

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LAW SCHOOL
DOCTOR OF THE SCIENCE OF LAW (S.J.D.)**

INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

Effective November 4, 1994,

**revised May 6, 1999, December 17, 1999, August 22, 2001, January 17, 2003,
April 24, 2004, and April 11, 2006 and applicable to students who matriculated in the
S.J.D. program before August 2003**

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The S.J.D. program at the University of Michigan Law School is intended for people who wish to carry on advanced study and original research under faculty supervision. S.J.D. students must present research which makes a significant, original contribution of long-term value to legal literature. The S.J.D. dissertation must be of publishable quality and provide lawyers, scholars, or governmental officials with a useful understanding, not previously available, of a particular area of the law.

Students must be specifically admitted to the S.J.D. program in order to pursue the S.J.D. degree. Admission to the S.J.D. program will not be granted unless a member of the Law School faculty is available and willing to serve as the student's principal S.J.D. advisor and chair of the student's dissertation committee. The dissertation committee supervises the student's research and writing on the S.J.D. dissertation topic. Students are responsible for maintaining contact with their dissertation committees throughout the S.J.D. program concerning the progress of their work.

Students can be admitted to the S.J.D. program in one of two ways. First, those wishing to embark on an S.J.D. can seek admission directly to the LL.M./S.J.D. program prior to their arrival in Ann Arbor. (Although, if admitted, they must satisfy the requirements for an LL.M. degree at the University of Michigan as an initial step toward the S.J.D., the master's portion of their programs of study is not the same as the standard LL.M. program, which consists primarily of courses and seminars. In contrast, students in the LL.M./S.J.D. program pursue a program, during their required two terms in residence at the Law School, consisting mainly of supervised research and writing on a subject approved as the student's S.J.D. dissertation topic.) Second, students enrolled in the standard LL.M. program may seek admission to the S.J.D. program following their completion of the standard LL.M. degree.

These materials will describe, first, the degree requirements for students admitted to the LL.M./S.J.D. program, and, next, the requirements for students admitted to the S.J.D. program following enrollment in the standard LL.M. program. Requests for a waiver of a rule or requirement must be addressed in writing to the Assistant Dean who will refer the petition to the Graduate Program Committee.

LL.M./S.J.D. PROGRAM - Degree Requirements

The S.J.D. degree is conferred upon a student who, following admission to the LL.M.-S.J.D. program, has:

- 1) satisfied the requirements for the LL.M. degree at this Law School, as described below under LL.M. Degree Requirements;
- 2) been admitted to candidacy for the S.J.D. degree on the basis of the quality of the student's research and writing on his or her dissertation topic as described below under Admission to S.J.D. Candidacy; and
- 3) demonstrated the capacity for independent research in law by the completion of an original dissertation of publishable quality approved by the student's dissertation committee and by passing an oral examination on the completed original dissertation, as described below under Oral Examination and Completion of Dissertation.

1. LL.M. Degree Requirements

The LL.M. degree will be conferred upon the student who (i) has completed two full-time terms in residence at this Law School, (ii) has completed with a passing grade (D or better) a minimum of 24 credit hours in a two-term program of study approved by the Assistant Dean, and (iii) has achieved an honor point average of 3.0 or better in the minimum hours submitted for the LL.M. degree. The approved program of study must include at least 5 credit hours of Law School courses or seminars, but the balance of the required 24 credit hours shall consist primarily of independent research and writing, supervised by the student's S.J.D. advisor, on the subject chosen as the topic of the student's S.J.D. dissertation.

The grades reported for the student's 24 credit hours of research, course and seminar work during the two terms in residence will determine whether the student has satisfied the LL.M. degree requirements. Because LL.M./S.J.D. students concentrate on research and writing on their dissertation topics during the required two term residence period, they typically are ready, upon receipt of the LL.M. degree, to be simultaneously considered for admission to S.J.D. candidacy, a process which is described below; however, the dissertation committee may require the student to perform additional research work, beyond that required for the research and writing undertaken toward the LL.M., to be considered for admission to S.J.D. candidacy. The student's dissertation committee makes the decision on the grade conferred for the dissertation research and writing credits toward the LL.M. as well as the decision on S.J.D. candidacy.

The student must satisfy the LL.M. degree requirements prior to admission to S.J.D. candidacy. If, during the two terms in residence, the student elects to pursue a program of study including more than a few courses or seminars, the student is unlikely to progress sufficiently on his or her dissertation research and writing to be considered for admission to S.J.D. candidacy at the end of the second term in residence.

Although the student is not obligated to be in residence at the Law School beyond the required two term residency period, as a practical matter the student's presence at the Law School may be necessary until admission to S.J.D. candidacy for conferences with the dissertation committee or use of the Law Library.

