Juris Master Program Assessment Report
2022-2023 academic year

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Introduction

The Juris Master (JM) degree is designed for professionals in non-law fields who want to gain knowledge of law but have no interest in becoming practicing lawyers. It requires 30 credits. The program is primarily online, but JM students may take select JD classes on-campus.

Students complete four required classes at the beginning of the program: Introduction to the American Legal System (IALS), Analysis, Research, and Communication for Professionals (ARC), Contracts for Professionals (Contracts), and Law & Legal Professionals (L&LP). Then the students take electives to complete the program. There are four concentrations: Health Law and Policy, Business Law and Regulation, Employment Law and Human Resources, and Data, Privacy, and Technology.

In the spring of 2022, the Graduate Program Committee approved new learning outcomes for the JM program:

1. By the end of the program, students will be able to identify, examine, and understand legal issues and regulatory frameworks and their potential impacts on their current or anticipated workplace or industry.

2. By the end of the program, students will be able to demonstrate the ability to collaborate effectively with legal professionals regarding legal issues and decisions.

3. By the end of the program, students will be able to demonstrate skills such as critical thinking, issue spotting, risk assessment, problem-solving, and conflict resolution.

4. By the end of the program, students will be able to demonstrate clear and persuasive written and oral communication related to legal and business issues.

5. By the end of the program, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the sources of law and the distinction between federal and state governments and courts in the United States.

6. By the end of the program, students will be able to recognize the relevant practice limitations on non-lawyer professionals who engage with legal issues.

Assessment Plan

We identified assignments in the required introductory classes and in electives that assessed the learning objectives. JM faculty used a rubric when grading assignments in nine courses across all concentrations to determine if the students met the learning objectives. The goal is to have at least 75% of the students meet each learning objective.

We also include data from reflection videos, which were part of the JM Fall Capstone, held in November of 2022. During the Capstone, students had the opportunity to refine their previous written work and to record a video where they reflected on what they learned in the JM program. Finally, this assessment also includes information from a survey sent to graduating students.

Summary

Overall, the assessment results show that we have been teaching to many of the program goals and that a significant number of students have achieved mastery. For those goals, where students are failing to meet the goal or a significant number of students are only approaching the goal, program personnel will reevaluate the readings and assignments chosen for assessment.

JM faculty and program personal selected assignments from required classes as well as electives. As with the previous assessment, program personnel questioned whether courses completed by students at the beginning of their education adequately reflected what students learned in the program. For goals three, five, and six, for example, faculty assessed assignments from Contracts, IALS, and L&LP respectively. These are the three classes that students take during their two semesters, and thus it is likely that the work produced therein would not be reflective of skills obtained "by the end of the program," as the program goals require. That said, the assessment data indicates high percentage of mastery for those program goals. Program personnel will continue to work with JM faculty to identify or design assignments that would be good indicators of mastery of goals three, five and six.

JM Learning Objective #1: By the end of the program, students will be able to identify, examine, and understand legal issues and regulatory frameworks and their potential impacts on their current or anticipated workplace or industry.

Evaluation Method 1: Faculty Assessment Form

JM Faculty evaluated the following assignments for this goal:

- A Compliance Manual Final Project from Business Oversight and Compliance.
- An Advocacy Letter to Legislature Re: Affordable Care Act and Health Care Reform from Health Care Regulation
- A final essay from Data Management, Privacy, and Cybersecurity in which students designed a system to protect personal data, to mitigate cyberthreats and in compliance with U.S. regulations.

The faculty selected 12 samples from Business Oversight and Compliance and Data Management and 9 samples from Health Care Regulation for evaluation. The assignments are from an upper-level elective courses and students from each of the four concentrations take at least one of these electives. In each assignment, the students apply their knowledge of laws and regulations to a particular industry.

Goal #1	Mastery/Meets Goal	Approaches Goal	Fails to meet goal
	79%	18%	3%

For this goal, faculty indicated that we are teaching towards that goal and majority of students across all concentrations have mastered this goal. The percentage of students who have mastered or who are approaching mastery of this goal suggest that we are teaching to this goal effectively. The assessment also showed that the content of these assignments was appropriate for this student population because many of the students in the JM program work in a compliance related field.

<u>Evaluation Method 2: Reflection Video</u>

Overall, students shared that the JM program improved their understanding of the legal issues and regulatory frameworks as applied to their workplace. For example, one student, who works as a Diversity, Equity, and Compliance officer, commented that the JM Program prepared him to investigate employee relation cases and to provide support for his decisions in the areas of dispute resolution and employee rights. Another student stated that the JM Program "helped him navigate the regulation and compliance requirements of the higher education field."

<u>Evaluation Method 3: Graduate Survey</u>

Based on survey results, many respondents indicated that they discuss legal issues or frameworks with lawyers as a part of their professional responsibilities. 16% of the respondents indicated that they frequently discussed legal issues and 50% stated that they sometimes had these discussions. In addition, 42% of respondents indicated that they applied cases, statutes, and regulations to solving issues in their organization. The survey results suggest that the goals of the program are aligned with students' professional needs.

