

# MLS Student Handbook

## 2025-2026

### Academic Requirements

The Academic Policies outlined herein apply to students in the Master of Legal Studies (MLS) on campus and online degree programs only. Students are responsible for reading and following all applicable Seattle University School of Law policies, rules, academic requirements, and regulations including the School of Law's Academic Standards Code and the remaining provisions of the School of Law's Student Handbook. To the extent the MLS policies conflict with other provisions of the School of Law's Academic Standards Code or the School of Law's Student Handbook, the MLS policies control. Where MLS policies are silent, the policies of the School of Law's Academic Standards Code and the School of Law's Student Handbook apply.

Students are responsible for the satisfactory completion of their program of study. To this end, students must work through the Director of Master of Legal Studies to document in writing information and understandings pertaining to academic matters, including any waivers or exceptions.

The enrollment and graduation of each student, the awarding of academic credits, and the granting of any award or degree are strictly subject to the exclusive authority of the School of Law. The School of Law reserves the right to cancel any class that does not meet the required minimum enrollment as determined by the School of Law.

### Graduation Requirements

MLS students must successfully complete a minimum of 30 credits and earn a minimum cumulative grade point average of at least 2.30 to be granted a Master of Legal Studies degree.

### Required Courses

All MLS students must complete the following two foundational courses:

- JURS-600: Intro to American Legal System
- WRIT-601: Legal Analysis, Research, and Writing

### *MLS IN COMPLIANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT*

Students enrolled in the online MLS in Compliance and Risk Management degree program must also complete the following four designated online courses in compliance operations and the Capstone course, with the remainder of the credits to be chosen from approved elective courses. Students should consult with the Director of Master of Legal Studies for further guidance or clarification.

- CMPL-600: Foundations of Regulatory Compliance OR ADMN-300: Administrative Law

- CMPL-610: Risk Management and Auditing
- CMPL-620: Contract Review and Policy Drafting
- CMPL-630: Organizational Investigations
- CMPL-700: Capstone

### *CAMPUS-BASED MLS PROGRAMS*

Students enrolled in the General Studies, Health Law, Sports Law, or Technology, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship MLS programs must also complete four designated core program courses in their chosen track or concentration, with the reminder of the credits to be chosen from approved electives in consultation with the Director of Master of Legal Studies.

## **Enrollment Status**

### **MLS in compliance and Risk Management**

#### **Full-time Status**

Fall, Spring, and Summer Terms:	5 credits
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#### **Half-time Status**

##### **(defined for financial aid purposes only)**

Fall, Spring, and Summer Terms:	3 – 4 course credits
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#### **Less than Half-time Status**

##### **(defined for financial aid purposes only)**

Fall, Spring, and Summer Terms:	2 or fewer course credits
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### **Campus-Based MLS Programs**

#### **Full-time Status**

Fall & Spring semesters:	9 – 15 course credits
Summer (optional):	4 - 8 course credits

#### **Half-time Status**

##### **(defined for financial aid purposes only)**

Fall & Spring semesters:	5 – 8 course credits
Summer (optional):	3 course credits

#### **Less than Half-time Status**

##### **(defined for financial aid purposes only)**

Fall & Spring semesters:	4 or fewer course credits
Summer (optional):	2 or fewer course credits

## Underloads and Overloads

Students requesting an overload or underload must obtain the written permission of the Director of Master of Legal Studies.

Students seeking permission to take an overload should submit a written request to the Director of Master of Legal Studies stating the reason for requesting the overload and a plan for balancing outside demands with additional course work. Absent extraordinary circumstances, an overload request will be approved if the Director concludes that the student will be able to handle the extra workload.

Students seeking permission to take an underload must submit a written request to the Director of Master of Legal Studies stating the reason for requesting an underload. Underloads will be permitted only where a compelling reason exists for taking a light load, a reasonable plan is made to ensure satisfactory progress toward achieving the degree, and the student's academic record and curriculum plan indicate that the light load is not taken merely to isolate difficult course work.

## Withdrawal from Individual Courses

No course withdrawal will be allowed unless the minimum course load requirements are maintained. Except as provided below, MLS students may withdraw from any course during the first five weeks of a 14-week semester (or an equivalent time during a shorter term) by submission of a course withdrawal form to the the Director of Master of Legal Studies and the Registrar. Students are encouraged to advise faculty members of their withdrawal as a courtesy.

After the first five weeks have elapsed, written approval of the instructor and the Director of Master of Legal Studies must be obtained to withdraw from a course.

