SMU’S JURIS DOCTOR LAW DEGREE

A legal education that rises to the challenges of the 21st century
Message From The Dean

The SMU Doctor of Jurisprudence (JD) programme was introduced in 2009 as an additional route for those who aspire to become qualified persons for the purpose of entry into the Singapore legal profession, in addition to the traditional LLB programme.

The UK model of modern legal education, which has been followed in Singapore, involves teaching law at the undergraduate level at universities. On the other hand, the North American model, which has been followed to a large extent in countries like Australia, Japan and South Korea, law is studied as a postgraduate degree, after the completion of an undergraduate degree in some other discipline.

The Doctor of Jurisprudence (JD) programme in SMU brought to Singapore the North American model of legal education. The JD programme is targeted at those who already have a degree in another discipline or a law degree from another jurisdiction. It shares the core law content of the LLB programme in SMU, and provides opportunities for internship.

For those seeking a change of career, and those who want to get qualified to practise law in Singapore, the SMU JD programme can provide exciting opportunities in Singapore as its legal services sector grows..

Professor Yeo Tiong Min
Yong Pung How Professor of Law
Dean, School of Law
Message From The Programme Director

The School of Law at Singapore Management University is building a strong reputation in offering a legal education that is responsive to the challenges of the 21st century. An innovative curriculum combined with creative, interactive teaching has shaped undergraduate law teaching since the Law School’s inception in 2007. In 2009, the School embarked on a new venture: offering graduate law studies to students who have undergraduate degrees in other disciplines and to students who have studied law in civil law countries and in other jurisdictions. Our goal is to prepare students for a diverse range of roles in the legal profession.

The Juris Doctor (J.D.) programme provides graduate students with an opportunity to be part of SMU’s exciting programme in legal education. J.D. students add experience and diversity to the classroom and they will add experience and diversity to Singapore’s legal profession.

The SMU School of Law emphasises the teaching of law in context (particularly the context of business), as well as interactive teaching in which students develop strong analytical, problem-solving, policy-analysis, and comparative law skills so important to today’s legal professions.

J.D. students bring interdisciplinary insights to the classroom - contributing knowledge and analytical perspectives from a variety of fields of study. Given the high quality of our undergraduate students and the depth of background of our J.D. students, strong synergies are developing between the LL.B. and J.D. programmes.

Our students will end up in, and feel at home in, a variety of roles within the profession: private practice, government service, in-house counsel in corporations, international and regional organisations and non-governmental organisations, law teaching and others. We expect our J.D. students and LL.B. students to add considerable value to the legal profession and society.

We encourage and welcome you to be a part of this.

David Smith,
B.A., J.D. Harvard Law School
Professor of Law (Practice)
J.D. Programme Director
The Programme

In August 2006, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Law appointed The Honourable Justice V.K. Rajah to chair a committee to undertake a comprehensive review of the legal services sector. The committee issued the "Report of the Committee to Develop the Singapore Legal Sector" in September 2007. The report recommended, amongst other things, diversifying law schools' admission criteria to give more opportunity for admission to mature and second career students who manifest an aptitude and passion for the law. In 2009, SMU launched the J.D. programme.

The J.D. Programme targets:

- Local non-law graduates who hold university degrees in other disciplines;
- Foreign non-law graduates who hold university degrees in other disciplines;
- Foreign law graduates from law schools in civil law countries;
- Foreign law graduates from other non-gazetted universities in the common law countries.

TEACHING APPROACH

The J.D. programme bears SMU's hallmarks of holistic learning and active seminar-style teaching. Students engage in a substantial amount of pre-class preparatory reading and thinking, and participate actively in class discussion. Our experience is that the interactive/participative learning environment at the School of Law helps develop confidence and analytical and presentation skills — attributes which are essential for excelling in the legal and corporate worlds.

Classes are kept small and a multi-faceted approach to course assessment is adopted. This includes class participation, research papers, oral presentations, and group work. The end-of-term written examination (usually open book) typically accounts for a maximum of 50% of the final grade in a course. A significant amount of time is devoted to research papers, group work and presentations.

Occasionally lawyers from practice, government and the judiciary are invited to participate in classroom teaching. This provides our students with the opportunity to integrate practical expertise with theory and doctrine.

J.D. CURRICULUM

SMU's J.D. curriculum is endorsed by Singapore's Board of Legal Education and the Ministry of Law. It comprises a mix of compulsory law courses and law electives. A law internship and community service are also required.

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<th>Law Core (19 Credit Units)</th>
<th>Law Electives (6 Credit Units)</th>
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<td>Internship and Community Service</td>
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The J.D. programme follows the same academic calendar/grading scheme as the LL.B. programme. (The academic year begins in mid-August). Students are expected to complete the programme within 3 years of full-time study.

The programme may be accelerated in some cases for completion within 2 to 2.5 years subject to the approval of the J.D. Committee, which will take into consideration first term examination grades.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Students are required to complete a total of 25 Credit Units (CU) of law courses (each course carries 1 Credit Unit unless stated otherwise), a minimum 6-weeks internship programme, and 50 hours of community service before graduation.
A. Illustrative 3-year Programme (cu = course unit)

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<tr>
<th>YEAR 1</th>
<th>YEAR 2</th>
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<td><strong>TERM 1: AUG - DEC</strong></td>
<td><strong>TERM 2: JAN - APR</strong></td>
<td><strong>TERM 2: JAN - APR</strong></td>
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<td>• Contract Law 1</td>
<td>• Contract Law 2</td>
<td>• Law Elective 4</td>
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<td>• Criminal Law (1.5 cu)</td>
<td>• Law of Torts (1.5 cu)</td>
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<td>• Legal Research Writing</td>
<td>• Law of Business Organisation</td>
<td>• Law Elective 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Legal System, Legal Method &amp; Analysis</td>
<td>• Comparative Legal Systems</td>
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Internships & Community Service

Students are required to undertake a minimum 6-weeks compulsory internship with either:

A law firm, or
The legal department of a Government-linked Corporation/Multi-national Corporation, or
A public sector regulatory body

The internship will acquaint the student with the practical workings of the legal system and the realities of law practice in the private and public sectors. The internship may also have an overseas component, as is the case of the KhattarWong Solicitors’ Regional Training Programme.

