



भारतीय विधिज्ञ परिषद् BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA

(Statutory Body Constituted under the Advocates Act, 1961)

21, Rouse Avenue Institutional Area, Near Bal Bhawan, New Delhi - 110002

Press Release Dated 22.04.2025

Bar Council of India convenes 4 hour long joint stakeholder consultation on equivalency of one year LL.M. degrees and academic eligibility following Supreme court directions with NLU's consortium, Central, State and Private Universities

The Bar Council of India today i.e. 22.04.2025 convened a Joint Stakeholder Consultation, at its premises, to deliberate on the outstanding issue concerning the academic equivalency and recognition of the one-year LL.M. degree, especially in the context of eligibility for faculty positions in law. This meeting was held pursuant to the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in Writ Petition (Civil) No.70 of 2021, Tamanna Chandan Chachlani v. Bar Council of India & Ors. and connected matters, including W.P. (C) Nos. 113/2021 and 171/2021.

This meeting was chaired by the President of the NLU Consortium Prof. (Dr.) V.C. Vivekanandan, Vice-Chancellor of Hidayatullah National Law University (HNLU), Raipur. The Hon'ble Chairman of the Bar Council of India, Shri Manan Kumar Mishra, Senior Advocate and Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), along with other members and officials of the BCI, attended the four hour long meeting in an observatory capacity. Rather than advancing any predetermined stance or position, the Bar Council of India chose to listen and facilitate an open and inclusive exchange of views among stakeholders, ensuring that the deliberations remained independent, balanced, and academically driven.

The issue originated with the notification of the Bar Council of India Legal Education (Post-Graduate, Doctoral, Executive, Vocational, Clinical and other Continuing Education) Rules, 2020, which provided that a one year LL.M. degree obtained from any foreign university would not be treated as equivalent to an Indian LL.M. degree for academic or teaching purposes, unless the individual had completed one year of teaching experience as a visiting or clinical faculty member. This clause was challenged before the Hon'ble Supreme Court, raising questions not only about foreign degrees but also about the recognition and academic status of the one-year LL.M. offered within India.

In response to the petitioners concerns, the Supreme Court, in the above referred matter, directed the Bar Council of India to convene a stakeholder meeting to deliberate and propose a resolution. Accordingly, the BCI conducted its first joint stakeholder meeting on March 7, 2021, with participation from National Law Universities (NLUs), Central and State Universities, private institutions, and affiliated law colleges. Following deliberations, the BCI passed a resolution that the one year LL.M. degree would not be treated as equivalent to the two year LL.M. for the purposes of academic appointment unless supplemented by a six-month professional teacher training programme. For higher academic posts, such as Associate Professor and Professor, an additional six month training was proposed, even for candidates holding a Ph.D.

This resolution was placed before the Hon'ble Court. However, in a subsequent order dated February 11, 2025, the Court noted that although several concerns had been addressed, the only surviving issue was the requirement of one year of teaching experience for one-year LL.M. degree holders to be eligible for academic posts. The Court acknowledged the earlier resolution but observed that further deliberation was warranted. It directed the Bar Council of India to hold one more meeting with all stakeholders to reconsider and resolve the matter in a manner that reflects judicial guidance and academic consensus.

The joint stakeholder meeting held today was attended by Vice Chancellors, Deans, senior faculty members from NLUs, Central and State Universities, private law universities, affiliated colleges, and legal education experts. The discussions were marked by a broad spectrum of perspectives and highlighted both shared goals and institutional challenges.

Several NLUs reiterated their support for the continuation of the one-year LL.M. model but stressed the need to enhance its rigour and academic depth. Many proposed that pedagogical training be embedded within the 1 year LL.M. curriculum itself, either as a structured paper or practicum. Others suggested that teacher training could be implemented as a post-degree certification, but preferably before assuming teaching responsibilities. A few participants proposed a hybrid approach, allowing institutions or candidates to complete pedagogical training either during or after the LL.M. course, depending on local institutional resources and timelines.

Concerns were also raised from Central and State Universities about maintaining academic equity. Representatives expressed that the one-year LL.M., in its current form, should not be placed on the same academic footing as the two-year LL.M. Supporting the stand of Bar Council of India, they emphasized that the longer duration allows for greater academic immersion, more extensive research, and deeper engagement with foundational and advanced legal subjects. Some stakeholders questioned the fairness of a system in which one-year LL.M. graduates could be considered for teaching eligibility a full year earlier than those who had completed a more demanding two-year programme. "How do we justify telling a student in a two-year LL.M. that their classmate in a one-year LL.M. is eligible to teach before them?" was a sentiment echoed by some.

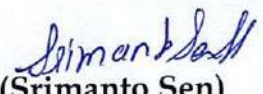
At the same time, a few participants stated that making pedagogical training mandatory within the one-year programme could reduce its attractiveness and viability, potentially causing students to shift toward the two-year model and leading to the eventual phasing out of the one-year LL.M. altogether. Others advocated for institutional and student choice, proposing that both one-year and two-year models be permitted to co-exist, provided they conform to clearly defined academic and pedagogical standards.

Some suggested a flexible structure, where training could be undertaken either pre- or post-appointment, so long as it is verifiably completed before promotion to higher academic ranks.

The underlying consensus, however, was that the core concern is not simply about the duration of the LL.M. degree, but also about the standards, rigors, and quality of legal education. LL.M. is the minimum qualification required to teach LL.B., and therefore it is critical that all institutions, whether large or small, public or private, urban or rural, maintain minimum standards of academic delivery, pedagogical preparedness, and institutional infrastructure. Stakeholders emphasized that national-level quality benchmarks must be enforced to ensure consistency and prevent disparities in implementation across regions and institutions.

In light of these discussions and in accordance with the suggestion which came from one of VC's of NLU, as per Rule 3, Chapter I of the Bar Council of India Legal Education (Post-Graduate, Doctoral, Executive, Vocational, Clinical and other Continuing Education) Rules, 2020, the Bar Council of India has resolved to constitute a High-Level Committee with respect to Higher Legal Education. This committee will include academic leaders from NLUs, Central and State Universities, private law schools, and affiliated law colleges. Its mandate will include reviewing and recommending frameworks for equivalency between one-year and two-year LL.M. degrees, designing appropriate structures for pedagogical training, harmonizing postgraduate curricula, and identifying mechanisms to ensure nationwide compliance with minimum academic and teaching standards.

The Bar Council of India reaffirms its commitment to promoting academic excellence, ensuring fairness and transparency in teaching eligibility, and protecting the credibility of Indian legal education in alignment with the evolving regulatory and judicial framework. The Supreme Court will be apprised about the constitution of this High Level Committee and resolution of the issue pending before the court accordingly. The High Level Committee constituted by Bar Council of India shall be chaired by a former Chief Justice of India and the Co-Convenor would be a noted academician of the country. The Bar Council of India is likely to constitute the Committee at the earliest.


(Srimanto Sen)
Principal Secretary
Bar Council of India