Stanford’s Joint Degree Programs in Law History: J.D./Ph.D. & J.D./M.A.

Overview

Stanford offers two joint degree program in law and history: (1) a J.D./Ph.D. program and (2) a J.D./M.A. program. Both programs afford substantial savings in time and money as compared with the separate pursuit of each degree. The programs are designed to provide students interested in the study of law and history with top-level training in each field, as well as in the complex and fascinating intersections between the two. Students have access to the full range of resources on campus—including not only courses, but also conferences, lectures, and workshops—devoted to law and history. For an overview of many law-and-history-related activities on campus, please visit the website for the Stanford Center for Law and History: https://law.stanford.edu/stanford-center-for-law-and-history-sclh/.

Joint J.D./Ph.D.

The basic structure of the J.D./Ph.D. program is outlined below. But please note that the program has been purposefully designed to ensure flexibility so as to make it possible to address each individual student’s needs and interests.

Timing of Applications

If you are interested in the joint degree program, you must apply and gain entrance separately to the Law School and the History Department. We encourage you, if possible, to apply to both the Law School and the History Department at the same time, as this maximizes the potential for cost- and time-savings and best facilitates a truly integrated, joint program. However, students who are already enrolled in either the Law School or the History Department may also apply for admission to the other program and for joint degree status.

Applications to the Law School’s J.D. program are accepted on a rolling basis, usually between September 1 and February 1. By contrast, applications for the Ph.D. program in History are typically due in early December. To ensure that you will be considered as a joint applicant, we therefore urge you to submit your law-school application around the same time as your Ph.D. application (and definitely no later than the December deadline for graduate school applications).

In completing the online Law School Admission Council [LSAC] application form, you will be directed to a set of questions unique to Stanford Law School—including a page inquiring whether you are applying to “Other Stanford Programs.” Please select “History” from the drop-down menu.

The History Department application does not include a separate box to check by means of which you can indicate that you are also applying to another Stanford program. But in writing the required “Statement of Purpose,” please be sure to specify that you are also applying for admission into the Law School’s J.D. program (or that you are already enrolled in that program...
and are seeking to pursue a joint degree).

Successful applicants have generally communicated with faculty advisors in both the Law School and the History Department prior to applying and are able to offer in their application essays a compelling intellectual rationale for their interest in a joint degree program.

Course of Study

Joint degree students are encouraged to begin their course of study by spending the first year in the Law School, followed by a full year in the History Department, as this sequencing is best for avoiding disruption of the required colloquia that many Ph.D. students are required to take. Thereafter, students may choose courses from either program regardless of where enrolled. That said, if there is a compelling reason, students may instead opt to commence the joint program by enrolling in the History Department for one year, followed by a year in the Law School. You are advised to discuss your plans in advance with advisors both in the Law School and in the History Department.

Wherever you choose to begin the joint program, you must be enrolled full time in the Law School during the first year of J.D. studies and full time in the History Department during the first-year of the Ph.D. program.

Please note that if you do choose to begin your coursework in the History Department, rather than in the Law School, it is vital that you complete the paperwork required to matriculate at the Law School right at the beginning of your very first year of coursework. Otherwise, you may be unable to cross-credit this first-year of history coursework toward your J.D. degree (as detailed below).

Joint degree students are expected to take the oral examinations required for the Ph.D. no later than the spring of their fourth year at Stanford.

Cross-Crediting of Units

The Law School requires students to earn 111 units in order to obtain the J.D. The History Department requires students to earn 135 units to obtain the Ph.D. This is a combined total of 246 units. But students may save about a year of coursework (or somewhat more) through cross-crediting some of these units.

The Law School cross-credits toward the J.D. up to 31 units earned in the History Department. The History Department has the flexibility to cross-credit toward the Ph.D. up to 23 units earned in the Law School. The Department makes case-by-case decisions about which courses earned in the Law School it will credit toward the Ph.D. So if there are courses in the Law School that you believe are relevant to your Ph.D. studies and doctoral dissertation, you should discuss with your doctoral advisor whether these are appropriate for cross-crediting.
Tuition and Financial Aid

Students pursuing the joint degree programs are eligible to obtain substantial savings in the cost of tuition as compared with those who pursue the degrees separately.