JM Learning Objective #2: By the end of the program, students will be able to demonstrate the ability to collaborate effectively with legal professionals regarding legal issues and decisions.

<u>Evaluation Method 1: Faculty Assessment Form</u>

- An assignment from Business Transactions in Practice where students assessed how an attorney's due diligence report affected an M&A Deal.
- An assignment from Law and Legal Professionals where students created criteria for selecting an arbitration provider and process.

The faculty selected 12 samples from both Business Transactions in Practice (BTIP) and Law and Legal Professionals for evaluation. BTIP is an upper-level elective course and Law and Legal Professionals is a required course. In the BTIP assignment, students must review a due diligence report prepared by an attorney in an M&A deal simulation, identify issues, and suggest

changes based on business goals. In the Law and Legal Professionals course, students assessed several arbitration providers and processes for their effectiveness, quality, and value.

Goal #2	Mastery/Meets Goal	Approaches Goal	Fails to meet goal
	67%	29%	4%

The assessment of goal three materials indicates that most students demonstrated mastery or approached mastery of this goal. These findings suggest that our program does teach to this goal, but we will strive to have more students meet or master the goal. Based on faculty feedback, students failed to meet the goal because of their efforts in the course not because of the quality of the material or teaching. The students who failed to meet the goal did not spend enough time on their assignments throughout the course. While we cannot control student participation, we will work with faculty to create or modify assignments so that students have additional opportunities to demonstrate their ability to collaborate with legal professionals.

Evaluation Method 2: Reflection Video

Several students indicated that the JM program and their knowledge of the law has helped them feel more confident in their interaction with attorneys. For example, one student explained that the JM program enabled her to "communicate more effectively with JDs." Her work product has improved because she understands when she needs to engage her general counsel's office and when she can "work more independently" from general counsel.

Evaluation Method 3: Graduate Survey

The survey results show that 50% of the graduates discuss legal issues or frameworks with lawyers. 50% of the respondents also indicate that graduates sometimes partner with the legal team at their workplace. Given how often JM students collaborate with legal professionals in their workplace, it is important to create additional assignments where students are able to develop their collaboration skills and move closer to mastery of this goal.

JM Learning Objective #3: By the end of the program, students will be able to demonstrate skills such as critical thinking, issue spotting, risk assessment, problem-solving, and conflict resolution.

Evaluation Method 1: Faculty Assessment Form

- An assignment from Contracts for Professionals where students analyze various contract law issues that arise from a detailed factual scenario.

Faculty selected 11 samples from Contracts for Professionals which is a required course. To show their mastery of the program goal three, students analyzed various contract law issues. The assignment involved critical thinking, issue spotting, and problem-solving.

Goal #3	Mastery/Meets Goal	Approaches Goal	Fails to meet goal
	64%	36%	0%

The assessment of goal three materials indicates that most students demonstrated mastery or approached mastery of this goal. Although students usually take this course in their second semester, the assessment outcomes suggest that students have a solid grasp of the skills outlined in the goal. These findings suggest that our program does teach to this goal, but we will strive to have more students meet or master this goal. In future years, we will evaluate assignments from the Dispute Resolution class that students take midway through the program. At that point in the program, a larger percentage of students should demonstrate mastery of this program goal.

Evaluation Method 2: Reflection Video

In the reflection videos, students commented on their improved ability to think critically, and problem solve. For example, one student who works with health care contracts, stated that the JM program "developed a critical thinking pattern and skill that superseded what [she] was capable of before."

<u>Evaluation Method 3: Graduate Survey</u>

In the graduate survey, 100% of the respondents stated they use critical thinking, issue spotting, risk assessment, problem-solving, and negotiating in their workplace. The JM program has improved the students' ability to perform these tasks in their professional lives. More than half of the respondents said the JM program has improved their ability to issue-spot and problem solve by a "great deal," and at least 70% of respondents indicated that they fine-tuned their critical thinking and negotiating skills a "great deal." For program goal three, the faculty assessment and the graduate survey results demonstrate a high level of mastery.

JM Learning Objective #4: By the end of the program, students will be able to demonstrate clear and persuasive written and oral communication related to legal and business issues.

<u>Evaluation Method 1: Faculty Assessment Form</u>

- A persuasive memorandum from Analysis, Research, and Communication for Professionals in which students advocate for cottage food regulations based on an assigned role within the food industry.
- An Op-Ed about the cost of health care and health insurance from Health Care Regulations in which students wrote an opinion column about the cost of health insurance.

For program goal four, faculty sampled the assignments from 12 students in ARC and 10 students in Health Care Regulation. For the ARC assignment, students assumed a particular role in a controversy about cottage food regulation, and they offered analysis and a recommendation to a governmental organization that was considering a range of regulatory options. ARC is a required class that students take in the first semester of the program and Health Care Regulation is an upper-level elective.

