

Doctor of Juridical Science

S.J.D. Program

The Doctor of Juridical Science (<https://law.ku.edu/academics/degrees/sjd/>) graduate degree program is designed for students interested in deep legal research and writing, and a career as a legal scholar or a senior public official.

Candidates for the S.J.D. conduct in-depth legal scholarship and must:

- Hold both a basic law degree (LL.B.) and a master's degree (LL.M.) or a J.D.;
- show an accomplished academic record;
- and compose an original, thoughtful dissertation proposal that introduces the research topic the candidate intends to pursue, explains its importance and presents an initial argument that the candidate plans to develop in the S.J.D. program.

Summary of S.J.D. Program Structure

Year and Semester	Activity
1st Year - Fall ¹	Coursework related to dissertation research for a total of 8 credit hours
	6 credit hours of coursework
	1 credit hour of S.J.D. Dissertation
1st Year - Spring ¹	1 credit hour of S.J.D. First-Year Seminar
	Begin research for dissertation
	Coursework related to dissertation research for a total of 8 credit hours
1st Summer	6 credit hours of coursework
	1 credit hour of S.J.D. Dissertation
	1 credit hour of S.J.D. First-Year Seminar
2nd Year - Fall ¹	Continue research/write Dissertation Proposal ²
	Complete Interim Review (details below)
	1 credit hour of Advanced S.J.D. Seminar
2nd Year - Spring ¹	1 credit hour of S.J.D. Dissertation
	1 credit hour of Advanced S.J.D. Seminar
	1 credit hour of S.J.D. Dissertation
3rd Year - Fall	1 credit hour of S.J.D. Dissertation
3rd Year - Spring	1 credit hour of S.J.D. Dissertation
	Oral Examination at KU Law
	Passage of Dissertation
	22 credit hours required for graduation

¹ 1st and 2nd Year must be in residence at the University of Kansas School of Law

² The Dissertation Proposal includes a complete working outline of the dissertation; a clear thesis statement; a 1-2 page abstract; a working bibliography; and one draft chapter of the dissertation.

Dissertation & Academic Requirements

Dissertation Passage Requirements

- Successful completion of all required courses with a grade of C or better.
- Successful completion of the Interim Review after the end of the first year.
- Production of a dissertation that is between 150 - 200 single-spaced pages, including front material, footnotes, and bibliography. Paper type, font, margins, and other format and style matters must conform to KU's Graduate School Instructions to Candidates for Doctoral Degrees in order for the dissertation to be deposited in the KU Libraries.
- Evidence that the candidate has identified a legal issue of relevance; constructed an original argument about that legal issue; defended that argument in a manner that is clear, organized, well-written and well-reasoned; and produced a work that would be publishable as a book, extended law review article, or linked series of law review articles.
- Successful, public defense of the dissertation to committee.

Interim Review

By no later than July 15 of the summer semester of the SJD candidate's first year in the program, the candidate must submit to his or her chairperson and to the SJD seminar instructor a Dissertation Proposal that satisfies the Dissertation Proposal requirements set forth below. No later than Aug. 15 prior to the start of the candidate's second year, the chairperson and the SJD seminar instructor must certify whether the Dissertation Proposal is acceptable and the candidate is otherwise in good standing (i.e. has a GPA of 2.0 or above). If the candidate fails to obtain certification of the Dissertation Proposal, they may seek an extension of no more than one semester from the chairperson and the SJD seminar instructor to revise and resubmit the Dissertation Proposal for certification. Denial of certification will result in the candidate's dismissal from the SJD program. The candidate may appeal the denial of certification or any denial of a request for extension to the Graduate & International Programs Committee by petition to the associate dean for international and comparative Law.

