AILF INSIGHTS · STUDENTS AND COLLEGES

# How to choose a law college in India

*A practical guide for students and parents on choosing a law college in India: recognition, faculty, internships, cost, location and outcomes.*

Choosing a law college is the first professional decision a future lawyer makes. Rankings and brand names matter less than most families think. What matters is whether the college will teach you to think, write and practise.

## First check: recognition

A law degree allows enrolment as an advocate only if the college is approved by the Bar Council of India and affiliated to a recognised university. Verify both before paying any fee. Approval can be checked with the Bar Council and the university.

## The main types of institution

- **National Law Universities**, with admission largely through the Common Law Admission Test, and through a separate test for the National Law University in Delhi.
- **University law departments and faculties**, some with long traditions and strong alumni at the Bar.
- **Government and aided law colleges**, with low fees and close links to local courts.
- **Private universities and colleges**, which vary widely in quality and cost.

## What to look for

**Teachers.** Are there enough full-time faculty? Do they publish, and do students speak well of their classes?

**Library and databases.** Access to legal databases and a working library is essential.

**Internship support.** Does the college help, or are students left alone?

**Moot courts, legal aid and journals.** These are where skills are built.

**Outcomes.** Where do graduates go: litigation, firms, judiciary, companies, higher study? Ask for real numbers and speak to recent alumni.

**Language of instruction.** Make sure you can learn well in it.

**Location.** A college near active courts and law offices makes internships during term possible.

**Cost.** Add tuition, hostel, books and internship travel over the full course.

## Questions to ask on a visit

- How many students per teacher?
- Which courts and firms took interns last year?
- Is there a legal aid clinic, and what does it do?
- How many graduates enrolled at the Bar, joined firms or cleared judicial service examinations?
- What scholarships and fee waivers exist?

## Do not overlook the local college

A committed student at a modest college, who interns in every vacation, reads judgments daily and seeks out mentors, will do better than an indifferent student at a famous one. Many leaders of the Bar and Bench studied at colleges that never appeared on a ranking.

## A word to parents

Law rewards patience. The early years are demanding and not always well paid. Choose a college your family can afford without distress, so that the student can make career choices freely afterwards.

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