



## Syracuse University College of Law

### *Joint Degree Programs*

Syracuse University College of Law students who desire a greater degree of specialization have a wide range of interdisciplinary opportunities from which to select. In a joint degree program, a student may pursue a J.D. and a related master's or doctoral degree concurrently. The joint degree programs are structured so students can earn both degrees in substantially less time than would be required to earn each degree separately. Students enrolled in a joint degree program must complete their first year of study in the College of Law. Students must apply and be admitted to both programs separately. Because a joint degree program involves reciprocal application of electives, students are not awarded either degree until the requirements for both degrees are completed.

#### **Juris Doctor and Environmental Science and Forestry**

Cooperative arrangements between the College of Law and the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) provide opportunities for interdisciplinary studies which focus on the legal aspects of resource conservation and environmental protection. The College of Law will accept a maximum of 15 credit hours toward the JD degree from courses taken at SUNY ESF if pursuant to an approved joint program. The basis for awarding credit hours is set out in the College of Law *Handbook of Academic Rules*.

The joint Juris Doctor (JD) and Forest and Natural Resources Management (FNRM) Master of Professional Studies (MPS) degree is designed for students interested in legal careers involved with forest, natural, and environmental resources. As human demands on the environment increase, society needs attorneys that understand the economic, demographic, social, and political issues that drive resource use and allocation. Students learn the complexities of managing both resources and people, recognizing that resource and environmental decisions involve value-driven conflicts. The degree provides a comprehensive foundation in forest, natural, and environmental resources issues and an understanding of both biophysical and social science.

Students enrolled in the joint JD/FNRM degree program must earn a minimum of ninety-six (96) credits at both the College of Law and the State University of New York's College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF). The JD normally requires eighty-seven (87) credits, but joint-degree students must take at least seventy-two (72) Law School credits. Students can transfer fifteen (15) credits from ESF to the College of Law. The MPS degree requires thirty (30) credits, a minimum of twenty-four (24) of which must be ESF Courses and six (6) of which may be applied by transfer from coursework at the College of Law.

Students can apply to the joint JD/FNRM degree program at two points: 1) simultaneously, before entering either program, and 2) after completing their fall semester of study at the College of Law. Applicants applying simultaneously must complete a College of Law application and an ESF graduate application. Applicants applying after enrolling at the College of Law must complete a College of Law "Graduate School Internal Admission Application" and ESF graduate application.

The ESF application requires applicants to submit: 1) an ESF application form, 2) at least two letters of recommendations (these can be the same letters the applicant used for admission to law school or different ones), 3) copies of their Law School Admission Test (LSAT) scores, 4) transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate institutions, and, if applying after enrolling in the College of Law, the transcript from their first semester of law school, and 5) a personal statement describing why they are interested in enrolling in the joint JD/MPS degree. Students can direct the College of Law Office of Student Affairs to provide ESF with copies of their law school application's letters of recommendation and LSAT scores. ESF waives its application fee for joint JD/MPS applicants. The application deadline for the Fall semester is February 1<sup>st</sup> of the previous academic year.

Applicants for the joint Law/SUNY ESF program must contact the Office of Student Affairs to begin the College of Law approval process. Students must be approved through both the department of the joint degree program and the College of Law. The approval request is submitted through the Student Services Request Form and must include a comprehensive plan outlining how the student will meet each program's requirements throughout their time at the College of Law.

While the FNRM MPS program features four areas of study, or expertise (<http://www.esf.edu/fnrm/graduate/>), most joint degree students enroll in the Economics, Governance, and Human Dimensions area of study (<http://www.esf.edu/fnrm/graduate/eghd.asp>), since students making satisfactory degree progress can complete the joint JD/MPS degree in the same time frame as the JD. After acceptance in the program, joint degree students meet with their assigned ESF major professor to develop an individualized MPS plan of study. While programs differ, here is a typical program of study:

Year	Semester	Law Credits	ESF Credits and Classes	Total Credits per Semester
First	Fall	16	None	16
	Spring	16	None	16
Second	Fall	10	APM 510: Statistical Analysis (3 credits) <sup>1</sup> 3 Credits of Biophysical Science <sup>2</sup>	16
	Spring	13	FOR 689: Natural Resources Law and Policy (3 credits)	16
Third	Fall	7	FOR 557: Fundamentals of GIS (3 credits) <sup>3</sup>	16
			FOR 692: Capstone in NR Policy and Management (3 credits) <sup>5</sup>	
			FOR 665: Natural Resources Policy (3 credits)	
	Spring	10	FOR 533: Natural Resources Managerial Economics (3 credits) <sup>4</sup> FOR 560: Principles of Management (3 credits) <sup>5</sup>	16
				Total Credits = 96

**Notes:**

1. Students who have successfully completed (a grade of "C" or better) an undergraduate course in statistics do not have to complete this course. However, they must then take another three (3) credit ESF statistics course.
2. Chosen from a list that includes FOR 521: Forest Ecology and Silviculture; FOR 540: Watershed Hydrology; FOR 545: Introduction to Soils; and other introductory biophysical science graduate courses.
3. The MPS degree requires students to complete at least three (3) credits in statistics, quantitative methods, or research methods, beyond the introductory graduate course (APM 510: Statistical Analysis). FOR 557: Fundamentals of Geographic Information Systems satisfies this requirement.
4. Students sometimes substitute FOR 670: Resources and Environmental Economics (fall semester) for FOR 533..
5. FOR 560 and FOR 692 are required FNRM MPS courses.

Students in the JD/MPS program should not try to take too many courses at one time. Usually, students at the College of Law register for fifteen (15) credits per semester. MPS students generally register for twelve (12) credits. Each represents a full-time commitment. For instance, attempting 3 law courses and 3 three-credit MPS courses simultaneously will result in an increased workload.

Students considering the joint degree will find it helpful to contact Dr. Robert Malmshimer ([rwmalmsh@esf.edu](mailto:rwmalmsh@esf.edu) or 315/470-6909), the joint degree's ESF liaison, for more information on the program. ESF's website ([www.esf.edu](http://www.esf.edu)) provides information about graduate study at ESF ([www.esf.edu/graduate](http://www.esf.edu/graduate)). Current students with general questions and inquiries concerning procedures regarding joint degrees should contact the Office of Student Affairs at [lawstudentaffairs@law.syr.edu](mailto:lawstudentaffairs@law.syr.edu); prospective students should contact the Office of Admissions at [admissions@law.syr.edu](mailto:admissions@law.syr.edu).