Legal Studies

Degree Offered

• Master of Legal Studies

Nature of the Program

West Virginia University’s Master of Legal Studies (MLS) program is part of the Department of Public Administration. The M.L.S. is a degree program designed to build greater public understanding of the law and the United States legal system, to provide graduates with the ability to apply knowledge and skills gained to performing their jobs more effectively and to provide private and public organizations the benefit of enhanced experience. It is a graduate program of study designed for professionals practicing in areas such as human relations, criminal justice, juvenile justice, journalism, social work, court administration, national security, probation and law enforcement, or regulatory agencies. It is neither a law degree nor a paralegal program.

The M.L.S. is offered entirely online (there are no on-campus courses) and operates through a cohort model with a new class of students admitted each January and August. Courses are offered each term (including summers). Students following the prescribed course of study should be able to finish the degree in six terms (two calendar years, including summers). Students progressing at a different pace may take longer and have up to eight years to complete the degree.

Prospective and current students should frequently check the program’s website at http://legalstudies.wvu.edu for up-to-date program information, forms, and other guidelines.

Degree Completion

According to university regulations, master’s students are permitted to continue in a program for a maximum of eight years under their original application. A student is generally not allowed to count any courses taken more than eight years prior to the conferring of a degree toward completion of that degree. Graduate students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment, excluding summer sessions unless permitted by the director. All graduate students must enroll for at least one credit hour during the semester (or summer) of graduation. No course in which the grades D, P (pass), F, or U (unsatisfactory) are earned can be counted toward a graduate degree, nor can courses taken under the audit option. Students in the Master of Legal Studies program must earn a 3.0 GPA to qualify for graduation.

FACULTY

CHAIR
• John C. Kilwein - Ph.D. (Ohio State University)
  Department of Public Administration

DIRECTOR
• Nancy L. Adams - Ph.D. (Fielding Institute)

COORDINATOR
• Erin E. Estell - M.P.P.M. (University of Pittsburgh)

Admission

In order to be considered for admission to the M.L.S. program, one must have completed a baccalaureate degree in any major with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. In addition, it is recommended that a prospective student have some work experience in an area broadly related to the field of legal studies. Applicants who do not possess a GPA of at least 3.0 may apply to the college for admission as a non-degree student in order to register for certain classes and to document academic ability. Acceptance as a non-degree student does not guarantee acceptance into the legal studies program.

To apply for acceptance into the M.L.S. program, one must apply to graduate school online at http://grad.wvu.edu. Official transcripts of all institutions previously attended must be sent to:

Office of Admissions
P.O. Box 6009
Morgantown, WV 26505-6009

Once the application to graduate school has been submitted, please have three references submitted online via the instructions at http://grad.wvu.edu. Provide the reference writers with the information on how to file a reference using this system. Reference writers should be persons who are able to
write directly to the applicant’s ability to think critically; analyze situations, information, or data; to write clearly; and to apply one’s self in an academic program of study. At least one of these references should be an academic reference if possible.

Once the admissions application has been submitted, please submit the following directly to the Master of Legal Studies Program at P.O. Box 6322, Morgantown, WV 26506-6322:

1. A current resume or curriculum vitae
2. A one or two-page personal statement on the subject of why and how the Master of Legal Studies Degree Program will further the applicant’s career or special interests
3. Results of standardized graduate-level tests (i.e. GRE, LSAT, GMAT, or MCAT) or a petition of waiver for the standardized test requirement

A prospective student may apply for a waiver of the graduate test score requirement if he or she possesses an undergraduate degree and has five or more years of work experience in a field related to legal studies. The petition should be in the form of a letter requesting a waiver and describing previous work experience as well as how this work experience or the individual’s qualifications provide evidence of their ability to engage in graduate studies. This should be sent directly to the program along with the other materials listed above.

All application materials should be submitted no later than November 15 of each year for admission in the spring semester and by May 1 for admission in the fall semester. The Admissions Committee will render decisions during the month of November for spring admission and the month of June for fall admission.

Additional information and forms may be found on the program’s website at http://legalstudies.wvu.edu or by calling the program at (304) 293-7977.

## DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Requirements</th>
<th>36</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Hours</td>
<td>36</td>
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## MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Total Hours</td>
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### Elective Courses

Select five from the following: 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEGS 691</td>
<td>Advanced Topics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEGS 710</td>
<td>Family Law</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 720</td>
<td>Media and the Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 730</td>
<td>Employment Law</td>
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<td>LEGS 740</td>
<td>Commerce Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 750</td>
<td>Criminal Law and Procedure</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 760</td>
<td>Administrative Ethics</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 770</td>
<td>Healthcare Law</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEGS 780</td>
<td>Constitutional Law</td>
<td>3</td>
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The Master of Legal Studies program requires thirty-six hours of coursework. This coursework is broken into three different areas: core courses (eighteen hours), elective courses (fifteen hours), and an applied research capstone project (three hours). The program provides a suggested plan of study for students to use as a guide regarding registration and course offerings.
COURSES

LEG 610. Law and the Legal System. 3 Hours.
Introduction to the law and its functions, the structure of the U.S. legal system, and the actors in the legal system.

LEG 620. Researching the Law. 3 Hours.
Provides experience in locating and interpreting primary and secondary legal authority; federal and state constitutions; agency rules and regulations.

LEG 630. Law and Society. 3 Hours.
Explores the relationship between legal rules and social norms; the law's role in defining deviance and establishing social control; issues of equality; where people go to resolve disputes.

LEG 640. Administrative Legal Process. 3 Hours.
Explores the role of administrative agencies in making law.

LEG 650. The Legislative Process. 3 Hours.
Examines how legislation develops and implications of recent legislative reform enactments and proposals.

LEG 660. Alternative Dispute Resolution. 3 Hours.
Theoretical and practical examination of alternative dispute processes and assessment of the appropriateness of alternative dispute resolution for particular legal disputes.

LEG 691A-Z. Advanced Topics. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. Investigation of advanced topics not covered in regularly scheduled courses.

LEG 692A-Z. Directed Study. 1-6 Hours.
Directed study, reading, and/or research.

LEG 695. Independent Study. 1-6 Hours.
Faculty supervised study of topics not available through regular course offerings.

LEG 697. Research. 1-15 Hours.
PR: Consent. Research activities leading to thesis, problem report, research paper or equivalent scholarly project, or a dissertation. (Grading may be S/U.)

LEG 699. Graduate Colloquium. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. For graduate students not seeking coursework credit but who wish to meet residency requirements, use of the University’s facilities, and participate in its academic and cultural programs. Note: Graduate students who are not actively involved in coursework or research are entitled, through enrollment in their department's 699/799 Graduate Colloquium to consult with graduate faculty, participate in both formal and informal academic activities sponsored by their program, and retain all of the rights and privileges of duly enrolled students. Grading is P/F; colloquium credit may not be counted against credit requirements for masters programs. Registration for one credit of 699/799 graduate colloquium satisfies the University requirement of registration in the semester in which graduation occurs.

LEG 700. Research Capstone. 3 Hours.
Research activities leading to a scholarly project applying and extending knowledge gained across the master of legal studies program coursework.

LEG 710. Family Law. 3 Hours.
Examines the distribution of power and responsibility among parent, child, and the state related to a variety of family issues and social service workers' reporting obligations.

LEG 720. Media and the Law. 3 Hours.
Survey of mass media and the law, implications of existing law, and proposed changes.

LEG 730. Employment Law. 3 Hours.
Explores law related to workers compensation, disability insurance, affirmative action/equal opportunity policies, workplace, workplace discrimination and related federal and state statutes.

LEG 740. Commerce Law. 3 Hours.
Survey of the legal principles relating to the organization, operation, and management of business organizations and principles relating to commercial transactions.

LEG 750. Criminal Law and Procedure. 3 Hours.
Covers investigative stages of search and seizure, interrogation, and identification. Familiarizes students with prosecutorial stages and evidentiary issues.

LEG 760. Administrative Ethics. 3 Hours.
Analysis of ethical issues in the law and the administrative decision making process.

LEG 770. Healthcare Law. 3 Hours.
Examines law and health care regulations related to provision of healthcare and issues related to liability.
LEGS 780. Constitutional Law. 3 Hours.
Examines the concept of constitutionalism, the relationships between the branches of government and between national and state governments, and the role of the Constitution in protecting individual liberties.