Students who withdraw during the first week of class in the 100% refund period will receive a drop-without-record, and the course will not appear on the student's transcript. Students who withdraw after the first week but before the end of the fifth week will have a "W" recorded on the transcript. A student who withdraws after the first five weeks may receive either a "W" (withdrawn) or a "WF" (withdrawn failing) on the transcript.

In courses involving a commitment to parties outside the law school, or courses where a student's withdrawal may have an adverse effect upon the education of other students, an earlier withdrawal deadline may be set. Students will be notified of this deadline before the end of the first week of classes. Absent extraordinary circumstances, students requesting permission to withdraw from such a course after the first week of class must have the permission of the instructor and the Director of Master of Legal Studies and may be awarded a grade of "WF" for the course. (See also section on [Tuition Refunds](#).)

## Adding a Class after Drop/Add Period

Students may add an open course during the first week of class. After the first week of class, students may add an open class only with the permission of the faculty member. Because of

attendance requirements, students will not be permitted to add a class after the third week of class.

## **Cross-Enrollment and JD Courses**

### **From JD to MLS**

Traditional JD and Flex JD students may enroll in MLS courses with permission from the Director of Master of Legal Studies; not all MLS courses will satisfy JD credit requirements.

### **From MLS to JD**

MLS students may enroll in open JD courses with permission from the Director of Master of Legal Studies. JD students will have priority registration for JD courses; not all JD courses will satisfy MLS course requirements.

### **From MLS to Flex JD**

The Flex JD course progression and cohort model require that Flex JD courses are reserved only for students enrolled in the Flex JD program. Students enrolled in the MLS degree programs are not eligible to take Flex JD courses.

## **Academic Probation and Dismissal**

### **Academic Probation**

A student with a cumulative GPA of 2.3 or below at the end of a semester will be placed on academic probation. A student will be released from academic probation when the student's cumulative GPA rises to 2.3 or above.

### **Dismissal**

A student who has been placed on academic probation and who does not achieve a cumulative GPA of 2.3 or above by the end of the following semester will be academically dismissed.

### **Dismissal: Second Time at 2.3 or Below**

A student with a cumulative GPA of 2.3 or below at the end of a semester, and who was on academic probation at any previous time, whether consecutive or not, will be academically dismissed.

### **Probation for First Time at End of Required Credits**

A student whose cumulative GPA is below 2.3 for the first time at the end of 30 successfully completed credits will be academically dismissed unless the student is readmitted per the process outlined below. If the student is readmitted, the student will be allowed to attempt courses for one semester only in order to attain the cumulative GPA of 2.3 or above required for the awarding the MLS degree.

## Readmission after Dismissal

An academically dismissed student may petition the Dean for readmission. The petition for readmission to the Dean must be submitted within two weeks of the date that the Director notifies the student in writing of the dismissal. In deciding the merits of the student's petition, the Dean shall consider whether readmission is in the best interests of the student and the Law School. The Dean may consider criteria including but not limited to the following: (1) the extent to which any factor that compromised the student's academic performance will no longer adversely affect the student's performance; (2) the evaluation of the student's potential for competent academic performance by faculty who have a basis for evaluating that potential; and (3) the recommendation of the Director of Master of Legal Studies. The Dean's decision on a student's petition for readmission is final. Students who are readmitted under this policy shall continue with their studies at the School of Law.

## Good Standing

All enrolled students, including students on probation, are considered to be in good standing. The term "not in good standing" shall be used only to identify students who have been academically dismissed.

## Time Allowed for Completing Degree

### Pace

MLS students accepted into the full-time program are expected to finish the program within one calendar year. MLS students accepted into the part-time program are expected to complete the degree within two calendar years. An MLS student, full-time or part-time, must complete the degree requirements within four years (48 months) of matriculation, including periods of non-enrollment such as leaves of absence.

## Progress

### Campus-Based MLS Programs

Campus-based MLS students must successfully complete a minimum of 10 credits per academic year (a minimum of 5 credits each for fall and spring term). Satisfactory progress is determined at the end of each semester. Summer term is optional, but if enrolled, students must complete at least 2 credits.

### MLS in Compliance and Risk Management

MLS in Compliance and Risk Management students must successfully complete a minimum of 5 credits each for fall, spring, and summer terms respectively, unless waived in writing by the Director of Master of Legal Studies.

## Leave of Absence

A leave of absence from academic studies for an MLS student may be granted by the Director of Master of Legal Studies for good reason at any time during an academic term. In making this

determination, the Director shall consider whether unanticipated circumstances exist that compel the conclusion that it is in the best interests of the student and the Law School that the leave be granted.

### Withdrawal from School

A student who decides not to return to graduate law studies may withdraw from the Law School at any time. Prior to withdrawing, the student shall consult with the Director of Master of Legal Studies. A student who has not graduated, taken a leave of absence, or given notice of withdrawal, and who is not currently registered, may be administratively withdrawn from the Law School.

