College of Law

WVU Law students have a passion for justice, an interest in how our legal system contributes to society, and a desire to learn a discipline that is both structured and creative.

West Virginia University College of Law provides students a unique opportunity to attend a small public law school within a nationally recognized research university. Here you can join diverse students from around the globe who come together in the beautiful mountains of West Virginia to experience public legal education with the intimacy of a fine private law school. Small class sizes and an excellent faculty-student ratio tell part of the story, but not all.

What makes the WVU Law experience exceptional is its culture of excellence. Our faculty, staff, and students are committed to creating a rigorous, inclusive, exciting, and supportive educational community in which individuals can pursue their personal vision of success in the legal profession.

Our faculty members are outstanding teachers, scholars, and leaders in legal education. What distinguishes our faculty from others, however, is the remarkable commitment they have in mentoring students to help them achieve individual goals. The faculty can be found supervising student articles for publication, assisting in obtaining prestigious federal judicial clerkships, or providing guidance for student-led symposia exploring cutting-edge and relevant topics. In addition, whether our faculty members teach corporate securities or civil disobedience, each one exemplifies the duty of a lawyer to serve the public interest.

To fulfill its commitment to individual student success and to improving the profession by producing the leaders of the future, the West Virginia University College of Law has a rapidly developing curriculum that combines the best of traditional legal education with new courses and opportunities necessary to practice law in the global society in the 21st century.

About the College of Law

Mission Statement: Preparing 21st century lawyers and leaders to serve the public, government, and business—both locally and globally—while focusing on justice, ethics, professionalism, and service in a diverse, vibrant, and respectful community.

Established: 1878

The West Virginia University College of Law was accredited by the AALS in 1914 and by the ABA in 1923.

The West Virginia University College of Law is fully approved by the American Bar Association Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar.

Since 1952, the ABA Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar has been approved by the U.S. Department of Education as the recognized national agency for the accreditation of professional schools of law.

Further information as to the Standards and Rules of Procedure for the Approval of Law Schools by the American Bar Association may be obtained from the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, 321 N. Clark Street, 21st Floor, Chicago, IL 60654. Phone: (312) 988-6738, Fax: (312) 988-5681. Email: legaled@americanbar.org. Website: http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education.html

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  Supporting Land Use Attorney
• Christy Burnside DeMuth - M.S. (Indiana University of Pennsylvania)
  Land Use Planner
• Nathan Fetty - J.D. (West Virginia University)
  Managing Attorney
• Katherine Garvey - J.D. (University of Missouri-Kansas City); LL.M. (Vermont Law School)
  Director of the Land Use and Sustainable Development Clinic
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  Professor Emeritus
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  Teaching Professor Emeritus

Degree Designation Learning Goals

DOCTOR OF JURISPRUDENCE (JD)

The J.D. program forms students’ professional identities as lawyers and provides students with the core legal knowledge and practical skills to pass the bar exam and to serve their clients competently and ethically.

In developing professional identity and values, we seek to produce students committed to professional excellence, justice, leadership, public service, global engagement, and lifelong learning. Our graduates are trained to be legal problem solvers who possess a solid grasp of the substantive and procedural law of their chosen fields, understand their professional responsibilities and ethical obligations, and have the varied skills needed for successful practice, including: legal analysis, legal writing, legal research, factual investigation, client counseling, negotiation, drafting, and advocacy.

MASTER OF LAWS (LLM)

Our LLM programs offer post-J.D. students an opportunity to deepen their subject-matter expertise and skills in particular areas of the law.

Energy and Sustainable Development Law

The LLM in Energy & Sustainable Development Law provides lawyers with a deep and broad knowledge of law and policy in the critical areas of energy, environmental protection, and sustainable development. Students will master these areas through course work, writing projects, and a variety of experiential learning opportunities. LLM graduates will have the skills necessary to work as lawyers serving energy companies, investors, utilities, manufacturing companies, lawmakers, policymakers, regulators, land use professionals, and environmental organizations.

Forensic Justice

The LLM in Forensic Justice provides working lawyers with a solid grounding in the theory and practice of the forensic sciences and their application in the courts. LLM students will gain an understanding of scientific method and of critical areas of forensic science including biological and chemical evidence, impression and trace evidence, and statistics and probability. In addition, students will gain practical experience in working with this evidence in a courtroom setting. The degree will be especially valuable for prosecutors and criminal defense attorneys, enabling those on both sides of the criminal process to ensure that forensic science serves the ultimate goal of justice.

ADMISSIONS - DOCTOR OF JURISPRUDENCE

FIRST-TIME ADMISSIONS

The following are the essential requirements to apply to law school:

• A bachelor’s degree from an accredited four-year institution
• Completion of the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT)
• Application for admission / Credential Assembly Service (CAS) report

For additional information, please visit the College of Law Admissions (http://www.law.wvu.edu/admissions) homepage.

TRANSFER ADMISSIONS

A transfer student is a student who has taken some or all of his or her first-year curriculum at another law school and is admitted to earn a J.D. degree at the West Virginia University College of Law. The College of Law accepts transfer students only from other law schools accredited by the American Bar Association. The College will not accept transfer applicants from law schools that do not award letter grades (or their numerical equivalent) during the
first year. All candidates who transfer to the College of Law from another ABA- accredited law school must satisfactorily complete courses aggregating at least forty-five credit hours at the College of Law. In addition, the last thirty credit hours for transfer students must be earned at the College of Law.

