

MASTER OF LEGAL STUDIES (MLS)

Overview

The MLS program is designed for non-law professionals who want to gain an understanding of the U.S. legal system to improve their performance in law-related job responsibilities, understand industry legal challenges, and expand their career opportunities.

MLS Admission Requirements

- Applicants must have received a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university before enrolling at William & Mary Law.
- Applicants are expected to have an overall grade point average of 3.0 or greater on a 4.0 scale.
- Applicants must have at least six months prior work experience in the applicable field of concentration.

MLS Application Checklist

1. Law School Application: Apply through the William & Mary Application portal (https://wm-recruitment.my.site.com/TX_SiteLogin?startURL=%2FTargetX_Portal__PB).
2. Required Personal Statement: Students should consider the personal statement as their unique opportunity to share with the admissions committee who they are and why they are interested in the Master of Legal Studies program and William & Mary Law School.
3. Official transcripts from all institutions previously attended, even if a degree was not earned
4. A resume or CV
5. Letter of Recommendation: One (1) letter of recommendation from a professional or academic recommender is required.

Key Admission Dates for the MLS Program

Semester	Application Opens	Application Closes	Program Starts
Fall 2026	January 1, 2026	August 10, 2026	August 24, 2026
Spring 2027	July 1, 2026	December 7, 2026	January 11, 2027
Summer 2027	January 1, 2027	April 22, 2027	May 10, 2027

Transfer Credits

Students who have earned master's-level course credits prior to matriculation at William & Mary may be eligible to transfer up to eight (8) credits toward the MLS. Transfer credit requests are reviewed by the Program Director and Assistant Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs.

Transfer credits completed post-matriculation will not be considered for transfer.

The Online MLS requires the completion of 32 credits. The program consists of 16 credits in required courses, 4 credits in restricted electives, and 12 credits in a concentration. Concentrations offered are Compliance and Risk Management, Health Law, Finance Law, Environmental Law, and Law of Emerging Technologies.

Required Courses and Credit Hours

The Online MLS requires the completion of 32 credit hours. All courses are offered in a 100 percent asynchronous format. Each course contains optional synchronous elements that provide students opportunities to interact directly with faculty and classmates, though these components are not required. Most students complete the program on a part-time pace in 4 semesters and will enroll for 4-8 credit hours per semester. Students should plan to take courses in the spring, summer, and fall. Students are required to complete a ten-hour, online, asynchronous orientation prior to beginning coursework.

Required Courses

The online MLS curriculum consists of core general law courses, electives, and concentration-specific courses to build expertise in specific topic areas. All core courses are required.

Code	Title	Hours
Core Courses		
LAW 810	Intro US Law and Legal System	3
LAW 811	Law, Ethics, Responsible Ldrsp	1
LAW 812	Contract Law:Interp & Strategy	4
LAW 813	Business Associations/Org Mgmt	4
LAW 814	Reg Law: Antitrust,Privacy,Tax	4
Restricted Electives		
Students are required to select and complete 2 elective courses for a total of 4 elective credit hours.		4
LAW 890	Cybersecurity and Privacy	
LAW 891	Dispute Resolution	
LAW 892	Project Finance Basics	
LAW 893	Directed Independent Study	
Concentration Courses		
Students are required to complete 12 credit hours in their chosen concentration.		12
Compliance and Risk Management Concentration		
Emerging Technologies Law		
Finance Concentration		
Health Law		
Total Hours		32

Compliance and Risk Management Concentration Courses

Code	Title	Hours
LAW 830	Risk Management and Liability	4
LAW 832	The Regulatory Landscape	4
LAW 833	Compliance Strat/Org Integratn	4
Total Hours		12

Emerging Technologies Law

Code	Title	Hours
LAW 820	AI and the Law	4
LAW 821	Cybersecurity and the Law	4
LAW 822	Ethics & Regulation of Biotech	4
Total Hours		12

Finance Concentration Courses

Code	Title	Hours
LAW 840	Consumer Financial Law	4
LAW 841	Banking Law Fundamentals	4
LAW 843	Investment Management Regulati	4
Total Hours		12

Health Law

Code	Title	Hours
LAW 850	Health Law Frameworks and Regu	4
LAW 851	Healthcare Administration	4
LAW 852	Policy, Patient Rights & Hlthca	4
Total Hours		12

Environmental Law

Anticipated launch Spring 2027

The environmental law concentration requires the completion of 16 credits in required courses, 4 credits in restricted electives, and 12 credits in environmental law specific concentration courses.

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Change to Concentration

Students are permitted to change their concentration only after matriculation into the program. A concentration change may be made one time during a student's enrollment in the program. No additional concentration changes will be approved.

Transfer Credits

Students who have earned master 's-level course credits prior to matriculation at William & Mary may be eligible to transfer up to eight (8) credits toward the MLS. Transfer credit requests are reviewed by the Program Director and Assistant Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs. Transfer credits completed post-matriculation will not be considered for transfer.