Students must complete the work in which they enrolled during their residency terms by the end of each term of enrollment except as extensions of time may be granted for incomplete work in accordance with the LL.M. Academic Regulations. For the purpose of satisfying the requirements of the LL.M. degree, the LL.M./S.J.D. student must comply with the Law School's LL.M. Academic Regulations with the exception of the following provisions which are not applicable: Part One: Section 1, Section VI, Section VII, Section IX, par. 2 and par. 4; Section X, par. 2; and Part Three: Section III, 3rd paragraph.

2. Admission to S.J.D. Candidacy

All students in the S.J.D. program must be admitted to S.J.D. candidacy as an intermediate step toward receipt of the S.J.D. degree. It should be noted that admission to S.J.D. candidacy is not the same as initial admission to the S.J.D. program.

The decision on admission to S.J.D. candidacy is made by a special committee of the faculty (the dissertation committee), appointed upon the recommendation of the S.J.D. advisor. The dissertation committee will meet to decide whether the student may be admitted to S.J.D. candidacy following the student's satisfaction of the requirements for the LL.M. degree, the completion of an outline of the entire S.J.D. dissertation, and the writing of a substantial portion of the dissertation.

The student will be admitted to S.J.D. candidacy if the student has satisfied the requirements for the LL.M. degree and if the dissertation committee determines that the student's research and writing on the dissertation topic is of sufficiently high quality to permit continuation in the S.J.D. program. The committee may decide not to admit the student to S.J.D. candidacy, and the student then will be ineligible to continue in the S.J.D. program.

The student is not required to be present at the meeting of the committee for admission to S.J.D. candidacy. The committee will report its final decision on admission to S.J.D. candidacy to the Assistant Dean for the student's academic records. If the student is admitted to S.J.D. candidacy, the committee will approve a plan for the balance of the student's dissertation work.

The dissertation committee shall be composed of three faculty members, one of whom is the S.J.D. chair. The S.J.D. chair must be a tenured member of the University of Michigan Law School faculty. At least one other member of the dissertation committee must be a tenured or tenure-track member of the University of Michigan Law School faculty. The third member of the dissertation committee must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member in (a) the University of Michigan Law School, or (b) any other law school, domestic or foreign, or (c) a non-law department at this or any another university, domestic or foreign (with Ph.D. or the professional equivalent). In consultation with the student, the chair of the dissertation committee shall select the other members of the committee as soon as possible after the student's admission to the S.J.D. program. Only a dissertation committee composed of all three members may decide on the student's admission to

candidacy for the S.J.D. program or, in the case of those directly admitted to the LL.M.-S.J.D. program, award a grade in more than 6 credits of research towards the LLM degree. If a member of the dissertation committee becomes unavailable while the student is eligible to continue in the S.J.D. program, the S.J.D. chair shall, after consultation with the student, appoint a substitute. In the event the chair of the dissertation committee becomes unavailable while the student is eligible to continue in the S.J.D. program, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, after consultation with the remaining members of the dissertation committee and the student, shall select a new chair of the dissertation committee.

If, within one year following the end of the student's second term in residence at the Law School, the student has not been admitted to S.J.D. candidacy, the student shall be automatically prohibited from continuing in the S.J.D. program, unless the student, upon the recommendation of the S.J.D. advisor, requests and receives an extension of time from the Graduate Program Committee. Such requests must be submitted in writing to the Assistant Dean prior to the expiration of the one year period.

3. Oral Examination and Completion of Dissertation

The S.J.D. degree will be granted to the student who, after admission to S.J.D. candidacy, has satisfied the requirements outlined here and further described below:

- a) The student has passed an oral examination administered by the dissertation committee on the student's completed dissertation;
- b) The dissertation committee has approved the student's completed dissertation for receipt of the S.J.D. degree and has certified that the dissertation is of publishable quality;
- c) The dissertation committee has notified the Assistant Dean that the above requirements have been satisfied; and
- d) The student has submitted to the Assistant Dean a copy of the final dissertation for deposit in the University of Michigan Law Library.

Oral Examination

The student is required to come to Ann Arbor for the oral examination by the dissertation committee on the completed S.J.D. dissertation. Upon the request of the student, the dissertation committee may waive the requirement of personal appearance if the student was fully and satisfactorily examined at the time of admission to S.J.D. candidacy and if the committee finds for appropriate reasons (such as overseas travel to Ann Arbor) that the requirement would impose an undue hardship on the student.

Completion of Dissertation

If the student does not submit the completed dissertation to the dissertation committee within five years after the date of admission to S.J.D. candidacy, the student is automatically ineligible to continue in the S.J.D. program, unless the Graduate Program Committee, upon the recommendation of the dissertation committee, grants the student an extension of time. The student must make a written request for an extension, before the expiration of the five year deadline, to the Assistant Dean for referral to the Graduate Program Committee. In reviewing the request, the Committee will consider the student's progress on the dissertation and the extent to which the student's research and writing may have grown out of date in light of the evolution of the law or in light of publications which have appeared in the meantime. The Assistant Dean, upon written recommendation from the Graduate Program Committee, will notify the student whether the extension has been granted or denied.

