

MASTER OF LEGAL STUDIES (MLS)

Program Policies

2019-2020

APPROVED BY LAW COUNCIL ON OCTOBER 16, 2019

Admission Prerequisites

An applicant seeking admission into the Master of Legal Studies program must satisfy the following prerequisites:

- A. The applicant must have earned a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited U.S. college or university, or approved university outside the United States. If the applicant earns a degree from a university or college outside the United States, the applicant must submit a certified WES evaluation that the applicant's education meets the bachelor's degree requirement.
- B. An international applicant must provide a TOEFL (minimum of 600 PBT/100 IBT) or IELTS (minimum of 7.0) score, if English is not the applicant's native language.

Application Requirements

Applicants in the Master of Legal Studies program must satisfy the following application requirements:

- A. Complete an online application;
- B. Answer objective, qualification, and career goal short essays (included in the application);
- C. Submit a résumé;
- D. Submit official transcripts from all post-secondary institutions; and
- E. Provide two reference forms with letters of recommendation.

Admission Process

- A. Admission decisions are made by the Assistant Dean of Graduate & Professional Law Programs or the Assistant Dean of Admissions for JD, Graduate & Professional Law Programs, on a rolling basis upon completion of an application file. In some circumstances, the assistant dean(s) may refer an application file to the Graduate Council for an admission decision. New MLS students are admitted into the fall semester only.
- B. The admission decision is made based on a number of factors including, without limitation, the applicant's (1) undergraduate academic record; (2) work experience; (3) career goals; and (4) other information the applicant deems necessary for the Graduate Law Admission Committee to consider in making the decision. An applicant may submit LSAT, GRE, or GMAT scores for consideration, but these scores are not required. In some circumstances, the Graduate Law Admission Committee may request an applicant submit one of these scores to assist with the Committee's review of the application and determination that the applicant has the aptitude for undertaking a graduate program.

C. Applicants accepted into the MLS program will receive an acceptance letter by email along with information about deposit deadlines, orientation, and the start of classes.

Admission of Current or Former JD Students

A current or former JD student from Capital or another ABA-accredited law school may seek admission into the MLS program. The following criteria apply to these applicants:

A. JD Students in Good Academic Standing

Students in a JD program in good academic standing who no longer wish to pursue a JD degree may apply to transfer a maximum of 15 passing credits (grades of “C” or better) to the MLS degree and continue to pursue that degree. The student must complete the remaining MLS degree requirements needed for graduation as a student in the Master of Legal Studies program. Once accepted, credits from the JD program are exclusively for the MLS program and cannot be re-transferred. These “degree transfer students” must meet with the Assistant Dean of Graduate & Professional Law Programs. The transferring student will pay MLS tuition for the remaining MLS credit hours, but they will not be eligible for any refund of the difference between the JD and MLS tuition.

B. JD Students that are not in Good Academic Standing

An academically dismissed JD student or JD student on academic probation may apply to transfer into the MLS program. The application will be considered by the Graduate Council. The applicant must address reasons for their poor academic performance as a JD student and explain how recent activities or changes in circumstances make the applicant capable of successfully completing the MLS program. When considering application, the Graduate Council will examine many factors including but not limited to:

- (1) the poor academic performance was the result of causes other than the inability to study law;
- (2) such causes were extraordinary and sufficiently substantial to cause poor academic performance;
- (3) the causes were beyond the applicant’s control or were justifiable;
- (4) the issues have been fully resolved; and
- (5) the student will be able to achieve and maintain academic good standing in the MLS program.

If accepted into the MLS program the applicant may transfer a maximum of 15 passing credits (grades of “C” or better) to the MLS degree and continue to pursue that degree. The student must then complete the remaining degree requirements needed for graduation as a student in the Master of Legal Studies program. Once accepted, credits from the JD program are exclusively for the MLS program and cannot be re-transferred. These “degree transfer students” must meet with the Assistant Dean of Graduate and Professional Law Programs. The transferring student will pay MLS tuition for the remaining MLS credit hours, but he or she will not be eligible for any refund of the difference between the JD and MLS tuition.