Goal #4	Mastery/Meets Goal	Approaches Goal	Fails to meet goal
	77%	18%	5%

The assessment of the two assignments indicates that most students demonstrated mastery or approached mastery of this goal. These findings suggest that our program does teach to this goal, and that we have a significant number of students mastering the goal to demonstrate teaching effectiveness. The percentage of students who demonstrated mastery of the program goal suggests that these assignments are appropriately aligned to the interests and needs of JM students.

Evaluation Method 2: Reflection Video

Several students commented that they saw an improvement in their analytical and persuasive writing skills after completing the JM program. For example, one student comment that his "research and analysis skills helped [him] identify the various policy and legal considerations required to make informed process and policy decisions."

Evaluation Method 3: Graduate Survey

In the graduate survey, 100% of the respondents indicated that written communication is an important part of their professional lives. Over half the respondents claimed that the JM program fine-tuned their writing skills "a great deal" and another 28% of respondents stated that their writing skills were "much" improved. The high percentage of student mastery and graduate satisfaction with these skills suggests that the program goals and student expectations are well aligned.

JM Learning Objective #5: By the end of the program, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the sources of law and the distinction between federal and state governments and courts in the United States.

Evaluation Method 1: Faculty Assessment Form

- An essay from Introduction to the American Legal System in which students assessed the powers enumerated by the U.S. Constitution and evaluate how the decision in *Marbury v. Madison* affected the constitutional doctrines of separation of powers and checks and balances.

- An assignment from Introduction to the American Legal System where students analyzed the concept of precedent as it relates to five cases decided in New York state courts.

For program goal five, faculty evaluated student performance on the two assignments listed above. The faculty sampled the assignments from 10 students for each assignment. IALS is a required class that students take in the first semester of the JM program.

Goal #5	Mastery/Meets Goal	Approaches Goal	Fails to meet goal
	65%	30%	5%

The assessment of the two assignments indicates that most students demonstrated mastery or approached mastery of this goal. However, since almost one third of the students are only approaching mastery, we will work to have more students master or meet this goal. In future years, we will identify assignments from upper-level electives, like Administrative Law for Professionals, to determine whether more students are mastering this goal. Administrative Law for Professionals introduces students to additional sources of law, specifically the rulemaking process at the federal level.

Evaluation Method 2: Reflection Video

Several students indicated their ability to navigate case law, regulations, and statutes has improved significantly over the course of the program. For example, one student commented that he was better able to "dissect cases" after completing the program. Another student stated that the program has "improved [her] legal literacy."

Evaluation Method 3: Graduate Survey

Based on the survey results, at least 50% of the respondents indicated that they sometimes read or interpret statutes and regulations in their professional lives. Another 28% of graduates stated they "frequently" read and interpret these sources of law. Given how often JM students interact with these sources of law, it is important to create additional assignments or opportunities where students can increase their knowledge of these sources of law and move towards mastery of this goal.

JM Learning Objective #6: By the end of the program, students will be able to recognize the relevant practice limitations on non-lawyer professionals who engage with legal issues.

Evaluation Method 1: Faculty Assessment Form

- An assignment from Law and Legal Professionals in which students examine the boundaries in which an insurance adjuster can advise someone making someone who is making an insurance claim.

For goal six, faculty evaluated how 12 students performed on the assignment above. Law and Legal Professionals is a required class that most students take during the second semester of the JM Program. However, the class can be taken at any time during the program.

Goal #6	Mastery/Meets Goal	Approaches Goal	Fails to meet goal
	83%	17%	0%

The assessment of the Law and Legal Professionals assignment indicates that all students have either mastered or approached mastery of this program goal. These findings suggest that our program does teach to this goal, and that we have a significant number of students mastering the goal to demonstrate teaching effectiveness. Furthermore, the percentage of students mastering the goal shows that the assignment was carefully crafted and that its content was appropriate for this student population and this program goal.

Evaluation Method 2: Reflection Video

Several students commented that the JM program improved their understanding of the boundaries between the services lawyers and non-lawyers can provide. After completing this program and the Law and Legal Professionals course in particular, students are better prepared to engage with legal issues in their industry and avoid the unauthorized practice of law. For example, one student, who is a social worker, stated that she is more "cognizant" of the "legal and ethical choices social workers need to make when working with children and families and when creating contracts."

<u>Evaluation Method 3: Graduate Survey</u>

The graduate survey does not address the graduates' understanding of the limitations of non-lawyers who engage in legal issues. In future years, program personnel will add questions related to the graduates' understanding of the unauthorized practice of law.

I have reviewed this JM Program Assessment Report and confirm that ELS is engaged in a systematic process of assessment and continuous improvement.

Signature: _____

Title:　　　Dean, Emory University School of Law