Usually, the dissertation is completed by the student in absentia following the required residency period. During the period of completion, the student is responsible for maintaining regular contact with the S.J.D. advisor for guidance on the research and writing, and should consult with the other members of the dissertation committee.

The dissertation should consist of an original and substantial contribution to the scholarship in the field, and it should have the format of a full-length book-style monograph or its equivalent in articles in the same field, and it should be of publishable quality. Upon completion of the S.J.D. dissertation, the student will submit the dissertation to the dissertation committee which will then meet again to evaluate the completed dissertation and examine the student orally on it. The committee will then decide (1) that the student's dissertation is of publishable quality and is approved for the S.J.D. degree, or (2) that the student must make revisions to the S.J.D. dissertation as recommended by the committee and, if necessary, receive an extension of time for this purpose, or (3) that the student is ineligible to receive the S.J.D. degree. (If the committee decides that the student must make revisions to the dissertation, the student must submit the revised dissertation to the committee within the deadline imposed by the committee.)

Award of the S.J.D. degree

The S.J.D. degree is conferred upon the student at the next regular graduation date after (1) the committee notifies the Assistant Dean that the student has satisfactorily passed the oral examination and completed the dissertation, and that the dissertation is of publishable quality and (2) the student has submitted to the Assistant Dean a copy of the completed dissertation as approved by the committee, bound in typescript, for deposit in the Law Library.

S.J.D. PROGRAM FOLLOWING STANDARD LL.M. PROGRAM - Degree Requirements

Students who were not directly admitted to the LL.M./S.J.D. program prior to their arrival in Ann Arbor, but who were enrolled in the standard two term LL.M. program at the University of Michigan Law School, may be considered for admission to the S.J.D. program. In reviewing an LL.M. student's application for the S.J.D. program, the Graduate Program Committee will consider the quality of the applicant's work (including research papers) in Michigan's LL.M. program, the quality of his or her prior academic and professional background, the quality of his or her S.J.D. thesis prospectus, the applicant's capacity for advanced legal research, and the applicant's potential for a

scholarly career. Applicants should be aware that admission to the S.J.D. program and fellowship awards are highly competitive and that Law School cannot offer fellowship support to all who are admitted to the S.J.D. program.

A student in the standard LL.M. program at the University of Michigan Law School who wishes to apply for admission to the S.J.D. program following receipt of the LL.M. must submit by May 15, to the Assistant Dean of International Programs the following:

1. A statement of interest describing why the applicant wishes to pursue an S.J.D.
2. A prospectus of the proposed thesis topic in sufficient detail to demonstrate its potential for a significant and original contribution to legal literature. It should describe the nature of the topic, the questions to be explored, and the research methodology.
3. A letter of recommendation from the University of Michigan Law School faculty member who is interested and available to supervise the applicant's S.J.D. and serve as the chair of the applicant's dissertation committee if the applicant is admitted to the S.J.D. program.
4. A letter of recommendation from a law professor from the country in which the applicant received his or her previous degree(s) in law, evaluating the applicant's capacity for advanced (S.J.D. level) legal scholarship and the applicant's prospects for an academic career or other career for which the applicant seeks the S.J.D.

It is recommended, but not required, that the applicant submit a letter of recommendation from a University of Michigan Law School professor, in addition to the one referred to in paragraph 3 above.

Applicants should complete their LL.M. research and seminar papers in sufficient time for them to be evaluated by their professors prior to May 15.

The S.J.D. degree is conferred upon a student, who having been admitted to the S.J.D. program following enrollment in the standard LL.M. program at the Law School, has:

- a) satisfied the requirements for the standard LL.M. degree at the University of Michigan Law School as set forth in the Law School's LL.M. Academic Regulations;
- b) remained in residence at the Law School for four months following his or her last term of enrollment in the standard LL.M. program, as further described below, and been admitted to candidacy for the S.J.D. degree on the basis of the quality of the student's research and writing on his or her dissertation topic, as described above under Admission to S.J.D. Candidacy; and
- c) demonstrated the capacity for independent research in law by the completion of an original dissertation approved by the student's dissertation committee and by passing an oral examination on the completed original dissertation, as described above under Oral Examination and Completion of Dissertation.

Students admitted to the S.J.D. program following enrollment in the standard LL.M. program at the Law School are required to remain in residence at the Law School for four additional months following their last term of enrollment in the standard LL.M. program and prior to admission to S.J.D. candidacy. The four month residency period generally coincides with the next regular term following their last term of enrollment in the standard LL.M. program. During this four-month period, their program of study consists exclusively of supervised research and writing on the dissertation topic under the supervision of the dissertation committee in preparation for the decision on admission to S.J.D. candidacy. Admission to S.J.D. candidacy for these students does not coincide with the award of the LL.M. degree since completion of the LL.M. degree is a pre-requisite to commencement of the S.J.D. program, and the requirements for admission to S.J.D. candidacy and for receipt of the S.J.D. degree are the same as those described above under Admission to S.J.D. Candidacy and Oral Examination and Completion of Dissertation.

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