

Faculty of Law

Summary of Degree Programs

Degrees Offered

UNDERGRADUATE

LLB

GRADUATE

LLM

LLB/MBA*

LLB/MEDes**

* Combined Degree with the Haskayne School of Business

** Combined Degree with the Faculty of Environmental Design

Undergraduate

The Bachelor of Laws program comprises three years of full-time study or six years of part-time study, each divided into two sessions of 13 weeks. The program is designed to satisfy the requirements of the Law Societies of common law Canada for admission to the respective Bars.

Combined Degree Programs

The Faculty of Law offers combined degree programs with the Haskayne School of Business, a combined LLB/MBA program, and the Faculty of Environmental Design, a combined LLB/MEDes program. Students wishing to obtain either combined degree must be admitted to each Faculty through the ordinary admissions process of each Faculty. Successful applicants may then apply to the combined LLB/MBA or LLB/MEDes Combined Degree Committee which consists of members of the academic staff of both Faculties. The Combined Degree Committee makes decisions on who will be admitted into the combined degree programs. Each combined degree program is a four year program.

Graduate

The Faculty of Law offers graduate work leading to a thesis-based LLM degree. The graduate program is confined to the areas of natural resources, energy and environmental law. See the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar for further details.

Faculty Information

Contact Information

Location: Murray Fraser Hall Room 4380A

Student Information: (403) 220-8154

Faculty number: (403) 220-7222

E-mail address: law@ucalgary.ca

Web page URL: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/faculties/LAW/>

Introduction

The developing complexity of Canadian society, as reflected in social, economic and political problems, has led to a correspondingly complicated pattern of law and legal institutions. Increasingly, especially in the present century, law has come to be regarded as both the facilitator and the regulator of human development. As a consequence, there has been a steady growth in the number both of laws governing society and of institutions which develop and apply law. Moreover, the inherent complexity of human problems addressed by the law has produced progressively closer interaction between law as a means of social progress and control and other human systems which also seek and stress those ends.

Pattern

The program of legal education developed at Calgary seeks to respond in a sensitive and balanced way to the development of law and legal institutions in a rapidly changing society in which the creativity, imagination and human qualities of the lawyer and legally trained person are likely to be challenged to the full. While recognizing that the study of law and legal institutions as part of our social, political and cultural heritage is valuable in itself, the program is directed to preparing individuals for a variety of roles within the legal system.

Pre-Law

There are no set pre-law requirements. The Law School recognizes that attracting students into the Law School from a variety of disciplines makes for an enriched climate within the school. The modern law school will attract students not only from the humanities and the social sciences but also from the fields of pure and applied science, from social work, from environmental studies, from education, and from business. Notwithstanding the lack of formal prerequisites, it is strongly recommended that students take several courses at university which stress the appropriate and creative use of the English language. In any legal endeavour, the ability to articulate an argument orally, and in writing is of vital importance. Also worthy of consideration are courses which give students an opportunity to develop and test their powers of analysis and to employ both information and judgement in comprehending and solving complex problems of human choice. For students who desire to develop a program which will give them some background in the social, historical, political, philosophical and economic milieu in which law operates, a series of courses are available at the University of Calgary in both the humanities and social sciences which provide these perspectives. The disciplines involved include Sociology, Anthropology, History, Political Science, Philosophy, Psychology, Economics, Religious Studies, and Greek and Roman Studies.

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The Law Program

The overriding purpose of the program for the LLB degree is to provide a sound basis for the intellectual, human and professional development of the legally trained person throughout that person's career lifetime. The content and structure of the program recognizes that the learning of the law and its application is a life-long process. The Faculty of Law has identified the following minimum standard of competence for our graduates: A graduate must be able to find and use relevant legal principles to identify issues, formulate an argument, advocate a position, plan transactions and resolve problems in a professionally responsible manner. There are many components to this standard:

- The student must be able to find relevant legal principles. This means that he/she must have knowledge of a critical mass of substantive law, must be able to retrieve legal information and must possess the analytical ability to distil the particular legal principle from its context, while still understanding the importance of that context.
- The use of the law connotes the ability to make assessments of relevance and cogency. Using the law involves a number of skills which are developed further below.
- Identifying the issues requires an overall understanding of the subject matter and an appreciation that the formulation of the question is a crucial aspect of problem-solving.
- In formulating an argument, the student must be able to see the reasons both for and against the application of existing principles to a new fact situation and to develop those reasons using a persuasive style. This requires clarity, organization and well developed communication skills as well as an understanding of the importance of policy and the changing values of society.
- Advocating a position is a broader concept than appellate argumentation in an adversarial context. It includes the ability to put forward, plan and protect a client's needs in a solicitor's practice and the ability to use the law in formulating arguments relating to broader interests than those of an individual client.
- Resolving problems and planning transactions require many different skills and styles, and the knowledge of the possibilities and how to use them responsibly are necessary elements in being able to perform these functions.

Opportunities

One of the consequences of these trends is an increasing demand for the services of lawyers and legally trained people in a wide variety of social roles. Traditionally, with minor exceptions, law was seen as the preserve of the general

private practitioner. Today private practice is only one of the ways in which lawyers or legally trained persons can apply their expertise and talents. The services of lawyers and legally trained persons are sought by government as advocates, solicitors, drafters, legal advisors, diplomats and policy-makers; by industry and business as counsel, executives and managers; and by public interest and community groups as staff lawyers, advocates and community organizers. As in the past, a high percentage of legislators are lawyers by background. Moreover, almost all our judges were previously members of the legal profession. In addition to the proliferation of the demand for lawyers and legally trained individuals in this variety of roles, the growth of the law into previously unregulated spheres of human activity has also expanded the need for private practitioners. Furthermore, within the private sector of the legal profession, there has been a distinct movement from general practice to specialization, in some instances involving totally new areas of the law. Administrative law, commercial law, company law, family law, criminal law, insurance law, resource law, labour law, taxation and land use planning are just some of the areas in which some lawyers are now effectively engaged as specialists.

