

SCHOOL OF LAW

William & Mary Law School

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<https://law.wm.edu>

Accreditation

William & Mary Law School is historically known as the Marshall-Wythe School of Law and has been accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA) since 1932, and pursuant to Standard 509(b)(9), approved by the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. For more information regarding ABA accreditation contact: Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the American Bar Association, 321 North Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60654, (312) 988-6738.

History

In 1779, William & Mary established the very first law school in America. William & Mary's program in law was established to implement many of the ideals of the American Revolution, as it was thought that well-educated citizen lawyers would make particularly appropriate leaders for the new republic. Our first law professor, George Wythe, who was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, said that William & Mary aspired "to form such characters as may be fit to succeed those which have been ornamental and useful in the national councils of America."

- William & Mary is the second oldest institution of higher learning in America.
- William & Mary was the first to offer professional education in law (1779).
- Three American presidents—Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe and John Tyler—were educated at William & Mary. (Four if we count George Washington's surveyor's license.) Jefferson (<https://www.wm.edu/about/history/tj/>) went on to read law with George Wythe, a Williamsburg lawyer and one of the most distinguished lawyers in colonial America. Wythe became William & Mary's and the nation's first professor of law in 1779.
- The first degree in common law awarded by any university in the world was awarded by William & Mary to William Cabell in 1793.
- The first woman to graduate from William & Mary Law School was Virginia Mister, who graduated in 1937.
- The first African American to graduate from William & Mary Law School was Edward A. Travis, who earned his B.C.L. in 1954.

Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision

William & Mary Law School educates lawyers, advocates, and leaders who are ready for the challenges of an ever-changing profession. Our commitment to an inclusive environment, where academic excellence is celebrated and important ideas are generated, remains constant. Together, we cultivate personal and professional lives of purpose, serving our communities and the world.

Mission

William & Mary Law School provides an exceptional education for tomorrow's lawyers. As the nation's first law school, we maintain an enduring tradition of intellectual and professional excellence. We improve legal systems here and abroad through a commitment to the classroom, influential scholarship, and service to the public. Our students become highly skilled advocates, ready to serve their clients and their communities with thoughtful engagement and unwavering integrity. We recognize the challenges of our history and our responsibility to pursue the realization of justice through the rule of law. Above all, we strive to be a diverse and close-knit community, inclusive in the broadest sense and defined by a shared commitment to the rigorous and open-minded study of the law.

Values

We embrace William & Mary's core values (<https://www.wm.edu/about/administration/vision-mission-values/>) - belonging, curiosity, excellence, flourishing, integrity, respect, and service - as well as these additional values that make the Law School a place where all can feel a sense of pride and achievement:

- **Leadership.** We serve our communities by leading as passionate, tireless, and ethical advocates who understand the immense responsibilities of the profession and the law's ability to affect society.
- **Insight.** We promote intellectual and professional excellence, academic freedom, and the pursuit of ideas and understanding.
- **Inclusion.** We strive to be an inclusive and supportive law school that welcomes and respects the diverse perspectives, experiences, and contributions of each member of our community.
- **Community.** We create a culture that fosters lifelong connections, promotes giving back to the Law School, and inspires our graduates to make positive contributions to their communities throughout their professional lives.
- **Progress.** We continue to be a leader in legal education by delivering a forward-thinking curriculum and producing meaningful research, constantly seeking to move beyond the status quo to improve our communities, the law, and the world.

Programs

Program	School	Degree	Academic Level
American Legal Studies (LLM in American Legal Studies)	School of Law	Master of Laws	Law
American Legal Studies, Online (LLM in American Legal Studies)	School of Law	Master of Laws	Law
Juris Doctor in Law (JD in Law)	School of Law	Juris Doctor	Law
Juris Doctor in Law, Business Law Concentration (JD in Law)	School of Law	Juris Doctor	Law

Legal Studies, Online (MLS in Legal Studies)	School of Law	Master of Legal Studies	Law
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