C. Dismissal from JD program for Honor Code or other issues.

A JD student who was dismissed for Honor Code violations or other non-academic issues will not be considered for admission into the MLS program.

D. After Extended Period of Leave from a JD Program.

A JD student who has completed credits at Capital or another ABA-accredited law school and has an extended period of leave from the JD program may apply to the MLS program. The Graduate Law Admission Committee will consider a number of factors including, without limitation, the applicant's (1) academic record in the JD program, (2) the length of time between withdrawing from a JD program and seeking admission into the MLS program, and (3) the stated reasons the applicant seeks to complete the MLS program. If admitted into the MLS program, the student may (1) waive taking the Introduction to Law & Legal Analysis courses (total of 4 credit hours) and (2) transfer from the JD program into the MLS program up to 15 credit hours for courses in which the student received a C or better.

E. Academic Dismissal from Other Graduate Program (non-JD program)

An MLS applicant who is academically dismissed from a graduate program (non-JD program) or on academic probation in that graduate program may apply for admission into the MLS program. The application will be considered by the Graduate Council. The applicant must address reasons for their poor academic performance in the graduate program and explain how recent activities or changes in circumstances make the applicant capable of successfully completing the MLS program. When considering application, the Graduate Council will examine many factors including but not limited to:

- (1) the poor academic performance was the result of causes other than the inability to study law;
- (2) such causes were extraordinary and sufficiently substantial to cause poor academic performance;
- (3) the causes were beyond the applicant's control or were justifiable;
- (4) the issues have been fully resolved; and
- (5) the student will be able to achieve and maintain academic good standing in the MLS program.

The MLS program will only accept the transfer of credits from an MLS or similarly situated program and up to a maximum of 15 passing credits (grades of "C" or better) to the MLS degree. The student must then complete the remaining degree requirements needed for graduation as a student in the Master of Legal Studies program.

Transfer of Credits

A. From Other Graduate Programs

At the discretion of the Assistant Dean, up to 4 credits earned in another graduate program within four years of matriculation into the MLS program may be applied to the MLS degree.

B. From Capital's ABA-Approved Paralegal Program

An MLS student matriculating into the MLS program may transfer up to 6 credit hours courses earned in Capital's post-baccalaureate, ABA-approved paralegal program. The student must have received a C or better in the transferring courses as a condition of the transfer.

C. From Other ABA-Approved Paralegal Programs

At the discretion of the Assistant Dean of Graduate & Professional Law Programs, an MLS student may transfer up to 6 credit hours for courses taken in another post-baccalaureate, ABA-approved paralegal program. The student must have received a C or better in the transferring courses as a condition of the

transfer. Before awarding the transfer credits, the MLS student shall provide a copy of the transferring course syllabi to the Assistant Dean for review.

Degree Requirements

- A. MLS students must complete 30 credit hours of required and elective coursework for the program within a period of 4 years from the date of matriculation.
- B. MLS students may select one of five areas of concentration or consult with the Assistant Dean to design a customized program of study. The concentrations include: (1) Criminal Justice, (2) Environmental Sustainability, (3) Governmental Affairs, (4) Health Care, and (5) Human Resources.

Course Selection

An MLS student is responsible for selecting the courses to enable her or him to satisfy the graduation requirements for the degree being earned. An MLS student is strongly encouraged to discuss with the Assistant Dean her or his intended course of study to ensure that the graduation requirements will be satisfied.

The 30 hours of required and elective coursework must include the following:

- A. Required Core Courses – 9 credit hours

MLS students are required to complete the following core courses (unless otherwise waived):

- Introduction to Law & Analysis I (2)
- Introduction to Law & Analysis II (2)
- Torts I (3)
- Torts II (2)

- B. One Foundation Course – 3 credit hours

MLS students are required to complete one foundation course in their selected concentration or as otherwise discussed with the Assistant Dean.

