Three-Year Dual Degree
LBJ School and UT School of Law
FAQs

Q. For whom are the dual degree programs in law and policy well-suited?

A. Students who are interested in working in positions at the intersection of policy and law are great fits for the dual degree programs. For example, those interested in social justice advocacy, legislative work, administrative law, policy reform, justice administration, international law, human rights work, politics, government, or non-profit work would benefit from having dual degrees and broad skill sets. But that is by no means an exhaustive list! Contact the program graduate advisor if you are wondering if the program is right for you.

Q. I’m interested in international policy. Can I still pursue a dual degree?

A. Yes, there are two dual degree programs with law. A student can pursue a dual degree in law and either the MPAff or the MGPS degree at the LBJ School. Students who want to focus primarily on domestic policy at the national, state, or local levels may wish to apply for the Masters in Public Affairs degree, while those with interests in foreign relations and international policy might be better suited for the Masters in Global Policy Studies. For more information about the differences between the two degrees at the LBJ School, visit [http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/mpaff](http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/mpaff) and [http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/mgps](http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/mgps).

Q. What kinds of jobs would I be qualified for as a graduate?

A. You will be fully qualified as a lawyer once you pass the bar exam, and can work in any legal position. And, of course, you may choose to use your legal training simply as background and to work primarily in the policy realm. We expect that many of our dual degree graduates will choose to seek out positions in government or non-profit work, or in the international sector. Many organizations are open to hiring staff with either a law degree or a graduate degree in public policy; having both degrees and skill sets equips you especially well for such positions and distinguishes you from most other job candidates.

Q. How will the dual training provided by these programs be useful in the workplace?
A. Both government and non-profit employers seek staff with the ability to problem-solve effectively and to think about issues from an interdisciplinary perspective. For example, policy analysts may be asked to craft or evaluate policies or advocate for policy change; this often requires an understanding of legal constraints and constitutional requirements. Similarly, lawyers can be more effective in their advocacy efforts if they can call on their ability to interpret data, read budgets, and understand organizational structures and management. Graduates of the dual degree programs will not limit themselves to the research techniques of a single discipline when it comes to answering questions posed by supervisors or clients; rather, they will feel comfortable seeking answers by using a wide variety of relevant resources. This range of skills represents a tremendous benefit to the workplace!

Q. In which school do you start the dual degree programs?

A. All participants engage in the same joint curriculum from the start. After a short course at the LBJ School during the late summer before the first year, students begin with the standard first-year Law School curriculum. All dual degree students with Law will begin in the same school so there is more uniformity in the approach to the curriculum and so that there will be a cohort of students in the dual degree programs who know and support each other.

Q. What is the curriculum?

A. We have designed the curriculum to promote an integrated approach to studying law and policy. In the late summer before the first-year, students will take a short-course at the LBJ School called “Policy Development and the Law,” which will introduce them to the policy development process and the ways in which it is affected by considerations of legal requirements. Students then go through the standard first-year core curriculum at the Law School. During the second or third semester, there is a required class called “Law and Public Policy” that explores the role of the courts and policy-makers, examines a range of substantive issues from both legal and policy perspectives, and allows students to discover the different disciplinary approaches and analytic tools used by practitioners in both fields.

In the summer between the first and second years, students will do a field placement at an organization or agency that will expose them to work at the intersection of policy and law. We will assist students in finding suitable placements, and there is a guaranteed $7,500 stipend to give students flexibility in finding the best position for them.

In the second and third years, students will take a combination of classes at the LBJ School and the Law School, including the core courses required by the LBJ School, such as Introduction to Empirical Methods, Applied Microeconomics for
Policy Analysis, Public Management, Public Financial Management, Advanced Empirical Methods for Policy Analysis, and Advanced Policy Economics. Students will also take four upper-class courses required by the Law School: a writing seminar, Professional Responsibility course, a professional skills course, and an advanced constitutional law course. There is also room in the curriculum for students to take electives in their areas of particular interest.

The capstone of the program is a year-long Policy Research Project course at the LBJ School, in which students work in teams with the professor on a consulting project for a real-world public sector or non-profit client.

