Article V. Doctor of Juridical Science (S.J.D.) Program

The Academic Regulations for the J.D. Program (with the exception of the Ulu Lehua Scholars and Evening Part Time Program requirements) apply to S.J.D. students. In the event of a conflict, the Supplement Academic Regulations for the S.J.D. Program shall control.

Section 5.01 Program of Study

(a) The Doctor of Juridical Science (S.J.D.) degree is an advanced legal degree with a focus on original research and scholarship under faculty supervision. Successful candidates for the degree must produce a work of publishable scholarship that makes a unique contribution to the legal scholarly literature. A student enrolled in the Program must have earned a J.D. degree from an American law school or an LL.M degree from the U.S. or another common law country after earning his or her first law degree.

Section 5.02 Requirements for the Doctor of Juridical Science (S.J.D.) Degree

(a) S.J.D. faculty advisor.

a. A full member of the law faculty must consent to act as an S.J.D. faculty advisor at the time of the student’s admission to the Program. The S.J.D. committee will seek an advisor based on the applicant’s area of interest and, if no suitable advisor is available, admission will be declined.

b. Dissertation advisors will review the progress of each student at the end of each semester and will update the student’s file.

c. At the end of each academic year, the S.J.D. faculty advisor will report to the S.J.D. committee on the progress of each student towards completion of the dissertation.

d. In the event an S.J.D. faculty advisor determines that she or he is no longer able to advise the candidate, the faculty advisor shall notify the S.J.D. committee at least six months in advance and the committee will designate a new S.J.D. faculty advisor who is also approved by the student. If a new faculty advisor is not available or approved, the S.J.D. candidate should withdraw from the program and request reimbursement of tuition for the semester during which no advisor is designated.

(b) A minimum of one year in residence enrollment.

a. A student must be in residence during the first year of the S.J.D. Program for at least two academic semesters. After completing the first-year S.J.D. coursework and submitting the dissertation proposal, the student may remain in residence or may request permission to continue studies remotely. A student who wishes to study remotely must seek written permission from the S.J.D. faculty advisor and the Law Registrar at least eight weeks in advance of the beginning of the proposed remote semester.

(c) Satisfactory completion of the first-year S.J.D. Seminar and directed research courses.

a. A student must enroll in the S.J.D. Seminar and in directed research courses during the first year. An S.J.D. student is expected to submit a successful proposal and outline of the dissertation at the end of the first year. Under extraordinary circumstances and with
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prior written permission of the S.J.D. Program Director, a student may petition to extend the deadline for the proposal to the end of the summer session.

(d) A minimum of 16 credit hours earned during the first year.

a. An S.J.D. student must enroll in 8 credit hours each semester during the student’s first year in the Program. A student who wishes to enroll in more or less than 8 credits per semester must have the written permission of the S.J.D. faculty advisor. S.J.D. students will be graded on an A-F basis in each course taken for credit. The student must receive a passing grade in all courses.

b. To be considered “Full Time” for University enrollment purposes, an S.J.D. student must register for at least 8 credits each academic semester. Withdrawal from a course prior to the completion of a semester that causes the student to fall below 8 credits will result in failure to be considered “full time” and may affect visa eligibility.

c. With the exception of certain limited-enrollment courses, an S.J.D. student may enroll in all courses offered at the Law School, subject to the approval of the S.J.D. faculty advisor. The focus of the S.J.D. degree is research toward a doctoral dissertation, thus a student is discouraged from enrolling in heavy course loads.

d. With the approval of the S.J.D. faculty advisor, a student may enroll in no more than three credits per semester in classes within other units of the University of Hawai‘i. Courses outside the Law School do not count toward the S.J.D. requirements and should be taken on a credit, no credit basis.

(e) Grade point average requirement

a. A S.J.D. student must maintain a grade point average of 3.0 or higher to maintain good academic standing. Grades in courses outside the Law School will not count in calculating the grade point average.

(f) A minimum of two semesters of LSJD 500 Dissertation course.

a. After completing the required first-year curriculum, students must enroll in the LSJD 500 SJD Dissertation course each semester, for no less than two semesters, until completion of the degree. This one-credit dissertation course meets University requirements for full-time enrollment. Students may enroll in additional courses at the Law School with written permission of the S.J.D. faculty advisor.

(g) Successful completion of the dissertation of publishable quality.

a. The student must successfully complete a dissertation of publishable quality and must be approved by the S.J.D. advisor and committee.

(h) A minimum of 18 but not more than 27 credit hours in total.

a. Research and completion of the dissertation is the core of the S.J.D. degree. Unlike other law programs, the course work will not be the key determining factor for the
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successful completion of the program. The goal of the program is to support S.J.D.
students to finish their dissertations as early as possible.

(i) All outstanding obligations to the Law School and/or the University, such as emergency
student loans, keys, parking fines, and borrowed library books must be satisfied before
graduation.

Section 5.03 Formation of the S.J.D. dissertation committee.

(a) A S.J.D. student must initiate the formation of the dissertation committee in the spring semester
of the first year by making a written request to an S.J.D. faculty advisor. The dissertation
committee must be comprised of the S.J.D. faculty advisor and one other full member of the law
faculty. Under special circumstances, the second member may be from a non-law University of
Hawai‘i department in the field related to the dissertation topic, subject to the approval of the
S.J.D. faculty advisor.

(b) The dissertation committee should be formed before the start of the second year; the deadline
may be extended at the discretion of the faculty advisor.

(c) Students are responsible for confirming the availability and agreement of faculty members to
serve on the dissertation committee.

Section 5.04 Term for completion of Program

(a) The expected length of the Program is three, and no less than two, years. An S.J.D. student will
have a maximum of five years to submit a dissertation and apply for a degree, after which the
student must petition to be reinstated and to submit a completed dissertation.

Section 5.05 Non-academic commitments

(a) While in residence, an S.J.D. student will be expected to concentrate on the student’s own
research and writing and will not be permitted to serve as a research or teaching assistant to Law
School faculty members or programs, or to participate in for-credit curricular activities such as
moot court or law journals.

Section 5.06 Exams

(a) S.J.D. students will not be ranked.

(b) “No Credit” grades shall not count toward full-time status requirements and shall not count in
the credit hours required for graduation.

(c) If the student's instruction in the home country was not in English and the student has
previously studied in the United States or another English-speaking country for less than two
years, extra time may be granted for the completion of an in-class exam and a dictionary may be
used for the first year of study at the Law School, in accordance with the exam procedures
established by the Law Registrar or Associate Dean for Student Services.
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Law School S.J.D. Student Learning Outcomes

The William S. Richardson School of Law S.J.D. degree complies with American Bar Association standards. It is an advanced research degree in law and its student learning outcomes relate to research results, so that student progress in research and writing of the dissertation may be readily gauged.

The S.J.D. Student Learning Outcomes are:

1. To conduct a literature and legal review in the student’s chosen subfield of law and to identify a topic on which s/he can make a substantial and original contribution to the existing body of knowledge and legal analysis;

2. To refine the research topic in light of comments from faculty advisors and from the results of the student’s initial literature and legal review;

3. To develop an effective research methodology and research plan;

4. To conduct original research on the student’s topic and related legal issues; and

5. To write a dissertation of publishable quality that makes an original and substantial contribution to legal scholarship in the student’s field.