- C. One Experiential Course – 2 credit hours

MLS students are required to complete one experiential course from the following list:

- Dispute Resolution (2)
- Negotiation (2)
- Mediation (2)
- Interviewing and Counseling (2)
- Other experiential class

- D. Electives – 13 credit hours

MLS students are required to complete 13 credit hours of elective courses in their selected concentration or as otherwise discussed with the Assistant Dean.

E. Capstone Project – 3 credit hours

MLS students are required to complete a 3 credit hour Capstone project. MLS students may choose one of the following options for completing the Capstone:

- (1) Field Practicum: 150 hours of supervised work in the student's area of concentration, including the completion of a portfolio of documents;
- (2) Research Paper: A master's thesis (30-page publishable paper) on a topic in the student's area of concentration, written with a faculty supervisor and an advisor with expertise in that area; or
- (3) Independent Project: A work project, including a substantial written component or portfolio of documents, agreed upon by the student and a faculty supervisor that solves a problem or addresses a concern in the student's area of concentration.

F. Waiver of Prerequisites

If a course has a prerequisite requirement, the MLS student must obtain the approval of the Assistant Dean for waiver of the prerequisite requirement prior to enrolling in the course.

Grading and Academic Good Standing

A. Grading Policy for MLS Students

The Master of Legal Studies (MLS) degree is not granted for the purpose of practicing law or taking a bar examination. MLS candidates will therefore be evaluated based on their performance in the context of preparation for work in other disciplines. MLS students should be graded based on a level of competency appropriate for the study of law as a graduate discipline, not for the ability to pass a bar exam or practice law.

MLS students should be graded and evaluated independently from JD students. In evaluating MLS students' performance on exams, the grading professor should consider that MLS students are not enrolled in, nor will they have completed, the first full-year JD curriculum. When assigning MLS grades, faculty should not require MLS students to achieve the same level of performance as JD students earning the same grade.

Grades of MLS students enrolled in a JD course or seminar shall not be included when determining means, medians, or rankings for JD students.

MLS students will be graded (1) separately from JD students and (2) anonymously whenever possible. When there is only one MLS student in a class, however, anonymous grading will not be possible. Because MLS students are evaluated separately from JD students, grade rosters will identify those who are MLS students.

B. MLS Grading Scale

MLS students will receive grades based on the following scale:

A	4.0
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.0
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.0
C-	1.67
F	Below 1.67

C. Academic Good Standing

An MLS student must achieve a minimum grade of 2.75 after attempting 9 credit hours to remain in good academic standing in the MLS program.

D. Dismissal

When an MLS student, after completing 9 credit hours, fails to achieve and maintain a minimum 2.75 grade point average, the student is dismissed from the MLS program. See Graduate Programs Dismissal Procedures below.

Graduation Requirements

A. Graduation Eligibility

To be eligible for graduation, an MLS student must complete 30 credit hours (including any transferred credit hours) in which a minimum grade of Satisfactory was earned.

B. Application to Graduate

An MLS student must complete an application for graduation in the semester in which she or he intends to graduate. The MLS student must also confer with the Assistant Dean to verify that she or he has satisfied the graduation requirements, assuming successful completion of the courses being taken in the final semester.

Time Limit

An MLS student must complete her or his degree within four years of taking the initial course.

Course Load

An MLS student may attend the MLS Program on a part-time or full-time basis. A part-time MLS student may take up to 6 credit hours per semester. A full-time MLS student must take at least 7 credit hours

per semester. No full-time MLS student may take more than 12 credit hours in a semester without the approval of the Assistant Dean.

