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China-Based Law School Will Be First to Make Bid for ABA Accreditation

Leigh Jones
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Peking University School of Transnational Law wants to become the first foreign law school accredited by the American Bar Association.

The school in China will welcome its inaugural class this fall, with 55 students enrolled.

Founding Dean Jeffrey Lehman will seek ABA accreditation for the school so that graduates can take bar examinations in the United States. Lehman is a former president of Cornell University and former dean of University of Michigan Law School.

The three-year program at Peking University School of Transnational Law will be taught in English and will cover American law. The school expects to become a supplier of lawyers to international law firms needing help in foreign offices. It will function independently of Peking University's Chinese-based law school.

No other foreign law school is accredited by the ABA, nor has any foreign school sought ABA accreditation, said an ABA spokeswoman. The ABA standards do not limit accreditation to U.S. law schools only, the spokeswoman said.

Nearly all states require law students to graduate from an ABA-accredited law school in order to take the bar exam.

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