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 MLS 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 MLS is offered entirely online (there are no on-campus courses). 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).

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**
- Maja Husar Holmes - Ph.D. (Syracuse University)

**DIRECTOR**
- Maja Husar Holmes

**COORDINATOR**
- Carla J. See - M.A., M.S. (West Virginia University)

**PROFESSOR EMERITUS**
- Nancy L. Adams

**Admission**

In order to be considered for admission to the MLS 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 Eberly College of Arts and Sciences 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.

Steps to apply for the MLS program:

- Application for admission and transcripts: (Apply here: http://admissions.wvu.edu/admissions/how-to-apply)
- Three Letters of Recommendation: References should be requested through the online Graduate Application portal. 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 letter should be from an academic reference, if possible.
- Current resume or curriculum vitae
- One to two page personal statement on the subject of why and how the Master of Legal Studies Program will further your career or special interests.
- Results from a standardized graduate-level test (i.e. GRE, LSAT, GMAT or MCAT) or a petition of waiver for the standardized test requirements. A form for the waiver request can be located on the Legal Studies Admissions webpage: http://publicadmin.wvu.edu/mls. 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.

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. Applicants are encouraged to submit materials early. Early applications that are complete will be reviewed by the Admissions Committee on a rolling basis. Otherwise, the Admissions Committee will render decisions by November 30 for Spring admission and by May 15 for Fall admission. **Applications for admission may be considered after these deadlines on a space-available basis. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

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.

Master of Legal Studies

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Minimum GPA of 3.0 is required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Courses</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEGS 610 Law and the Legal System</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 620 Researching the Law</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 630 Law and Society</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 640 Administrative Legal Process</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 650 The Legislative Process</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 660 Alternative Dispute Resolution</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGS 700 Research Capstone</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
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| Elective Courses                       | 15      |

Select five from the following:

- LEGS 691 Advanced Topics
- LEGS 710 Family Law
- LEGS 720 Media and the Law
- LEGS 730 Employment Law
- LEGS 740 Commerce Law
- LEGS 750 Criminal Law and Procedure
- LEGS 760 Administrative Ethics
- LEGS 770 Healthcare Law
- LEGS 780 Constitutional Law

Total Hours: 36

Major Learning Goals

MASTER OF LEGAL STUDIES

- Students will be prepared to articulate with and differentiate between the law, the courts, other legal institutions and legal actors and to define their impact on society;
- to identify sources of law;
- develop research plans and conduct legal research;
- prepare for and assist with civil and criminal litigation;
- understand policymaking and rulemaking, develop and implement strategies and plans to affect policy making and rulemaking.