

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

Admission Requirements

This degree program is designed for those seeking to pursue careers as teachers and scholars of law. It is a highly selective program open only to applicants who possess a distinguished academic record in law, show promise of outstanding scholarship, and demonstrate high potential for completing a scholarly dissertation of the required quality.

The law school admits a small group of candidates to the S.J.D. class each year through a highly competitive admission process. The S.J.D. Committee will admit only the most highly qualified candidates who complete all elements of the application for admission, provide clear evidence of academic excellence, and demonstrate high potential for completing a scholarly dissertation that constitutes a substantial contribution to knowledge in his or her intended field.

All applicants must have a first degree in law to be eligible to apply for the S.J.D. Students may meet this requirement either:

- By holding a Juris Doctor from an A.B.A.-approved law school, or
- By holding a bachelor's degree in Law (LL.B) or a related field from an accredited college or university outside of the United States, and an LL.M degree (or its equivalent).
- Students with an LL.B may apply to the joint LL.M/S.J.D. dual program of Emory Law School or for those students who so wish and who are admitted, the A.J.D./S.J.D. dual degree program.

The application deadline for the fall semester is listed on the Emory Law website.

The following items are required to submit an application through the LSAC website. No materials submitted directly to Emory Law will be accepted. Applications must include:

- Application form and fee.
- CV/resume.
- Personal statement.
- Research proposal.
- A TOEFEL score for those who did not receive a B.A. from an American college nor have a J.D. from an ABA-accredited school. (No TOEFEL required for students from a university with an English language curriculum.)
- All official transcripts including LL.B., LL.M, and J.D. degree transcripts.
- Three letters of recommendation. One letter may be from a supporting Emory Law faculty member, as appropriate who could be a faculty mentor.
- A substantial research paper written in, or translated into, English or in a language that can be read by an Emory faculty member.

Faculty Mentor: Prior to submitting their application, prospective students may seek to contact and secure a potential faculty mentor for their S.J.D. studies. Our faculty directory is available here. Applicants should contact their potential faculty mentor via email. This message should provide the following: an introduction; a brief explanation of the applicant's educational background, professional work, and proposed research; and how the applicant believes that this faculty member could provide proper mentorship for their proposed S.J.D. academic work. If the faculty member agrees to serve as a mentor, the applicant ought to ask that faculty member to be one of their letters of recommendation. (Please note that receiving approval from a potential faculty mentor does not guarantee an offer of admission from the Admission Committee.)

General Requirements

Academic Standing

To remain in good standing, students must maintain an overall cumulative minimum grade point average of 2.70 on all coursework at the conclusion of the first term and be certified as making sufficient progress by the program administrator. In each term beyond the first, a student must have a cumulative grade point average of 2.70 and continue sufficient progress toward completion to be in good standing. Any student not in good standing is presumptively ineligible to continue in, or graduate from, the S.J.D. program.

A student who becomes presumptively ineligible to continue the program because of a lack of good standing may petition the Academic Standing Committee for continuation in the program. Students granted continuation remain in the program on probationary status and must raise their cumulative grade point average to at least 2.70 by the end of the probationary period. It is the student's obligation to petition for continuation when no longer in good standing and to monitor his or her own eligibility to continue in the program.

No student will be permitted to start writing their S.J.D. thesis who has not taken a total of 54 credits of post B.A. or LL.B credits in law. Students with a J.D. definitionally fulfill this requirement and other students need to demonstrate such.

S.J.D. Coursework and Other Requirements

There are five stages to the S.J.D. program:

1. Completion of a study plan which includes course work, typically in the first year of a student's enrollment in the S.J.D. program.
2. Successful completion of a prospectus defense, typically in the first two years of the student's enrollment in the S.J.D. program.
3. Two presentations at the S.J.D. Colloquium, typically in year two or three of a student's enrollment in the S.J.D. program.
4. Submission and acceptance of a doctoral dissertation in the last year of a student's enrollment in the S.J.D. program.

5. Successful oral defense of the dissertation, typically in the last semester of a student's enrollment in the S.J.D. program.

All S.J.D. students are expected to take the following courses in their first year or two of the S.J.D. program:

- **Methods** (3 credits, Fall semester). First year S.J.D. students take this class their Fall semester. Its purpose is to launch students on the path to writing a successful dissertation. Specifically, students refine their dissertation topic and write a thesis statement as well as tentatively decide on a structure for their dissertation and discuss writing strategies. The course examines and compares concepts and features of different legal scholarship methodologies. Finally, students are introduced to the Zotero/Juris M database and citation manager.
- **Presentation Skills for Law School Academics** (2 credits, Spring or Summer semester). First year S.J.D. students take this course to receive training in presentations and practice their skills in moot sessions. Specifically, the course aims to provide the opportunity for students to refine their communication skills in order to effectively communicate research projects to listeners, enhance listening skills, adapt messages to desired purposes and target audiences, and manage information before, during, and after presentations. This course culminates in presentations at the National S.J.D. Roundtable.
- **Scholarly Paper Seminars** (3 credits times three, either Fall or Spring semesters) Over the course of their years in the S.J.D. Program, students take at least three seminars or directed readings from the law school's regular curriculum or specifically given by their thesis advisor or a member of their doctoral committee that require a scholarly paper. Students select their three seminars in consultation with their faculty supervisor. The purposes of this requirement are to add to students' intellectual foundations for the dissertation; to give them additional experience writing a scholarly paper; to get them started drafting portions of their dissertations; and, if appropriate, to enable them to submit an article for publication

Beside these courses, students who are enrolled in the S.J.D. program must take in their first year of residence at Emory Law a total of 30 credits which include a mixture of the following:

1. A course on methodology in their field of study.
2. Any advanced courses they feel they need to take or that their advisor recommends.
3. Directed readings under their faculty advisor.
4. Courses in other divisions of the University.
5. Any foreign language needed for their course of study.