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Grading

All courses in the program will be graded on an A through F scale: A, Excellent; B, Good; C, Minimum Pass; and grade below C, Fail. Students

may not repeat a course in which a minimum grade of C was received, unless a petition to do so is approved by the Associate Dean for Online and Executive Education. If a course is repeated, the student will pay tuition to retake it, and the first grade remains on the student's record and is included in the cumulative GPA. Though any grade below a C is considered fail, the grading system allows for grades C- through F and identifies quality points for these grades. These grades are included in the cumulative GPA. Grade distribution (a curve or mean GPA) will not be integrated in MLS grading. A student may not elect to be graded on an Honors/Pass/Fail scale.

Law grades in courses graded by standard letter grade have quality points from which student grade point average is determined:

- A (4.0), A- (3.7)
- B+ (3.3), B (3.0), B- (2.7)
- C+ (2.3), C (2.0), C- (1.7), D (1.0), and
- F (fail - 0 quality points that will factor into the grade point average; no credit is earned).

The grade of A+ is not awarded as a final course grade.

Other grades that have no effect on grade point average may be on a student's transcript:

- **P**; transfer credit from another institution - students must request permission to "visit" another institution or an institution's abroad program and must seek approval to register in specific courses. To transfer, grades in approved credits must be a "C" or better and will come to the W&M transcript as a P (pass)
- **I**; incomplete-can only be given with permission of the Associate Dean for Online and Executive Education, and is never given to a graduating student in the semester they are graduating
- **O**; satisfactory audit-no credit earned
- **U**; unsatisfactory audit-no credit earned

Grade Review, Appeals, and Grade Changes

Students have the right to discuss their academic performance with the instructor of record regarding examinations, papers, presentations, class participation, experiential learning activities, or any other work submitted in partial or complete satisfaction of course requirements. The purpose of such discussions is to promote student learning and understanding of the evaluation process. These conversations may include discussion of:

- The strengths and weaknesses of the student's work;
- The grading criteria and standards used in evaluating the work;
- The student's performance relative to the stated course requirements; and
- Other matters related to academic performance and assessment.

These discussions are intended to provide feedback and clarification and do not, by themselves, constitute a request for a grade change.

Students who believe a final grade was assigned improperly or that established grading procedures were not followed may seek review through the Law School's grade appeal process. A written appeal must be submitted in accordance with the procedures and timelines established by the Law School. Appeals will be reviewed through the

appropriate academic channels, and decisions may be further appealed in accordance with Law School policy. The decision of the Dean, or the Dean's designee, shall be final.

Final grades are presumed to be accurate and final once submitted. A grade may be changed only in limited circumstances, including the correction of an administrative, clerical, calculation, or recording error, or the resolution of an approved Incomplete grade in accordance with policy. Grade changes may not be used to re-evaluate previously graded work, provide additional opportunities to improve a grade after the conclusion of a course, or alter a grade based solely on a student's academic standing or grade point average.

Only the instructor of record may initiate a grade change request, and all requests must be submitted and approved in accordance with procedures and established deadlines.

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GPA Requirements

A minimum cumulative GPA of 2.75, the general standard expected of students in William & Mary graduate programs, is required to graduate.

The Curve and Ranking

MLS students are not affected by nor count towards the curve, and they are not ranked.

Academic Probation and Dismissal

Students will be placed on academic probation if:

- Cumulative GPA falls below 2.75 will be placed on academic probation. Notifications of probation will include the specific GPA a student must achieve in subsequent coursework to return to good academic standing and meet the minimum cumulative GPA requirement of 2.75.
- Receives a failing grade (any grade lower than a C) in any course at any time during the program. Students will remain on academic probation through program completion. A second failing grade will result in dismissal from the program.

A student will be dismissed from the program if any of the following conditions are met:

1. The student cannot mathematically achieve the minimum GPA of 2.75 within the remaining credit hours required to complete the degree;
2. Receives two or more failing grades (any grade lower than a C) in any course at any time during the program;
3. The student fails to achieve a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5 upon completion of 16 credit hours in the program; or
4. The student fails to achieve a cumulative GPA of at least 2.75 upon completion of 32 credit hours (program completion).

Academic dismissal will be recorded on the student's official transcript. Students who are academically dismissed prior to their final semester

may petition the Academic Advisory Committee for reinstatement. The Committee's decision on such petitions is final. All petitions for reinstatement must be typed and filed with the Office of the Vice Dean. Email petitions must be sent from the student's official William & Mary (.wm) email account, and the student is responsible for confirming receipt. A student who has been dismissed, reinstated, and subsequently dismissed again is not eligible to petition for reinstatement. Students are encouraged to review guidance and procedures for submitting a Petition for Reinstatement (<https://wm1693.box.com/s/cv2950udnpqxl6fpygk90290htnq1c4s>).

These regulations apply to all degree candidates and are intended to ensure that students who is unable to raise their GPA to the minimum required for graduation can be dismissed and will not incur further financial obligations for coursework that will not lead to degree completion.

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Graduation Requirements and Degree Completion

To graduate with an MLS degree, a student must:

- Complete a total of 32 credit hours;
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.75; and
- Apply online for graduation beginning February 15, but no later than September 2, in the calendar year prior to their graduation date. For Class of 2027, MLS seeking students, if graduating January, May, or August 2027, students are required to apply for graduation beginning February 15, 2026 but no later than September 1, 2026.