Dissertation Proposal

The Dissertation Proposal must include:

1. a complete working outline of the dissertation
2. a clear thesis statement
3. a 1-2 page abstract
4. a working bibliography
5. one draft chapter of the dissertation

Remote Defense Policy

S.J.D. candidates are required to defend their dissertation at the law school. However, in exceptional circumstances, candidates may request an exemption from this requirement in order to defend their dissertation remotely via videoconference, upon prior approval of the Associate Dean for International & Comparative Law, in consultation with their chairperson. To request an exemption, candidates must:

1. have demonstrated the ability to complete their dissertation and schedule the defense within the timeframe approved by their chairperson.
2. be in compliance with any degree completion plan established by their chair.
3. submit a request to both their chairperson indicating (A) the reason for the requested exemption; (B) where and how they propose to set up the videoconference necessary for a remote defense; and (C) the feasibility for a remote defense in light of the needs of their external committee member, the nature of their project, the technology described in (D) and any other relevant considerations. Candidates are encouraged to submit this request as early as possible and must do so no later than two (2) weeks prior to their departure from the United States.

Candidates who have been approved to defend their dissertation remotely must provide electronic copies of any slides or handouts they intend to use to their committee members in advance and will be required to test the proposed technology thoroughly with KU staff in advance of their defense.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: If technological or other reasons not within the control of the candidate's chair, committee or the law school prevent the remote defense from occurring, the candidate will be required to defend their dissertation at the law school within a reasonable time period established by the chair. Candidates should be aware that this may delay their graduation and require them to enroll for an additional semester if the defense cannot be rescheduled within the same semester, as candidates must be enrolled in the semester they graduate.

Doctoral Degree Time Limits

SJD candidates have a total of 5 calendar years to complete the SJD from the date of initial enrollment. Exceptions to this policy will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances. Requests for a one-year extension must be made no later than 30 days prior to the end of the 5-year period to the chairperson and the associate dean for international and comparative Law and must be accompanied by a degree completion agreement agreed upon by the candidate and the chairperson that establishes the expectations regarding the candidate's progress, the expected degree completion date, and appropriate consequences for a student's failure to defend by the expected completion date. Any subsequent request for extension must be accompanied by a revised degree completion agreement.

Withdrawal and Readmission Following Withdrawal

SJD candidates considering withdrawing are strongly encouraged to confer with their chairperson and with the associate dean for international and comparative law as soon as possible and to indicate whether they intend to seek readmission to the program. Failure to enroll in any semester before the degree is completed is considered a withdrawal from the program. Note that SJD students enroll the entire calendar year (spring, summer, fall semesters).

Any candidate who has completed at least 16 credit hours in the SJD program and is in good standing may withdraw from all law school courses in which he or she is enrolled if the candidate completes all required administrative steps for withdrawal no later than the last day of classes for the semester. Candidates who wish to withdraw after the last day of classes for the semester must obtain permission from the Graduate & International Programs Committee. A candidate who had completed at

least 16 credit hours in the SJD program at the time of withdrawal may re-enroll in a subsequent semester without reapplying for admission upon permission from the chairperson of their doctoral committee. Evidence of progress towards the degree and documentation of the reasons for the candidate's withdrawal will be determining factors in the decision to grant re-admission. Candidates considering a temporary withdrawal from the SJD program due to extraordinary circumstances (i.e. illness, emergency, financial hardship, or military leave), family responsibilities, or pursuit of full-time activities related to long-term professional goals are strongly encouraged to develop a degree completion plan with their chairperson and the associate dean for international and comparative law in anticipation of a re-admission application.

Any candidate who withdraws before completing 16 credit hours must reapply for admission. There are no exceptions to this rule. Any candidate who has completed at least 16 credit hours and who is not in good standing must have the permission of the chairperson of their doctoral committee and the associate dean for international and comparative law to withdraw if the candidate wishes to be readmitted in a subsequent semester. A candidate who fails to secure such permission may petition the Graduate & International Programs Committee for readmission.

Maximum Time for Publication of the Dissertation

Upon successful completion of the dissertation defense, the SJD candidate must make any required revisions to the dissertation manuscript. Upon the approval of the chairperson of the final manuscript, the candidate must submit the signed electronic release form to the library staff to file the dissertation manuscript electronically to UMI/ Proquest **within 2 weeks** of the date of the chairperson's approval. The candidate must file the dissertation manuscript in order to be certified by the chairperson to graduate. The candidate should also provide a copy of the signed electronic release form to the registrar as confirmation that this has been completed.

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Improve upon legal analysis and writing skills.
- Conduct original, publishable research in chosen area of interest.
- Develop multi-chapter thesis of publishable quality and defend dissertation before dissertation committee.