurricular opportunities, including 9 clinics, 9 joint-degree offerings, twelve scholarly journals, and 66 student organizations. It does not have any in-house study abroad programs, though.

Application deadline: 2/1

Application fee: \$75

Financial aid deadline: 3/2 (Priority deadline)

Type of school: Public

Tuition and fees: \$44,245 (R); \$52,245 (NR) (2010 - 2011)

Admissions: Rolling (most sent out by mid-April)

Acceptance percentage: 10% (2009)

Incoming class size: 292 (2009)

Early Action/Early Decision available: No

Part-time program available: No

GPA AND STANDARDIZED TESTS

LSAT 25th - 75th percentile range: 165 - 170

GPA 25th - 75th percentile range: 3.68 - 3.95

TOEFL required for some international applicants.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Letters of recommendation: 2 required

Required essays: Personal statement (4-page limit)

Optional essays: Diversity essay

Dean's Certification: Not required

Additional documentation: Résumé (optional)

Berkeley Law: The PowerScore Perspective

The chosen few

Boalt Hall is one of the most selective law schools in the United States. With an acceptance percentage of around 10%, there are only a few schools that are stingier with their nods of approval. This selectivity leads to generally high standards: The median LSAT score for the class of 2012 was a 168, and the median GPA was a 3.83. The numbers for the class of 2013 were similar. Although these figures are high, Berkeley states that they like to see more than just numbers, and they focus on exceptional achievements, unusual backgrounds, and personal stories when making admission decisions.

The least LSAT-centric top law school?

At most law schools, the LSAT outweighs the GPA in the multiplier formulas used during the admissions process. Boalt indicates that they weigh GPA and LSAT roughly the same, making Boalt one of the least LSAT-centric top law schools in the country.

Renovation and reconstruction

Boalt Hall has been undergoing major reconstruction and remodeling, including brand-new classrooms, a new student center, a renovation of the school's West Terrace, and a fully-renovated moot courtroom. There is also a new South Addition to the school that will host the law library, a café, a student lounge, a new classroom, and a new roof deck garden. Most of these renovations have been completed, and the South Addition will be completed by August 2011. These changes improve mightily on Boalt's 1950s building and give the school a modern, new facility.

Excellent programs

Berkeley Law is known, among other things, for its intellectual property and environmental law programs. The intellectual property curriculum, in particular, is very strong (US News has ranked it the #1 IP program for a while). "The Berkeley Center for Law and Technology [which focuses on developments in the field of intellectual property law] provided a fantastic curriculum and solid professional opportunities," says a student. Being within a stone's throw of Silicon Valley also puts Berkeley near the heart of tech industry and the innovations that are affecting intellectual property laws, a position that the school and its students take full advantage of.

California and the world

Over two-thirds of the graduating class in 2009 obtained employment in California, typically in the Bay Area. Although there are plenty of schools in California vying for the attention of employers (most notably Stanford, which is located about an hour away), Berkeley Law grads are widely recognized as well-educated and well-trained, and are well-regarded by California employers of all types. In addition to its influence in California, Berkeley Law has a stellar reputation across the U.S., particularly in the large legal markets of New York, Boston, and Washington, D.C.

An acquired taste

Although the majority of students surveyed expressed satisfaction with the city of Berkeley, it may not be the place for everyone. "It's not all hippies," says a student, "but it's definitely very liberal." Another notes, "it's bohemian, and parts of the city look like they haven't been given a good

cleaning since the 70s. That said, I love it here!" Visiting the school is a good idea for those students seeking final confirmation that Berkeley is for them; the atmosphere of the school and city is unique.

Everyone loves San Francisco and the Bay Area

While Berkeley may have its quirks, the general feeling among students is that they could not have a more attractive city neighbor than San Francisco. Plus, the school's Bay Area location allows for easy weekend trips down to Monterey or up to Napa. One thing Berkeley students do not lack is options for things to do when they have time off.

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Tuition rising

The Regents of the University of California system recently raised tuition for both in- and out-of-state students, and the hikes aren't done. Be prepared for tuition costs to keep rising in the next few years.