A student who withdraws or is given an administrative withdrawal is not guaranteed readmission to the Law School and will be required to compete with new applicants for readmission. A withdrawn student may petition for readmission. In determining whether the petition should be granted, the Director of Master of Legal Studies shall consider the following: 1) why the withdrawal was taken rather than a leave of absence; 2) the length of time away from legal studies; 3) work experience during the withdrawal period; and 4) the student's academic record. Students who do not remain continuously enrolled and who do not apply for a leave of absence will be administratively withdrawn.

### Change of Program

A student wishing to change degree programs must submit a written petition to the Director of Master of Legal Studies to initiate this process. A student may only transfer from the program to which they have been admitted into another program with the approval of the Director of Master of Legal Studies.

### Credit from Other Schools

At the discretion of the Director of Master of Legal Studies, a candidate for the MLS degree may be allowed to transfer credit for courses taken at another institution if: (1) the courses were taken at a law school accredited by the Section of Legal Education of the American Bar Association or an equivalent non-U.S. school; (2) the courses were completed with a grade of "C" or better; and (3) the candidate received no credit for these courses toward any other degree earned. Grades from courses taken at another institution are not used in computing grade point averages.

### Limits on Transfer Credits

Students are limited to transferring in no more than 10 credits from another institution, which is one-third of the total number of credits required to complete the MLS degree. A student must complete a minimum of two-thirds of their credit requirements at the Law School to receive a degree from Seattle University School of Law.

### JD Credit for MLS Coursework

The American Bar Association prohibits law schools from granting credit toward a JD degree for any coursework taken in the MLS program prior to enrollment in a JD program. Students in the MLS program interested in enrolling in the JD program should consult with the Director of Master of

Legal Studies and must apply through the regular admissions process for Seattle University School of Law.

### MLS Credit for JD Coursework

With permission of the Director of Master of Legal Studies, credits earned for JD coursework may be applied to earning an MLS degree.

Students who began their JD studies at Seattle University School of Law and later transfer into the MLS program may be permitted to transfer more than 10 JD credits toward the MLS degree. The number of transferable credits will be determined by the Director of the MLS program, based on the alignment of completed coursework with the MLS curriculum and the student's remaining degree requirements.

Students who began their JD studies at another institution remain subject to the standard transfer credit limit of 10 credits.

### Clinical Courses

Clinical courses are intended to provide JD and LL.M. students with experiential learning opportunities in the practice of law. MLS students are not eligible for clinics.

### Externships

MLS students may register for externships which complement their program and with the approval of the Director of Master of Legal Studies and the Externship Director. MLS students are eligible for part-time externships only and are not eligible for full-time externships. A student may earn no more than four (4) externship credits toward the credits required for graduation. Students must enroll in the accompanying externship seminar course to satisfy the academic component of the externship.

### Independent Study

MLS students who wish to pursue a special research and writing project under the supervision of a faculty member may earn up to two (2) credits for independent study. Students undertaking independent study meet periodically with the faculty member supervising the project for discussion, review, and evaluation of the research project. The proposed study should require a substantial investment of time and effort and should promise a significant work product that makes an original contribution to the understanding of law or that reflects pursuit of a specialized interest not covered in standard offerings in the curriculum. The finished research paper should be comparable in scope and quality to a student note or comment in a law review or social science journal. A student may earn no more than two (2) independent study credits toward the credits required for graduation without the written permission of the Master of Legal Studies.

### Credit Limit

A student may earn no more than six (6) combined externship, independent study, or other co-curricular credits toward the credits required for graduation without the written permission of the Director of Master of Legal Studies.

## Grades

### Grading Scale

#### Definition of Grades and Grade Points

Letter Grade	Grade Points
A+	4.33
A	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.00
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.00
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D	1.00
D-	0.67 (minimum passing grade)
F	0.00
WF (withdrawn failing)	0.00

#### Notations and Grades with No GPA Impact

AU = Audit
I = Incomplete
IP = In Progress
P = Pass (equivalent to a D- or better)
W = Withdrawn

### Grading Curve

Students in the MLS degree programs are not subject to the mandatory or presumptive grading curves that apply to JD students, nor are their scores included in the calculation of the curve as it applies to JD students.

### Class Rank

MLS students are not ranked.

### Pass/Fail Grades

Pass/Fail grades will be given only for Independent Study projects (upon petition by the student and at the instructor's discretion).

## Information on Student Services and Other Campus Resources

See the Seattle University School of Law 2025-2026 Student Handbook for information on School of Law and University student services and campus resources.