

Juris Master: Preparation for a Career in Policy Analysis (1999 - 2004*)

In October 2004, the law faculty voted that the Juris Master program be allowed to go dormant.

Created in 1999, the Juris Master degree is a nontraditional program that provides students with a rigorous and pragmatic alternative to traditional public policy degrees. The program gives students the skills they need to deal effectively with the legal and economic dimensions of policy issues through extensive training in fundamentals of American law coupled with advanced work in theoretical and quantitative economic analysis. This specialized training enables students to become effective advocates and analysts of existing and proposed policy initiatives.

This innovative degree is a two-year, part-time evening program requiring completion of 34 to 36 credit hours of course work, including 9 to 11 hours of electives. Juris Master students are admitted to, and attend courses at, George Mason's top-tier School of Law, where they learn to analyze case law, statutes, and regulations from a distinguished faculty, including the winner of the 2002 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, Vernon Smith. They learn how to identify pressing legal issues and to place those issues in the context of American jurisprudence and administrative procedure. Students in the Juris Master program put their intellectual training into operation in a series of writing and research courses specially designed to meet their needs. Further, students take a variety of economics and quantitative courses to enlarge their understanding of the relationship between the market process and the political process. Given the law school's location near our nation's capital, Juris Master students also enjoy the opportunity to meet with and learn from top policy analysts and government officials.

This intensive program provides future policy makers with a depth of training in law and economics that prepares them for leadership roles inside and outside government service. A significant number of Juris Master students work for the government on Capitol Hill or in federal agencies and departments. Other students come from trade associations, lobbying firms, and think tanks.

The program is highly selective. Admission is based on academic records, an acceptable score on the LSAT and/or general GRE, letters of recommendation, and statement of purpose.

The primary goal of the Juris Master program is to prepare students for employment as professional policy analysts by providing them with sophisticated legal and economic analytic tools comparable to those possessed by the country's best-trained lawyers. A wide variety of organizations require analysts with these skills in and around the federal government in Washington, D.C., as well as elsewhere in the nation.

Examples of possible employers for graduates of the J.M. program include:

- Federal and state executive agencies
- Legislative offices
- Consulting and lobbying firms
- Corporate and government relations offices
- Trade associations and labor organizations
- Think tanks
- Political party organizations

Juris Master: Program and Curriculum (1999 - 2004)

The Juris Master program is a two-year, part-time evening program designed to train students who are interested in public policy and advocacy in law and economics. Like our J.D. students, J.M. students learn the fundamentals of American law. They will learn how American law has evolved over time, the methods of legal reasoning that have characterized that evolution, and the techniques of legal research necessary to find and explore the law. They will also learn how to use economic reasoning and quantitative methods to explain and critique law and policy.

Specific skills and knowledge that students will gain include:

- The ability to read, understand, and analyze case law, statutes, and regulations.
- An understanding of the relationship between law and economics.
- The ability to spot legal issues and frame these issues using economic principles and methods.
- Knowledge of the quantitative methods used in legal and economic analysis.
- Technological research tools for policy analysis.
- Knowledge of the legislative, administrative, and judicial processes and their roles in policy development.
- An in-depth knowledge of legal and economic issues relating to a field of professional interest, gained through electives.
- Legal and economic writing skills.

A Part-Time Program

The Juris Master program is taught on a part-time basis, with classes meeting in the evening at George Mason's Arlington Campus (although some electives may be offered only during the day or only at the Fairfax Campus). Classes are scheduled between 6 and 10 p.m., Monday through Friday. Some research sessions, and other special events may be scheduled on Saturdays.

An Innovative Curriculum

Since its creation, the law school has been at the forefront of curricular innovation, providing its students with three core competencies that are often neglected at more traditional institutions: the application of economic tools and methods to legal questions and issues, intensive development of legal research and writing skills, and specialized preparation for a law-related career. This curriculum gives George Mason's students correspondingly unique advantages in today's competitive employment market. Juris Master students can expect to benefit from a program designed to equip graduates with a unique and highly sought-after set of skills that will prepare them for success in the fields of policy analysis and advocacy.

The J.M. program requires 34 to 36 credit hours to complete, depending upon the electives a student chooses, and the standard time to finish the degree is two years. Students take from six to ten credit hours each semester for four to six semesters. This is a lighter load than a part-time law student's, but heavier than a typical part-time graduate student's normal course load.

Courses required for the Juris Master degree are listed below in **their recommended sequence**.

YEAR 1	Credit Hours
First Semester	
Economic Foundations of Legal Studies	3
Torts I	3
Contracts I	3
Legal and Economic Research I	2
Second Semester	
Statistics for Lawyers and Policy Analysts	2
Law Elective(s)	2-4

Economics Elective(s)	2-4
Legal and Economic Research II	2
Total Hours First Year	19-22
YEAR 2	
Third Semester	
Perspectives on Regulation	2
Economics Elective	2-3
Law Elective(s)	2-4
Fourth Semester	
Administrative Law	3
Legislation	2
Law or Economics Elective(s)	2-4
Seminar ¹	2-3
Total Hours Second Year	15-21

With the exception of some advanced courses with extensive prerequisites, all courses in the law school and 600-level and above courses in the Economics Department will be available as electives, allowing students to focus their studies in an area of particular professional interest.

1. Student's selection of a seminar is subject to approval by the J.M. program director.

Last updated: 2004