Reasonable living costs

Living in Berkeley, though, is pretty reasonable. Although by no means the cheapest on this list, a cost of living hovering around \$20,000 is a good thing when it comes to living in California.

No grades!

Berkeley doesn't hand out traditional letter grades. Instead, students receive marks of High Honors, Honors, and Pass. That lessens direct competition and provides a more relaxed atmosphere at the school.

Berkeley Law: The Numbers

ACCEPTANCE RATES

Full-time: 10% (803 of 7,960 admitted)
Part-time: N/A

GPA AND LSAT SCORES

GPA - 75th percentile: 3.95
GPA - Median: 3.83
GPA - 25th percentile: 3.68

LSAT - 75th percentile: 170
LSAT - Median: 168
LSAT - 25th percentile: 165

ENROLLMENT AND ETHNICITY

African-American: 20 (M); 23 (F); 4.8% of student body
American Indian: 5 (M); 10 (F); 1.7% of student body
Asian-American: 70 (M); 86 (F); 17.5% of student body
Caucasian: 217 (M); 196 (F); 46.3% of student body
Hispanic: 17 (M); 31 (F); 5.4% of student body
Mexican-American: 23 (M); 24 (F); 5.3% of student body
Puerto Rican: 0 (M); 0 (F); 0.0% of student body
International: 0 (M); 0 (F); 0.0% of student body
Non-Reported: 80 (M); 90 (F); 19.1% of student body

TRANSFERS (FIRST-YEAR) AND ATTRITION

Transfers in: 45
Transfers out: 0

1L attrition: 7 (0 Academic, 7 Other)
2L attrition: None
3L attrition: None

FINANCIAL AID

Merit aid available? Yes
Grants and scholarships available? Yes
Students receiving grants: 412, 47.6% of student body
Median grant amount: \$14,349
LRAP program available? Yes

The school has Boalt Hall Grants, which are awarded to students on the basis of financial need, as well as Berkeley Law scholarships and fellowships, which are awarded to students on the basis of need, merit, or both. Students are not automatically considered for aid; they must apply.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Wireless network availability? Yes
Number of wired connections available: 213
Hours per week the library is open: 100
Study seating capacity inside the library: 307
Number of full-time professional librarians: 16

CAREER SERVICES

On-campus Career Services Office? Yes
Number of full-time career services staffers? 9
Career services specializations: Corporate, LL.M. and international careers, judicial clerkships, government, public interest, public service, private sector
On-Campus Interview (OCI) program? Yes, in the fall and spring.

EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS*

**All statistics are 9 months after graduation*

Employment status known: 292, 100.0% of class
Employment status unknown: 0, 0.0% of class
Employed: 281, 96.2% of class
Pursuing graduate degrees: 7, 2.4% of class
Unemployed: 4, 1.4% of class

TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT

Academia: 0, 0.0% of class
Business and Industry: 11, 3.9% of class
Government: 14, 5.0% of class
Judicial Clerkship: 25, 8.9% of class
Law Firms: 203, 72.2% of class
Public Interest: 28, 10.0% of class

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The biggest market for Berkeley Law grads is, by far, California.

Students employed in-state: 69%
Students employed in foreign countries: 2%
Number of states where students are employed: 23

Berkeley Law grads also find employment in big East Coast legal market, such as New York City, Boston, and Washington, D.C.

ALUMNI NETWORK

The Berkeley Law alumni network is over 15,000 strong, and is spread out all over the world. Berkeley Law keeps its alumni connected through clubs and alumni groups both domestically and abroad, in addition to alumni reunions happening yearly.

BAR PASSAGE RATES

First-time takers: 270 (84.44% reporting)
Average school pass rate: 87.72%
Average state pass rate: 78.07%
Average pass rate difference: 9.65%

Berkeley Law: The School

"Berkeley Law lived up to my expectations in almost every way," says a '10 grad. "Berkeley Law is one of the finest schools in the country in one of the finest locations in the country," enthuses another grad. "The student body is vibrant, unique, and friendly. There's not much more to want!"

