

## ■ EDU GUIDE ■

# The difference between studying UK LAW AND BANGLADESHI LAW

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The prospect of donning the distinguished black gown and delivering justice in the courtroom inspires many to pursue law. In that case, one may choose to explore the educational pathways available in Bangladesh, either through obtaining the Bangladeshi LLB Honours (Hons) degree or opting for a UK qualifying law degree instead.

The LLB degrees offered at private institutions such as North South University (NSU) and BRAC University centre around Bangladeshi law, the same as public universities. For British law, only a few institutions such as London College of Legal Studies (LCLS) and Newcastle Law Academy (NLA) are available.

For any student, one of the deciding factors in choosing a degree is its cost. While the cost of an LLB (Hons) degree depends on which university you're studying at and whether it's a public or private university, it is generally cheaper than a UK law degree.

Part of the reason why UK law degrees costs more is that students have to pay module registration and assessment entry fee to the course provider, such as the University of London, or monthly and yearly fees to the registered teaching centres.

The total costs usually end up being more than BDT 10 lakhs, which gradually increases every year. In the past, one could be a private student and skip the teaching centre fees but that may not be possible from 2024, as the University of London has indicated that it may require students to register under teaching centres to enrol for the courses.

Personal preferences may be a deciding factor as well, as Ayesha Binte Ashraf, a recent UK LLB graduate from British School of Law, says, "I chose UK

law because many of the laws of our legal system derive from the UK law during the British rule. Thus, it seemed like pursuing British LLB over the LLB (Hons) degree would give me a better understanding of the foundation of our legal system."

The course length and content are different as well. The LLB (Hons) degree takes four years whereas a British LLB can be finished within three years. In addition to that, people who already have a degree can obtain an LLB degree through the graduate entry, requiring them to study 9 subjects instead of 12. However, the time length of the course remains the same.

Another difference is that while all the 12 subjects in an LLB degree are related to the UK legal system, LLB (Hons) students may have to undertake other courses as well. Khaled Hares Hridoy, a recent LLB graduate from Eastern University, shares, "Along with the legal subjects, we also had courses on General Knowledge, English, CSE, and Ethics. Studying law itself is not enough, as history and general knowledge are quite important for lawyers."

The exams formats vary as well. Since 2020, LLB students have been giving online open-book exams for all subjects. Meanwhile, Bangladeshi LLB exams are almost always closed-book. Khaled shares, "All our exams were closed-book except one. I think while open-book exam questions are harder, it is still better than closed-book. Not everyone can remember all the laws in the Act, but in an open book exam, one can look at the law and apply them properly."

You might also be required to give a viva while pursuing LLB (Hons), especially if you're studying in public universities, which is not a requirement for the British LLB. Arafa Ferdoushi Eshaba, an LLB student at Chittagong University (CU), says, "Every year, after the written exams are over, a viva takes place every year for one day. Questions are asked from a random subject but you have to be

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prepared to answer from all subjects. You can think of it as a separate course."

The experience of getting the degree itself can be very different as LLB (Hons) is taught in a university while the British LLB is taught in teaching centres. Many of these teaching centres may not have a large campus, meaning that students can sometimes miss out on clubs, moot competitions, or a proper university experience. Given the amount of time one will spend while studying this degree, I believe this is also a factor one should take into account.

The core difference between these two degrees is the purpose of getting it. One of the primary reasons for pursuing the British LLB is the direct pathway to the Bar Training Course and becoming a barrister after graduating, which is not possible if you only studied Bangladeshi law.

However, it's very hard to make an argument to study UK law if you are not going to pursue being a barrister. In that case, getting an LLB (Hons) degree is a much more cost-effective option.

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