The College of Law will accept transfer credits only for courses where the student earned a grade of C or better. In exceptional circumstances, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may approve the transfer of a small number of pass/fail credits. The Associate Dean will determine the total number of credit hours that will transfer; only in exceptional cases will credit be given for more than thirty-two credit hours. The Associate Dean will also determine whether particular courses taken at another law school satisfy specific course requirements at the College of Law. Graded credits at other law schools that transfer to the College of Law will be entered on the student’s College of Law record as pass/fail credits and hence will not affect the student’s College of Law grade point average.

In order to graduate, all transfer students must obtain a cumulative grade point average of 2.30 or better on courses taken at the College of Law. Transfer students are not eligible for election to Order of the Coif at the West Virginia University College of Law.

The deadline for transfer applications is July 1. The West Virginia University College of Law has established the following guidelines for the Enrollment Management Committee to use in reviewing transfer applications.

• In reviewing applications for advanced standing, the Enrollment Management Committee will give preference to West Virginia residents.
• Applicants must have completed at least one academic year of studying or its equivalent at the institution from which transfer is being sought. For admission purposes, one year of study or its equivalent is equal to a minimum of twenty-eight credit hours of coursework. The twenty-eight credit hours should ideally include the following coursework, but we will consider transfer applicants who have a substantial number of the listed courses:
  1. Civil Procedure I & II
  2. Contracts I
  3. Torts I
  4. Constitutional Law
  5. Criminal Law
  6. Property I
• Applications from students seeking to transfer from schools that are not accredited by the ABA will not be accepted under any circumstances. (The applicant may apply as a first-year student.)
• Applications for transfer to the College of Law for the second year will be considered by the Committee on the basis of the following:
  1. The size of the returning second-year class.
  2. The applicant’s grades and/or class rank at her/his law school. Applicants from law schools who do not provide either a GPA or class rank for 1L students will not be considered for transfer.
  3. Whether the applicant would have been admitted to the College of Law in the first year had the applicant applied.
  4. The academic strength of the law school attended by the applying student, including whether it is accredited by the AALS. (ABA accreditation is required.)
  5. Recommendation(s) from a law professor in whose class the applicant was enrolled. (At least one is required.)
  6. Residency of the applicant.
  7. All of those facts, performance records, recommendations, and other matters that the Committee normally considers for applicants to the first-year class, including everything that might implicate the student’s fitness for the practice of law.
  8. Any other activities and experiences of the applicant occurring since the student began law school.
  9. Any other information regarding the applicant that may be considered relevant to success in law school.

• In addition to the aforementioned criteria, applicants must meet the requirements set forth below.
  1. Applicants must conform to all other relevant criteria relating to first-year entering students as found in the admission policy of the West Virginia University College of Law.
  2. Applicants must submit a certified official transcript of their first-year law school grades and class ranking. If class ranking from the law school is unavailable, the applicant must submit sufficient information about grades from the law school attended to make a reasonable estimation of class ranking. No one will be admitted for transfer without class rank (or its reasonable equivalent) based on a full year of law school attendance.
  3. Applicants must provide a letter of good standing from the Dean of the law school (or his or her designee) from which the student is transferring.
  4. Applicants must submit a copy of their most recent LSAC Credential Assembly Service (CAS) report including a certified transcript of undergraduate school grades and the LSAT writing sample.
  5. Applicants must fully explain any ethical or other problems with admission that may appear in the file.
  6. Applicants must submit the completed file to the Admission Office by July 1 in order to be considered for transfer.
• In considering applications for admission from individuals with credits or degrees from foreign institutions, the Enrollment Management Committee shall have the authority to make any of the below stated decisions with regard to the applicant:

1. The Committee may admit the applicant as a first-year entering student.

2. The Committee may admit the applicant with advanced standing by granting credit for specific course work completed at another institution. (AALS executive Committee Regulations 2.8 and 2.9 prescribe limitations on the award of advanced standing.)

3. The Committee may admit the applicant as a special student for the purposes of auditing courses or transferring course work to another institution.

4. The Committee may deny admission to the applicant.

TRANSIENT ADMISSIONS

The West Virginia University College of Law accepts transient students only from other law schools accredited by the American Bar Association. A transient student is one who has taken or will take most of his or her work toward a J.D. at another ABA-approved law school and will earn a degree from that institution. Transient students are permitted to earn some credits toward that J.D. while in temporary residence at the West Virginia University College of Law, provided that they obtain permission from their school and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

ADMISSIONS - LL.M. (MASTER OF LAWS)

ENERGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

WVU Law's LL.M. in Energy and Sustainable Development Law will be a source for a high-quality professional legal education and a home for thought leaders in the areas of energy and sustainable development.

Minimum admission requirements for the program are as follows:

• A J.D. from an ABA (American Bar Association) accredited school.
• A J.D. grade point average of at least a 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) or other demonstrated indicia of likelihood of success.
• A demonstrated interest in or commitment to the fields of energy and/or sustainable development.

For additional information, please visit the LL.M. in Energy & Sustainable Development Law (http://law.wvu.edu/energy-llm) homepage.

WVU College of Law also offers students an opportunity for a dual J.D./LL.M in Energy and Sustainable Development Law. For more information about participating as a dual degree student, please visit the J.D./LL.M homepage. (http://www.law.wvu.edu/academics/academic-programs/dual-degree-programs/jd-llm)

FORENSIC JUSTICE

Minimum admission requirements for the LL.M. in Forensic Justice are as follows:

• A J.D. from an ABA (American Bar Association) accredited school or equivalent.
• A grade point average of at least a 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) or other demonstrated indicia of likelihood of success.
• A demonstrated interest or commitment to the fields of science, forensic evidence, and law.

Applicants may include newly graduated J.D. students, professionals (prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges) returning for study after years of practice, or qualified international students.

For additional information, please visit the LL.M. in Forensic Justice (http://law.wvu.edu/forensic-llm) homepage.