Legal Studies, M.L.S.

Degree Offered

Master of Legal Studies

Nature of the Program

West Virginia University's Master of Legal Studies (MLS) program is housed in the Department of Public Administration.

The MLS is a degree program designed to build greater public understanding of the law and the United States legal system, provide graduates with the ability to apply knowledge and skills gained to performing their jobs more effectively, and provide private and public organizations the benefit of enhanced experience. It is designed for professionals practicing in human relations, criminal and juvenile justice, the court system, journalism, social work, regulatory agencies, county and municipal government, military, business, and other professionals who work with, though not necessarily in, the legal system. It is neither a "pre-law" program nor a paralegal program. It does not prepare graduates to practice law.

The MLS is a 30-credit hour program offered entirely online. Courses are offered each semester, including summer terms. Students following the prescribed course of study should be able to finish the degree in 18 months.

The MLS degree offers Areas of Emphasis in Healthcare Systems and Justice Systems.

Prospective and current students should frequently check the program's website (https://publicadmin.wvu.edu/students/master-of-legal-studies/) for up-to-date program information, forms, and other guidelines.

FACULTY

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS

- Valarie Blake JD (University of Pittsburgh)
- John C. Kilwein Ph.D. (Ohio State University)

SERVICE ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

• Samantha Godbey - Ph.D. (West Virginia University)

LECTURERS

- Carrie Caviani JD (West Virginia University College of Law)
- Irving Condon JD (University of South Carolina School of Law)
- Michelle Mensore Condon JD (Washington & Lee University)
- Cara Davis JD (Duquesne University School of Law)
- Cheryl Dennis JD (West Virginia University College of Law)
- Frederick Dimichele JD (Indiana University School of Law)
- Kevin Gillen JD (West Virginia University College of Law)
- Julie Hawkinberry JD (West Virginia University College of Law)
- Ulysses N. Jaen JD (West Virginia University College of Law)
- Jeri Kirby Ph.D. (West Virginia University)
- · Gregory Noone JD, Ph.D. (Suffolk University Law School, West Virginia University)
- Thomas O. Patrick JD (West Virginia University College of Law)

PROFESSOR EMERITUS

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

Admissions

The Master of Legal Studies is a degree program designed to build greater public understanding of the law and the United States legal system. Graduates will be able to apply the knowledge and skills gained to performing their jobs more effectively and to provide private and public organizations the benefit of enhanced experience. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree with an overall undergraduate GPA of 2.75 or higher. Preference is given to those with work experience broadly related to legal studies.

Standardized graduate-level test scores (GRE, GMAT or LSAT) are required unless the following circumstances apply, in which case the requirement can be waived:

- Applicants who earned a bachelor's degree from a U.S. accredited college or university and achieved a cumulative GPA of 3.4 or higher may request a waiver of the graduate exam score requirement.
- Applicants who already hold a graduate degree or have successfully completed at least 18 credit hours and achieved a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher from another accredited graduate program.
- Applicants with at least five years of broadly related experience after completing their undergraduate degree. If applicant are active military or a veteran, they should include this information in their request as well as a description of all relevant professional experience and how it relates to legal studies and the applicant's career goals.

List of Admission Requirements:

- · See the steps to apply for admissions and access the application here (https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/how-to-apply/).
- Transcripts from all institutions attended.
- Standardized graduate-level test scores (GRE, GMAT, LSAT) unless exceptions described above apply. In that case, this should be addressed in the statement of purpose.
- A statement of purpose that describes the applicant's career goals and how the M.L.S. program will support those goals. The statement should also address any exceptions to the graduate test scores as described above.
- Resume or CV.
- Two letters of recommendation.

International Applicants:

- See the steps to apply for admissions and access the application here (https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/how-to-apply/).
- International applicants should view additional requirements here (http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/graduate/graduateeducationatwestvirginiauniversity/ #internationaltext) and here (https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/information-for/international-students/).
- Language proficiency is required in order to hold a graduate teaching assistantship. See here (https://elli.wvu.edu/testing-resources/english-proficiency-gtas/).

Application Deadlines:

- The MLS program admits students for the Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters on a rolling basis.
- The priority review deadlines for all application materials are April 15th (Summer), May 15th (Fall) and November 15th (Spring).
- Applications will be considered after these deadlines on a space-available basis.

For questions, please contact: publicadmin@mail.wvu.edu

Certain application requirements may be waived based on a preliminary review of an application by the program.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS 2024-2025

The Admission Requirements above will be the same for the 2024-2025 Academic Year.