Students will take between 15 and 17 credit hours during each semester in the dual degree program.

Q. How else do these programs support students interested in careers in law and policy?

A. The programs include a strong advisory component that will help pair students with faculty who work in the students’ areas of professional interest. These faculty members can help advise students on course selection, summer positions, and possible job opportunities.

Also, there will be regular meetings with all students in the dual degree programs to help build cohesion and to hear from outside speakers about their work at the intersection of policy and law. These gatherings can help students explore their career options.

Q. How can two degrees be completed in three years? Will I miss any important aspects of professional preparation?

A. The programs have been carefully designed so that students will take all the required classes in both schools and will not miss out on any important preparatory courses. The compressed time to get both degrees is made possible by an increased credit-hour load in each semester, credit for a summer class prior to the first-year, and a for-credit field placement during the summer between the first and second years. Also, while students will be able to take a number of elective courses, there are fewer elective credit hours than if both degrees were to be pursued separately. Dual degree students will complete a total of 65 credit hours at the Law School and a total of 32 credit hours at the LBJ School, which meet the requirements for the schools’ accrediting bodies.

Q. Can I take longer than three years to complete the dual degree?
A. The programs are designed to be completed in three years and there is no ability to stretch the programs out over a longer period of time.

Q. How much does it cost?

A. Tuition is based on a formula that depends on the number of credit hours taken per semester. But for most new students who are Texas residents, the annual cost in 2014-15 will be approximately $34,000, while the cost for non-residents will be approximately $56,000. Tuition information is available at: https://www.utexas.edu/business/accounting/pubs/tf_dualdegree1415.pdf

Q. Are scholarships and fellowships available to help with costs?

A. Yes, both the Law School and the LBJ School have merit-based and need-based scholarships available to defray the costs of the program. Applicants are automatically considered for merit-based aid without need for a separate application. Each school awards its own scholarships and fellowships.

Additionally, each dual degree student is eligible to receive a guaranteed $7,500 stipend to support the law and policy internship during the summer following the first year.

Q. Are the admissions decisions made independently by the schools?

A. Yes, each school has its own admissions process in which you are evaluated against other candidates to that school. You must be admitted to both schools to be in the dual degree program.

Q. If I’m offered admission to one school and not the other, can I still come?

A. Yes, you can still come to the school to which you have been admitted to pursue a single degree if you do not get into both schools or decide to accept only one school’s offer.

Q. What is the admissions committee looking for in candidates for these dual degrees?

A. We want applicants who have a passion and demonstrated interest in issues that fall at the intersection of policy and law. We seek highly qualified applicants because we believe we are creating future leaders—those who will help shape our nation’s social policies and guide our country’s involvement in international affairs.
The program itself is rigorous and challenging, and applicants should have a very strong record of academic achievement. Ideally, they will also have some work experience that provides them with exposure to their fields of interest.

Q. Where can I get information about applying?

A. Each school’s admissions application is on its website and may be accessed here:
LBJ School MPAff: http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/degreeprograms/mpaff/admissions
LBJ School MGPS: http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/degreeprograms/mgps/admissions
UT School of Law: http://www.utexas.edu/law/admissions/

On your admissions application to each school, be sure to check the box indicating that you are applying for a dual degree program.

Q. I am already an enrolled student at the LBJ School or the Law School. Can I apply to this program?

A. Students who have begun their studies at either the LBJ School or the Law School are not eligible for the three-year dual degree program; however, they are encouraged to contact dual degree coordinator Prof. Michele Deitch at michele.deitch@austin.utexas.edu to discuss the possibility of a four-year joint degree.

Q. Who should I talk to if I have questions about admissions? What about if I have questions about the programs?

A. For questions about the admissions process, please contact the LBJ School Admissions Coordinator at ljbadmit@uts.cc.utexas.edu or the Law School Admissions office at admissions@law.utexas.edu.

For questions about the dual degree programs or to discuss whether this is the right option for you, contact the graduate advisor, Prof. Michele Deitch, at michele.deitch@austin.utexas.edu.