Graduate Programs Dismissal Procedures (from Graduate Law Programs Supplement to the Manual of Policies and Procedures of the Capital University Law School)

7 Academic Good Standing

7.1 Requirement

A graduate student must achieve a minimum 2.75 grade point average after attempting 9 credit hours to remain in good academic standing in the Graduate Law Programs.

7.2 Dismissal

When a graduate student fails to achieve and maintain a minimum 2.75 grade point average, the graduate student is dismissed from the Graduate Law Programs. When a graduate student is dismissed, she or he will receive a letter that officially notifies the graduate student of her or his dismissal. The letter of dismissal will advise the graduate student that she or he was the privilege of filing a petition for reinstatement within two weeks with the Assistant Dean. A dismissed graduate student is not eligible to enroll in any courses unless the graduate student receives the approval of the Graduate Law Council following submission of the petition for reinstatement.

7.3 Petition for Reinstatement

If a dismissed graduate student submits a petition for reinstatement, the graduate student must show that the grades received are not an adequate measure of the graduate student's learning or performance. The dismissed graduate student must prove in the petition for reinstatement that:

- A. The academic deficiency was the result of causes other than an ability to study in the Graduate Law Programs;
- B. Such causes were sufficiently substantial to cause poor academic performance;
- C. Such causes were beyond the dismissed graduate student's control or were justifiable;
- D. The causes for the academic deficiency have been fully or substantially resolved or no longer exist; and
- E. Given one more semester of study, there is a reasonable possibility that the dismissed graduate student will be able to attain the required grade point average.

7.4 Review

Upon receipt of a timely petition for reinstatement, the Assistant Dean will circulate the petition to the members of the Graduate Law Council and schedule a meeting to review the petition for reinstatement. Neither the dismissed graduate student nor her or his representatives are permitted to attend the Graduate Law Council meeting. This means the dismissed graduate student must fully and completely explain the reasons for being reinstated in the petition for reinstatement. In its deliberation, the Graduate Law Council considers whether the dismissed graduate student has a realistic chance of achieving academic success upon reinstatement. The factors to be considered by the Graduate Law Council include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. The grade point of the dismissed graduate student when the petition is submitted, including the level of performance the dismissed graduate student must maintain to raise

the grade point average to 2.75, and the number of credit hours attempted when the petition is filed;

B. Reasons given in the petition for poor performance and other matters presented in the dismissed graduate student's petition;

C. The dismissed graduate student's credentials, both currently and upon admission to the Graduate Law Programs;

D. Comments and recommendations of other faculty members; and

E. The level of motivation of the dismissed graduate student.

Following the decision of the Graduate Law Council, the Assistant Dean must promptly notify the dismissed graduate student in writing of the academic decision.

7.5 Limited Appeal

An academic decision of the Graduate Law Council is final. However, the dismissed graduate student may appeal the academic decision to the Dean of the Law School on very limited grounds by submitting a written notice to the Dean within two weeks of the dismissed graduate student receiving notice of the decision of the Graduate Law Council. The review of the Dean is limited to whether the Graduate Law Council violated its own procedures or another Law School or Capital University policy and the dismissed graduate student was prejudiced by such violation. In appealing the academic decision, the dismissed graduate student must clearly state in the written notice of appeal the nature of violation that the dismissed graduate students requests the Dean to review. In reviewing the appeal, the Dean shall confine the review to the written materials submitted by the dismissed graduate student and the Graduate Law Council. If the Dean finds the academic decision of the Graduate Law Council violated its own procedures or another Law School or Capital University policy and finds the dismissed graduate student was prejudiced by such violation, the Dean, in the Dean's discretion, may:

A. Remand the decision to the Graduate Law Council for action consistent with Dean's determination;

B. Reverse or modify the decision; or

C. Make the referral of the matter to another appropriate Law School or Capital University office.

Upon the decision of the Dean with respect to the appeal, the Dean, or the Assistant Dean at the Dean's request, must promptly notify the dismissed graduate student in writing of the Dean's decision.