Incoming class size: 292 (2009)

Typical first-year section size: 90

CURRICULUM

Students report that the class sizes are small and intimate, and that interaction with professors is easy and commonplace. First-year classes are anywhere from 60 to 120 students in size.

During the first year, students are required to take **Civil Procedure, Contracts, Criminal Law, Property, and Torts**. In the fall students must take three of these required courses, in addition to Legal Research and Writing. In the spring, students take the remaining two required courses, in addition to Written & Oral Advocacy.

The school also recommends that students also take Constitutional Law during their first year, since it is a required course for graduation, and 1Ls get priority registration for the course.

First-years can also choose to take upper-level electives during the spring semester.

FACULTY

Student-to-faculty ratio: 11.3 : 1

Berkeley Law's prominent faculty includes:

Eric P. Rakowski, tax law expert.

Molly S. Van Houweling, former president of Creative Commons, and intellectual property expert.

John Choo Yoo, author and constitutional law expert.

Angela P. Harris, feminist legal theory and critical race theory expert.

Christopher Edley, Jr., Dean of Berkeley Law since 2005, and civil rights and administrative law expert.

ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES

CLINICS: Berkeley Law has a total of nine clinics, six of which are "in the community" and three of which are "in the law school." Within the school are the Death Penalty Clinic; International Human Rights Law Clinic; and Samuelson Law, Technology & Public Policy Clinic. The East Bay Community Law Center contains the six "community" clinics, which deal with matters HIV/AIDS, benefits advocacy, estate planning, family law issues, debt relief, and immigration.

STUDY ABROAD: The school does not have any formalized study abroad programs of its own, although it provides assistance to 3L students who want to participate in a study abroad program through another ABA-approved school.

JOINT DEGREE: Berkeley Law has nine different joint-degree options through four of its departments and five of its schools. They include a JD/MA in Asian Studies, a JD/MA in Economics, a JD/MA/PhD in Jurisprudence and Social Policy, a JD/MBA with the Haas School, a JD/MCP in City and Regional Planning, a JD/MJ in Journalism, a JD/MPP with the Goldman School, and a JD/MSW in Social Welfare.

JOURNALS AND PUBLICATIONS

Berkeley Law has twelve different scholarly journals: *California Law Review*; *Ecology Law Quarterly*; *Berkeley Technology Law Journal*; *Berkeley Journal of Employment and Labor Law*; *Berkeley Journal of International Law*; *Berkeley Journal of Gender, Law & Justice*; *Berkeley Journal of African American Law & Policy*; *Berkeley La Raza Journal*; *Asian American Law Journal*; *Berkeley Journal of Criminal Law*; *Berkeley Business Law Journal*; and *Berkeley Journal of Middle Eastern & Islamic Law*.

MOCK TRIAL AND MOOT COURT

Berkeley Law has a **Board of Advocates**, which administers the schools internal negotiations, trial, and moot court competitions. The members of the Board of Advocates also participate in external alternative dispute resolution (ADR), trial advocacy (mock trial), and appellate advocacy (moot court) competitions.

• NOTABLE ALUMNI •

Berkeley Law has a lengthy list of notable alumni in myriad industries and fields, both legal and non-legal. They include **Earl Warren**, 14th Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States; **David M. Louie**, Hawaii Attorney General; **Lance Ito**, Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge who presided over the O. J. Simpson trial; **Mary Dunlap**, LGBT activist and founding member of the LGBT rights group Equal Rights Advocates; **Larry Hillblom**, co-founder of DHL; **Howard Lincoln**, CEO of the Seattle Mariners (MLB), and former Chairman of Nintendo of America; **G. William Miller**, 11th Chairman of the Federal Reserve, and 65th United States Secretary of the Treasury; and **Robert K. Tanenbaum**, attorney and author of popular legal thrillers.

The Berkeley Law experience seems to center around a few common themes: Relaxed atmosphere, congenial students, and great weather (perhaps it is this last one that helps make the first two possible!). “My fellow students were intelligent, kind, and had a good perspective on life,” says a recent grad. An ‘09 grad agrees: “The student body at Berkeley Law is engaging, social, and has a strong sense of purpose in the world. I made many excellent friends and remember the whole law school atmosphere fondly.” Other grads elaborate further: “I got a better vibe from the student body [than from the other law schools I visited].”