After two or three semesters of course work are successfully completed, S.J.D. students will have four years in which to complete the dissertation and a one year extension may be granted. S.J.D. students are expected to spend at least one year in residence at the Emory campus to meet regularly with their

dissertation advisor. In the case of the LL.M/S.J.D. dual degree program, student who have completed the LL.M portion and are enrolled in the S.J.D. program, may be granted another extension of time at the discretion of their dissertation advisor.

Students will be required to make presentations at the S.J.D. Colloquium, General Faculty Colloquium, or other academic conferences at Emory at the direction of their S.J.D. advisor or the director of the S.J.D. program.

At the end of each academic year of enrollment, the dissertation advisor must certify to the S.J.D. Committee that the candidate has made satisfactory progress. If a dissertation advisor determines that a S.J.D. student has not made satisfactory progress at the end of any academic year, the student will be given a written warning that they must make satisfactory progress at the end of the following semester to continue in the program.

Sample Coursework for Year One of S.J.D. student:

Fall:

- S.J.D. Methods Seminar: 3 credits
- Scholarly Paper Seminar: 3 credits
- Advanced Course selected with advisor: 3 credits
- Advanced Course offered by LGS in related field: 3 credits
- Thesis Research and writing: 3 credits

15 credits total

Spring:

- Presentation Skills for Law Academics: 2 credits
- Scholarly Paper Seminar: 3 credits
- Scholarly Paper Seminar: 3 credits
- Advanced Course selected with advisor: 3 credits
- Thesis Research and writing: 4 credits

15 credits total

After all mandatory coursework is completed, S.J.D. students shall register for “Thesis Writing” until their dissertation is completed. In his or her final semester, S.J.D. students will register for a no less than three credits course entitled “Thesis Defense.” He or she may register for more credits as deemed needed. Students shall confirm that the registered credits received during this time meet any relevant student visa, residency, or financial aid requirements.

S.J.D. Residency

Students in the S.J.D. program must be physically in residence and conduct their work from Emory Law's Atlanta campus during the first two semesters of the program. After the first two semesters in residency, students must be enrolled in the program but may complete their research and writing from another location if remote work is approved by the student's faculty supervisor and the Director of S.J.D. Programs. Students are strongly encouraged to stay in residence in Atlanta for at least their third and fourth semesters. Students must complete the program within eight years of their initial admittance. Students who fail to complete the program within eight years will be discontinued though they may apply for readmission.

Dissertation Requirements

Prospectus Defense. Upon successful completion of the first two semesters and performance in courses at a level substantially above the quality expected of J.D. candidates, the S.J.D.

Committee shall constitute a doctoral committee consisting of three faculty members which may include a single faculty member from a division outside of the law school. In the third semester of enrollment, the student will present a research prospectus to his or her doctoral committee and complete a successful defense of the prospectus before the doctoral committee. Students may petition to accelerate the prospectus defense to the first semester or delay it to the fourth semester. Petitions to accelerate or delay the prospectus defense will be granted or denied by the Director of the S.J.D. Program on recommendation of the student's supervisor and committee.

Upon successful completion of the defense and acceptance of the prospectus by a student's doctoral committee, the S.J.D. Committee shall allow the students to proceed in the program. If a student fails to successfully complete the prospectus defense and/or the student's doctoral committee does not accept the prospectus, the student will be discontinued from the program. Students who fail may appeal that decision to the Director of S.J.D. Program who, in consultation with the Graduate Studies Committee, will give a final decision on any appeal. Any student dismissed from the program may not reapply.

Dissertation Completion Process. After a student has completed and passed the prospectus defense, the student may continue research and writing under the supervision of his or her committee subject to the residency and enrollment requirements outlined above. No later than their seventh semester, students must declare their intent to schedule their oral defense examination of their dissertation. The defense and submission of a final dissertation will take place during the student's eighth semester unless, under exceptional circumstances, an extension is granted by the S.J.D. Committee.

After the prospectus defense and examination of the dissertation, the student's committee may rule as follows: *Full pass; pass with minor revisions required; pass with major revisions required; or fail.* The decision of the committee to grant a pass, or a pass requiring any sort of revision, is not appealable. The decision to fail a candidate in his or her dissertation will result in immediate dismissal from the S.J.D. program and granting of the LL.M terminal degree. The decision of the committee to fail a candidate may be appealed to the Executive Director of Graduate Programs who, in consultation with the Dean, will give a final decision on any appeal. Any student dismissed from the program may not reapply.

In his or her final semester, a candidate shall submit and successfully defend in an oral examination his or her dissertation in the form of a monograph or a series of closely related essays suitable for

publication and constituting a substantial contribution to knowledge in its intended field. To graduate, the student must submit a final copy of his or her dissertation along with his or her committee's final approval as directed by the Executive Director of S.J.D. Programs. To graduate, a student must meet all final dissertation deadlines

	Spring Graduation	Fall Graduation
Declare intent to schedule oral defense next semester	December 1	May 1
Notice of intent to defend and graduate	February 1	September 1
Oral defense and committee action (<i>pass, pass with minor revisions, pass with major revisions, fail</i>)	By March 1	By September 15
Minor revisions to committee for review	April 1	October 15
Final signoff by supervising professor	April 15	November 1
Final dissertation submitted	May 1	November 15