Major Code: 1408

Master of Legal Studies

Degree Requirements

- Credit Hours: Students are required to complete a minimum of 30 credit hours in graduate coursework.
- Grade Point Average: Students must earn a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. Students must also earn a minimum GPA of 3.0 and a minimum grade of B- in all courses applied to the degree.
- Area of Emphasis: The MLS program offers three areas of emphasis 1) Healthcare, 2) Justice Systems, and 3) Homeland Security. Students may either complete an Area of Emphasis or 9 credits of electives.
- Benchmarks: For details, go to the Legal Studies Degree Progress tab (http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/eberlycollegeofartsandsciences/ legalstudies/#degreeprogresstext)

Curriculum Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses		
LEGS 610	Law and the Legal System	3
LEGS 620	Researching the Law	3
Select two of the following:		6
LEGS 640	Administrative Legal Process	

LEGS 645	Judicial Legal Process	
LEGS 650	The Legislative Process	
LEGS 660	Dispute Resolution	3
LEGS 700	Research Capstone	3
LEGS 760	Administrative Ethics	3
AOE or Elective Courses		
Select three of the following (others approved by Master of Legal Studies Advisor):		

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LEGS 691	Advanced Topics	
LEGS 720	Media and the Law	
LEGS 730	Employment Law	
LEGS 750	Criminal Law and Procedure	
LEGS 751	Punishment and Corrections	
LEGS 752	Homeland Security	
LEGS 753	Immigration and Border Security	
LEGS 754	Military Justice	
LEGS 770	Healthcare Law	
LEGS 771	Legal Issues for Adults in Care	
LEGS 780	Constitutional Law	
Total Hours		30

Areas of Emphasis Offered:

- Health Systems (p. 3)
- Justice System (p. 3)

Health Systems Area of Emphasis

Code	Title	Hours
CORE COURSE:		3
LEGS 770	Healthcare Law	
ELECTIVE COURSES:		6
LEGS 720	Media and the Law	
LEGS 730	Employment Law	
LEGS 731	State, Corporate, and Organizational Fraud	
LEGS 771	Legal Issues for Adults in Care	
LEGS 780	Constitutional Law	
Total Hours		9

Justice System Area of Emphasis

Code	Title	Hours
CORE COURSE:		3
LEGS 750	Criminal Law and Procedure	
ELECTIVES:		6
LEGS 720	Media and the Law	
LEGS 731	State, Corporate, and Organizational Fraud	
LEGS 730	Employment Law	
LEGS 751	Punishment and Corrections	
LEGS 752	Homeland Security	
LEGS 753	Immigration and Border Security	
LEGS 754	Military Justice	
LEGS 780	Constitutional Law	
Total Hours		9

Degree Progress

Benchmarks: Students are expected to consult with their faculty advisor at least once a semester to review their progress in the program of study. More information is provided in the MLS Student Handbook.

Plan of Study: The Plan of Study should be discussed with the faculty advisor to ensure appropriate sequencing of courses to meet graduation requirements.

Evaluation Procedures: The Legal Studies faculty are committed to supporting all admitted students in their timely completion of the program. Students will receive a "good standing" letter from the Department Chair annually. They will also be provided feedback through academic assignments and individual meetings as needed. The academic advisor is available to discuss areas in which students may be experiencing challenges and/or need additional support. If the academic advisor is not available, students should feel free to contact the Chair of the Department of Public Administration.

Timeline: Master's degree students are permitted to continue in a program for a maximum of eight years following their term of admission to the program. Students who have been inactive for two or more years or who exceed eight years following their term of admission are required to apply for readmission to the University and their graduate program.

Professional Behavior: The MLS program is a professional program preparing people for careers in public service. Adherence to professional standards and ethics is expected of students.

Degree Completion: Full-time students usually complete the MLS degree in five semesters.

More information is provided in the MLS Student Handbook.

Major Learning Outcomes MASTER OF LEGAL STUDIES

Students will be able to:

- Effectively communicate the current state of knowledge, research, and bodies of legal doctrines in the field of jurisprudence and regulatory law.
- Identify and evaluate policy and procedure of the distinct governing bodies of legal mandates including the courts, legislatures, judiciary and other legal institutions.
- Apply professional practice, including mediation and ethics, as they relate to various legal professions, areas of regulation and broader social connections.
- Critically analyze the recognized literature and apply knowledge to conduct independent and original research in the field of jurisprudence and/or regulatory law.