Within private practice, lawyers perform a wide range of functions. They may be advocates, drafters, planners, negotiators, or arbitrators. There are signs, too, that both the general public and the legal profession are recognizing more fully the facultative qualities of law and the need for sound planning of the legal affairs of clients. This notion of the preventive practice of law is also being applied to a broader range of clients than traditionally enjoyed the benefits of quality legal service. Increasingly, a premium is set upon the services of lawyers who can use their creative talents and knowledge effectively to plan the affairs of their clients and prevent future conflicts.

Admissions

Admission to the practice of law in the common law provinces of Canada is governed by the several Law Societies according to statute or regulation, as the case may be. In Alberta, the admission requirements are set out in the Legal Professions Act. At present, admission to the Bar of Alberta normally requires two years or the equivalent of two years, of a full program of studies leading to a degree at a university in Alberta or an acceptable equivalent, a law degree from a university in Alberta or its equivalent, one year in articles in the province and successful completion of the Bar exams. For practical purposes, pre-law work in any Canadian university is considered to be the equivalent of university work in Alberta. Pre-law work in a university outside Canada is assessed on the basis of whether the University of Calgary recognizes the academic credentials as equivalent to those at Calgary. These requirements are currently under review.

Subject to the agreement of the Benchers of the Law Society of Alberta, articles may be served outside the normal environment of the private firm. For example, a student might serve a period of his/her articles in the legal department of a corporation, in legal service in a government department, or in clerkship to a judge.

The requirements for admission to most other common law Bars in Canada are similar, although there exists some variations in the pre-law requirements and in the time required for

articles and Bar Admission Course. Students who intend to seek positions in practice in other provinces are advised to contact the secretary of the Law Society of the province in question to determine the requirements in force.

Requirements

The present educational prerequisite for admission to Law School at the University of Calgary is successful completion of two years, or the equivalent of two years, of a full program of studies leading to a degree at a university in Alberta or its equivalent. Courses to be considered must be completed prior to January 1 in the year in which the application is made. These requirements, which are currently under review, apply to all applicants including aboriginal applicants. As a practical matter, very few applicants who do not already possess a degree are admitted to the Faculty of Law at the University of Calgary. Most have already demonstrated academic competence, before presenting themselves as candidates to the Law Faculty, by successfully completing one or more degree programs.

In evaluating applications, so as to select the 66 or so most promising students each year, the Admissions Committee looks at a number of factors. Academic record, performance on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), evidence of maturity, extra curricular activities, work experience, and community involvement are considered. There is no formal weighting of the factors; individual candidates often compensate for weakness in one area by substantial strengths in others. Some applicants may be required to attend an interview, and should therefore be prepared to travel to Calgary at their own expense, sometimes on short notice.

Persons with disabilities who meet the above criteria are encouraged to apply, and once admitted the Faculty will take steps to ensure that the disability will not disadvantage students in evaluation exercises.

Prospective applicants are urged to be realistic about their chances for admission. Only 70 out of 800 candidates are admitted each year. A typical first-year class has an average grade point average of 3.5 (on the University of Calgary system). The average age of the entering classes has remained around 29 years of age and ranges from those in their early 20s to those in their mid to late 40s.

The Law School Admission Test

All students seeking admission to the Faculty of Law are required to take the Law School Admission Test. The test is given in February, June, October and December. However, as it may not be given at every testing centre on each occasion, applicants should check carefully the dates on which the test will be administered at the centre which is most convenient for them. Information concerning dates and registration materials for the test may be obtained from the Admission Office of the Faculty of Law.

An application to write the LSAT together with the appropriate fee should be sent to:

Law School Admission Services,
P.O. Box 2000,
Newtown, Pennsylvania,
U.S.A. 18940

within the time stipulated in the LSAT brochure.

Any applicant seeking admission to the Faculty of Law, University of Calgary, must write the LSAT prior to January 1 in the year in which the application is made. Only those applicants who have done so will be given consideration. Applicants who cannot afford the LSAT test writing fee may apply to the Chair of the Admissions Committee on the prescribed form for a Fee Waiver. Proof of the applicant's financial position for the previous three years will be required.

Procedures

The deadline for receipt of fully completed application forms is February 1. This is a firm deadline. There are no exceptions. All supporting documentation must be completed by May 1. This includes an LSAT score, certified transcripts from all post-secondary educational institutions attended, and three letters of reference. Two should be academic references if possible. An explanation must be given if fewer than two of the references are academic.

Applications that lack any supporting documentation on May 1 will be rejected. All supporting documentation must come directly from the source and not be sent by the applicant. Students who are applying after two years of study must have completed two full years by January 1 of the year in which they apply.

The Admissions Committee will begin its review of applications for the upcoming year in February. No application file will be reviewed until complete. Therefore, it is to the applicant's advantage to have a completed file as soon as possible. Those applicants being interviewed will be contacted by phone. Each applicant will be notified by letter only, as to whether or not they have been admitted or have had their application deferred for a final decision later in the summer. Successful applicants in all categories (ordinary, part time, transfer, and letter of permission) will be required to confirm, within a specified time period, their acceptance of an offer by sending a non-refundable \$200.00 deposit, \$100.00 of which will be applied to partial payment of their tuition upon registration in August.

Administration

Faculty Administrative Officers

Dean

P. Hughes

Associate Dean

E. E. Dais

Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies

J. Watson Hamilton

For more information please consult the 2002/2004 Faculty of Law print Calendar, or visit the Faculty of Law Calendar website at: www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/faculties/LAW/