YALE LAW SCHOOL

Joint Degrees

Yale Law School encourages an interdisciplinary approach to the law. Some students choose to combine their law studies with a program at another professional or graduate school, either at Yale University or another institution. These joint degrees are intended to complement the JD by providing specialized skills and a body of knowledge in another discipline. In recent years, about 30-40 Yale Law students have been enrolled in joint degree programs at any given time.

Joint degrees are most common with the Yale Graduate School and the School of Management, but students have also arranged joint programs with the Yale Schools of Divinity, the Environment, Medicine, and Public Health. YLS students may pursue joint degrees with programs in other universities as well. With the exception of certain programs, noted below, all proposed joint degree proposals are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Pursuing two degrees simultaneously generally shortens the total period of study. In a joint degree, the Law School grants up to 12 units of credit for appropriate work in another degree program toward the 83 credits required for the JD. This is the equivalent of one term's credit, so joint degree students are generally required to be in residence at the Law School for only five terms (with a sixth term of residency granted for one joint degree semester). The other program may (but will not necessarily) grant credit for work at the Law School, decreasing the length of that degree as well. Please note that students approved for joint degrees may not be enrolled simultaneously at Yale Law School and at another school in any given semester.

Additional information about joint degrees, academic requirements, and other issues is available in the Yale Law School Bulletin (www.law.yale.edu/studying-law-yale).

Please note: The JD-PhD in Finance, in cooperation with the Yale Graduate School and the School of Management, follows different procedures and has a separate deadline; information is available at www.law.yale.edu/studying-law-yale/degree-programs/joint-degrees/jd-phd-finance.

1. Application for and Approval of Joint Degree Petition

- You may apply to the Law School and the other school simultaneously or in separate years. For example, a student may enroll in the Law School and then apply to the Graduate School during her first year in the Law School.
- Each school will evaluate your application and make an independent decision about admission. Acceptance by both schools does not guarantee approval of a joint degree.
- Potential joint degree students should consult with the admissions office or director of graduate studies in the other school to discuss that school's policies regarding reciprocal credits for Law School coursework, degree

requirements, and timing of degree progress in the other program. Information on the other academic programs at the University, including specifics on admission, tuition, curricular requirements, and financial aid, can be found on the University website at *http://www.yale.edu/schools/index.html*.

- In most cases, you may start your program in either school, but the two programs must be combined/intermixed.
- If you plan to begin your studies in a school other than the Law School, you will need to petition the Law School Admissions Committee for a deferral. More information about deferrals is available from the Admissions Office.
- After you have matriculated at the Law School, you may petition for approval of your joint degree program. You will need to submit a formal proposal to the faculty Special Courses of Study Committee outlining a course of study and explaining how pursuing a degree in another program complements or enhances your legal studies. The Registrar, Assistant Deans, and Associate Deans, as well as faculty members, are available to consult with you about your proposal and your joint degree plans.
- The Joint Degree Petition Approval form, which includes a list of materials to submit with the petition and the submission deadline, is available on the Registrar's Office webpage.
- You must be enrolled in or admitted to the other school or program at the time you submit your proposal.
- The Special Courses of Study Committee meets once each semester (usually in November and April). First-year students are strongly advised to wait until the spring to submit joint degree proposals.
- After your joint degree petition has been approved, if you wish to make any changes to your proposed program, you will need to submit a new petition to the Special Courses of Study Committee.
- You may only be enrolled as a full-time student in one school, department, or program in any semester.
- Note: Transfer students are not eligible to petition for joint-degree status and must be enrolled full time at Yale Law School for four terms that, together with the credit they earn toward the JD from their first year at another law school, will complete their residency requirement.

2. **Joint Degree Credits**

- Students with approved joint degrees may earn one semester of residency (out of six) and up to 12 credits (out of 83) towards the JD through the other program.
- Students may receive a total of 12 credits from non-YLS courses, including joint degree credits and other courses. Thus, students receiving 12 joint degree credits cannot count other outside courses towards their JD.
- Only courses taken after the approval of the joint degree petition are eligible for joint degree credit; joint degree credit cannot be granted retroactively.

- Students who have completed all of the coursework for the other degree prior to matriculating at the Law School are not eligible for joint degrees. For example, a PhD candidate who, prior to enrolling at YLS, has completed all of the required graduate school coursework but has not yet completed her dissertation may not receive Law School credit for the completed coursework and is not eligible for a joint degree.
- Transfer students are not eligible for joint degrees.
- Language courses and courses taken at another law school are not eligible for joint degree credit, even if they count towards the other degree program.
- Independent study coursework in the other program is not eligible for joint degree credit.
- Students cannot receive joint degree credit for dissertation writing or preparation for orals or comprehensive exams.
- Students may take up to four semesters of leave during the JD degree to pursue another degree, even if they do not petition for joint degree approval or are not eligible for a joint degree. For more information on leaves of absence, please see The Bulletin or consult with one of the assistant or associate deans.

3. Financial Aid

During each semester of a joint degree, you will be "in residence" at one school or the other. Tuition and financial aid for the semester will be determined by the school where you are in residence. Students receiving financial aid are strongly encouraged to meet with the Law School's Director of Financial Aid, Jackie Outlaw (jacqueline.outlaw@yale.edu or (203) 432-1668) in advance to discuss the potential impact to federal loan eligibility.

Another Option: Cross-Registration for Courses Outside the Law School

After the first term, you may take courses in the undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools at Yale University. This type of interdisciplinary study is an excellent way to explore other areas or to gain specialized knowledge without enrolling in a joint degree program. You may receive Law School credit for these classes when they are relevant to your program of study or planned legal career. Up to 12 units of credits for such courses may be counted towards the 83 units required for the JD degree.