Students also perform 50 hours of community service attachment at a Voluntary Welfare Organisation (VWO) or an organisation involved in pro-bono and legal aid work.

For the latest list of law firms and organisations that the Law School partners with, please refer to www.law.smu.edu.sg/gates/students/internship.asp

The J.D.s

Drawn from various educational and professional backgrounds, our J.D. students include recent university graduates and those with several years of working experience. J.D. classes typically possess a wide range of expertise across discipline; from accounting, biomedical science, economics, engineering, education, the public sector and others. Students benefit from sharing their knowledge and experience. Class discussion and sharing of perspectives is encouraged by our seminar-style teaching.

Legal Practice

Students will qualify for legal practice in Singapore (admitted as Advocate and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Singapore) if they attain a GPA of at least 3.00 in the courses leading to the J.D. degree, and have completed the five-months Part B of the Singapore Bar Examinations and a Practice Training Period with a law firm (minimum six months).

Students graduating from SMU in December are allowed to undertake the Training Contract before the Part B Preparatory Course.
To be considered for admission to the J.D. programme, an applicant must have a Cum Laude or Second Class Upper Honours degree qualification, or an equivalent level of achievement.

INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

An international applicant whose undergraduate programme of studies was not in English is required to sit for the TOEFL or IELTS English language test. With effect for 2013 admissions the minimum TOEFL score and IELTS band are as follows:

- TOEFL (Paper-based): 600*
- TOEFL (Internet-based): 100
- IELTS: Overall band 7

*Applicants must score at least 60 in each of the sub-sections and at least 5.0 in the written English test. Scores that are more than 2 years old will not be accepted. SMU’s institution code for TOEFL is 9014.

An applicant who received a bachelor’s degree from a university where English is NOT the sole language of instruction but received a Master’s or Ph.D. degree from a university programme where English was the sole language of instruction are also strongly advised, though not required, to submit TOEFL or IELTS scores as part of their application process.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applications should be made online at www.law.smu.edu.sg/jd/programme/online_application.asp

Hard copies of the supporting documents should be posted to the J.D. Programme Office in order for the applications to be valid.

Supporting documents include:

- Identification Documents
- Curriculum Vitae
- Degree Certificate
- TOEFL / IELTS*
- Transcripts
- Written essays (2)
- Recommendation forms (2)

*If your undergraduate or graduate education was not in English

Shortlisted applicants will be required to undergo an interview and write a brief essay on an assigned topic.

TUITION FEES

For details on fees and payment, please refer to www.law.smu.edu.sg/jd/programme/admissions_and_fees.asp

DEADLINES

For application deadlines, please refer to www.law.smu.edu.sg/jd/programme/online_application.asp

FAQ

My undergraduate qualification is less than your required 2nd class upper honours, but I have a Masters degree and good work experience. Can I apply?

We are looking for outstanding candidates who meet our admissions criteria of either a cum laude or a 2nd class upper honours. However, candidates with significant achievement such as having an outstanding further degree and/or outstanding work experience that could contribute to the class and legal profession will be considered by the Admissions Committee.

I have a 2nd class upper honours degree done externally. Am I eligible to apply for the J.D. programme?

A candidate with a 2nd class upper honours in an external degree will be considered if he or she has a record of achievement in professional work.

Will J.D. students take classes with LL.B. students?

Apart from electives, J.D. classes will usually not be held with the undergraduates.

I have taken a law degree/law modules before. Can I be exempted from certain courses in the J.D. programme?

Generally, exemptions will not be granted. However, an SMU graduate who has completed an SMU Law School module with a prefix “LAW” in his or her undergraduate SMU degree studies may be exempted from the course, subject to approval by the School.

Under what circumstances would a student be allowed to complete the programme in 2 years?

Acceleration of the programme is subject to the student’s grades in the first term and the school’s advice and approval. A student will also need to consider his or her ability to manage an increased load every term, including the vacation period. Students must also be mindful of the required overall GPA. To qualify for practice, a minimum GPA of 3.00 is needed.

Will the J.D. programme be offered as a part-time or evening programme?

At the moment we are not scheduling a part-time or evening programme.

In which countries will graduates of this programme be able to practise?

A graduate of the SMU J.D. programme will be able to practise in Singapore after completing the requirements of practical training and exam for the Singapore bar. Admission to other bars (legal professions) depends on the requirements of each jurisdiction, just as with the LL.B. degree.

One would have to look at the particular bar entry requirements for a particular country or state. In Canada and the U.S., admission to the bar is governed by each province or state. Since U.S. law schools and many Canadian law schools offer J.D. degree programmes, a J.D. degree may be treated more favourably than an LL.B. degree in bar admissions. But there may still be some additional course requirements (such as taking a local property law or constitutional law course). The local bar websites of each jurisdiction will provide specific details.

Are scholarships and financial aid available?

For more information, please refer to www.law.smu.edu.sg/jd/scholarships&awards.asp