The environment, probably due in large part to Berkeley’s lack of grades, is a laid back one. “Berkeley Law is a very congenial place,” says a ‘10 grad. That doesn’t mean students don’t care about their academic performance, though. “Students are generally honest about the fact they’re going to try hard to get the best grades they can,” muses a current student. However, “this does not lead to hostility or discomfort. Most everyone I knew was more than happy to help with notes, outlines, and study groups.”

“Most people get along,” says a student. “I didn’t notice that it was particularly competitive.”

The size of the school is manageable, report students and grads. “The school is a good size, not so big that you get lost in the crowd, but not so small that you know everyone.”

This size also leads to a welcome diversity within the student body, and an amiable aggregation of personalities. “I found [Berkeley Law] to be the most lively and diverse of all of the schools I visited. I wanted to be in a place that was conducive to student life.”

ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

- Advocates for Drug Law Reform
- Advocates for Youth Justice
- American Constitution Society
- Asian Pacific American Law Students Association
- Association of Trial Lawyers of America - Boalt Chapter
- Berkeley Chinese Law Society
- Berkeley Consumer Protection Law Group
- Berkeley Energy & Resources Collaborative
- Berkeley Law Critical Race Scholars Society
- Berkeley Law Foundation
- Berkeley Society of Law and Public Policy
- Berkeley Student Animal Legal Defense Fund
- Berkeley Student Chapter of the J. Reuben Clark Society
- Boalt Association of Military Veterans
- Boalt Catholic Community
- Boalt Civil Rights Outreach Project
- Boalt Criminal Law Association
- Boalt Death Penalty Discourse Project
- Boalt Disability Law Society
- Boalt Hall Committee for Human Rights
- Boalt Hall Democrats
- Boalt Hall Federalist Society
- Boalt Hall Healthcare Law Society
- Boalt Hall Labor Coalition
- Boalt Hall Older & Wiser Law Students (OWLS)
- Boalt Hall Patent Law Society
- Boalt Hall Queer Caucus
- Boalt Hall Women’s Association
- Boalt Jewish Students Association
- Boalt Muslim Student Association
- Boalt.org
- Boalt Hall Capital Markets Group
- Boalt Hall Mediation Group
- Boalt Police Review Advocates
- Board of Advocates
- California Asylum Representation Clinic
- Thelton E. Henderson Center for Social Justice Student Advisory Board
- Christians at Boalt
- Coalition for Diversity
- Community Legal Outreach
- East Bay Community Law Center Student Steering Committee
- Environmental Law Society
- Global Justice & Climate Change Policy Initiative
- International Law Society
- Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project
- Korean American Law Students Association
- La Raza Law Students Association
- Law & Society Student Forum
- Law Students for Reproductive Justice
- Law Students for Justice in Palestine
- Law Students of African Descent
- Middle Eastern Law Students Association
- National Lawyers Guild - Boalt Chapter
- Native American Law Students Association
- Parents at Boalt
- Pilipino American Law Society
- Restorative Justice Committee
- Society for Cultural Heritage, Arts and the Law (SCHAL)
- Sports and Entertainment Law Society
- Students for Environmental and Economic Justice
- Student Organization for Advanced Legal Studies
- Students Opposed to Domestic Violence (STOP DV)
- Transfer Student Coalition
- Universities Allied for Essential Medicines
- Women of Color Collective
- Worker’s Rights Clinic

• CLASS PROFILE •

The school received a total of 8,313 applications for the incoming Berkeley Law class of 2013. Of those, 287 eventually matriculated.

59% of the incoming class was female; 41% was male.

The average age was 25. 7% of the class was between the ages of 30 and 38.

54% of the class was composed of students of color.

The 75th percentile LSAT score for this incoming class was a 170; the median was 167; and the 25th percentile was 163.

The 75th percentile GPA was 3.89; the median was 3.80; and the 25th percentile was 3.64.

