

DOCTOR OF JURIDICAL SCIENCE

Overview

As the highest degree offered in law, the Doctor of Juridical Science (S.J.D.) program is a three-year, post-LL.M. degree designed for aspiring legal academics, members of the judiciary, and public policymakers as well as for students interested in careers as legal scholars, teaching law inside or outside the United States. The S.J.D. program is designed to prepare graduates with superior scholarly potential to pursue policy work in research institutes, or careers in government service, or the judiciary. Students in the S.J.D. program, are expected to conduct advanced research and produce original scholarship submitted as a scholarly dissertation under the guidance of the internationally renowned faculty at the University of Miami School of Law.

Admission Requirements

Admissions decisions will be made by the Law School's SJD Committee, in consultation with the faculty member who has agreed to serve as the candidate's dissertation adviser.

Applicants to the SJD degree program must have earned a JD degree or an LLM from a U.S. law school or an LLM from another common law country. The SJD Committee may also consider applicants with graduate degrees from institutions outside the common law world and from experienced members of the judiciary, universities, or public service organizations if the applicant's experience indicates likely success in the SJD program.

Applicants will be required to submit a detailed statement of purpose or preliminary dissertation proposal, published work or a writing sample of publishable quality, transcripts, at least two academic or professional letters of recommendation, and a complete CV. Applicants will not be admitted to the program unless the SJD Committee finds an appropriate Law School faculty member who is willing to serve as dissertation supervisor.

Applicants must also demonstrate excellent English writing skills and a thorough understanding of the subject matter discussed in the dissertation proposal. In most cases, an interview by phone or web conferencing will be required of applicants, depending on their experience and training.

Subject to approval of the SJD Director, Miami Law's LLM students may be eligible to apply to the SJD during their first semester at Miami Law. If admitted, students may be able to reduce by one semester the duration of their SJD residency period and graduate a semester earlier if all other graduation requirements have been satisfied.

Curriculum Requirements

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Required SJD Seminar		6
Students will take two semesters of SJD Seminar (new course)		
Upper-Level Law Electives		12
Students will design their own course of study with advisor approval		
Dissertation Research and Writing		12
Total Credit Hours		30

Sample Plan of Study

All first-year students will be enrolled in the SJD Seminar. Additional upper level law courses may be required by the faculty supervisor. In subsequent years, students will be enrolled in the Dissertation Research and Writing course.

Year One		Credit Hours
First Semester		
SJD Seminar		3
Upper-Level Law Elective		3
Upper-Level Law Elective		3
Credit Hours		9
Second Semester		
SJD Seminar		3
Upper-Level Law Elective		3
Upper-Level Law Elective		3
Credit Hours		9

Year Two	
First Semester	
Dissertation Research and Writing I	6
Credit Hours	6
Second Semester	
Dissertation Research and Writing I	6
Credit Hours	6
Year Three	
First Semester	
Dissertation Research and Writing II	1
Credit Hours	1
Second Semester	
Dissertation Research and Writing II	1
Credit Hours	1
Total Credit Hours	32

Mission

The mission of the SJD is to advance legal scholarship by producing graduates who have contributed significantly to their chosen area of study, and who are prepared to become leaders in the international academic, judicial and public service communities.

Goals

The SJD Program seeks to:

- Recruit outstanding international candidates with distinguished prior academic records in law who are seeking to pursue careers as legal scholars, members of the judiciary and public servants.
- Offer high quality instruction and support enabling students to produce a scholarly dissertation that constitutes an outstanding contribution to legal scholarship.
- Contribute to and enrich the School of Law's intellectual life.
- Further the School of Law's mission to provide international lawyers and scholars the tools that they need to advance their careers.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who complete the SJD program will be able to:

- Conduct a literature and legal review in the chosen subfield of law and identify a topic on which the student can make a substantial and original contribution to the existing body of knowledge and legal analysis, refine the research topic in light of comments from faculty advisers and the results of the student's initial literature and legal review, and develop an effective research methodology and research plan.
- Conduct original research on the student's topic and related legal issues, and write a dissertation of publishable quality that makes an original and substantial contribution to legal scholarship in the student's field.