Students from the class of 2013 attended 113 different undergraduate institutions. The schools with the greatest representation were UC Berkeley, UCLA, Stanford, Harvard, UCSD, USC, Brown, and Yale.

The incoming class represented 77 different majors. The most predominant were political science, history, economics, international relations, philosophy, sociology, and English.

15% of the class had a graduate degree; 35 had Masters, and 9 had PhDs.

The class included newspaper editors, professional singers and dancers, software engineers, scientists, actors, and financial consultants.

Berkeley Law: The City

Setting: College Town

"The Bay Area is a wonderful place to live!" say students and grads. "The weather is awesome, bike paths are everywhere, and fun recreational opportunities abound," says a '10 grad. "There is a lot to do without being in a big city," agrees a current student. "The city is dominated by the University so it is friendly to students of all kinds," concurs another student.

LIVING EXPENSES

Living expenses are fairly reasonable, particularly considering the generally high cost of living in California. Finding housing in Berkeley is a easy; the very student-friendly city abounds with both affordable and upscale options. Most students live within walking distance of the campus, although some choose to live in San Francisco.

Estimated academic year living expenses*

Rent and Utilities	\$10,431.00
Food	\$5,054.00
Personal	\$1,920.00
Transportation	\$2,821.00
TOTAL	\$20,226.00

* Values provided by Berkeley Law

HOUSING

The school has a number of different on-campus housing options. For single students, the Manville Apartments and Ida Louise Jackson Graduate House are available. For married students or students with children, the school has the Smyth Fernwald apartments (in Berkeley) and University Village (in nearby Albany) available.

On-campus housing available? Y
Average apartment rental cost (1 BR/1 BA) \$1,100/mo

DEMOGRAPHICS

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates the 2006 population of Berkeley, CA to be 101,555 people, with 75.7% of the population between 18 and 65 years of age. 64.3% of the population has a bachelor's degree or higher.

Population density in the Berkeley area (as per the 2000 census) is 9,823 persons per square mile.

The 2000 census puts the ethnic makeup of the city as 59.2% white, 9.7% of Hispanic or Latino origin, 13.6% African American, 0.5% American Indian or Alaskan native, 16.4% Asian, 0.1% native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 5.6% from two or more races.

PARKING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

"I really liked Berkeley because it is a city where you can walk, drive, bike, or take the bus," says a graduate of the school. Berkeley is a city where the "bike trails abound" and where "it's easy to find a public way of getting around."

The city has a variety of public transportation options available: The BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit), a rail system connecting the cities in the Bay Area; AC Transit (Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District), which operates the bus system in the city; and the UC Berkeley shuttle system.

Berkeley keeps its bicycle-riding citizens on the road with Bicycle Boulevards (which run adjacent to the car lanes).

The city has an Amtrak station for those travelling by train. For air transport, residents use the Oakland International Airport or San Francisco International Airport.

AREA ATTRACTIONS & ENTERTAINMENT

The University is the main attraction in Berkeley. The Berkeley Botanical Garden, home to thousands of native and non-native species of flora spread out over 30+ acres, is one of the university's most popular locations.

The Berkeley Botanical Garden is part of the Berkeley Natural History Museums consortium. The other museums in the group (the Essig Museum of Entomology, the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, the Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology, the UC Museum of Paleontology, the University and Jepson Herbaria, and the Human Evolution Research Center) are also popular locations within the city.

Telegraph Avenue (a street that runs from the campus) is a unique Berkeley sight, consisting of many bookstores, coffee shops, music stores, and eateries exclusive to the city.

CITY MUST-DOs

"There is so much to do in the Bay Area!" say students. It's hard to pinpoint only a few must-dos. Students recommend "eating a slice of pizza at Zachary's Pizza, taking a bike ride along the bay, and going for a beautiful hike in Tilden Park." And "don't forget to spend at least a day being a tourist in San Francisco!"

They also suggest "going to Marin County to one of the beaches or parks, wine-tasting in Napa or Sonoma, and skiing in Tahoe," which is only three hours away by car. And don't forget to "go to Cal football games, especially since the stadium will be newly remodeled in the next few years."