Through admission into the Ph.D. program in history, students obtain five years and fours summers of financial support, including full tuition and a stipend. As concerns the law degree, a year of tuition is saved through the cross-crediting of units noted above. Moreover, the university excuses an additional year of law-school tuition. This means that students need at most pay for one year of law-school tuition in order to receive both degrees.

As concerns the one year of tuition for which students must pay, joint degree students are eligible for the full range of need-based financial aid arrangements made available by the Law School. Moreover, entering J.D./Ph.D. students may also apply for University funding to cover some or all of these law school tuition fees that are not already included in our generous need-based scholarships. This funding will be awarded on a competitive basis and applications will be made available upon admission to both degree programs.

Applicants are also encouraged to consider applying to the Knight-Hennessy Scholars Program, which provides very generous funding for graduate training and research at Stanford. But please be aware that the deadline for applying to this program is much earlier than the deadline for applying to pursue either the J.D. or the Ph.D. in History—namely, September 12, 2018. Joint-degree applicants who choose to submit applications for the Knight-Hennessy Scholars Program must still submit separate applications to the law school and the history department (as described above). Details can be found at: https://knighthennessy.stanford.edu/

Joint J.D./M.A.

Timing of Applications

If you are interested in the joint degree program, you must apply and gain entrance separately to the Law School and the History Department. We strongly encourage you, if possible, to apply to both the Law School and the History Department either (1) at the same time or (2) during your first year as a law student, as this maximizes the potential for cost- and time-savings. Students in their second year of law school may also apply to the M.A. program in History, but they are less likely to be able to complete both degrees in a total of three years and at the cost of only the law degree.

Applications to the Law School’s J.D. program are accepted on a rolling basis, generally between September 1 and February 1. By contrast, applications for the M.A. program in History are due in early December.
In completing the online Law School Admission Council [LSAC] application form, you will be directed to a set of questions unique to Stanford Law School—including a page inquiring whether you are applying to “Other Stanford Programs.” Please select “History” from the drop-down menu.

The History Department application does not include a separate box to check by means of which you can indicate that you are also applying to another Stanford program. But in writing the required “Statement of Purpose,” please be sure to specify that you are also applying for admission into the Law School’s J.D. program (or that you are already enrolled in that program and are seeking to pursue a joint degree).

Successful applicants have generally communicated with faculty advisors in both the Law School and the History Department prior to applying and are able to offer in their application essays a compelling intellectual rationale for their interest in a joint degree program.

Course of Study

Students pursuing the joint J.D./M.A. must begin their course of study by spending the first year in the Law School. Starting in their second year, they will begin to take classes offered by the History Department, as well as by the Law School, and should be able to complete both degrees by the end of the third year.

Cross-Crediting of Units

The Law School requires students to earn 111 units in order to obtain the J.D. The History Department requires students to earn 45 units to obtain the M.A. This is a combined total of 156 units.

The Law School cross-credits toward the J.D. up to 31 units earned in the History Department. The History Department has the flexibility to cross-credit toward the M.A. up to 10 units earned in the Law School. The Department makes case-by-case decisions about which courses earned in the Law School it will credit toward the M.A. So if there are courses in the Law School that you believe are relevant to your M.A. studies, you should discuss with your History-Department advisor whether these are appropriate for cross-crediting.

Tuition and Financial Aid

Students are responsible for the cost of tuition for the joint J.D./M.A program. If the joint program is completed in three years through the cross-crediting of units noted above, the student pays law tuition for three years, and that is all. Students who take more than three years to complete the two degrees will be charged History-Department tuition for any quarters exceeding three years.
Joint J.D./M.A. degree students are eligible for the full range of need-based financial aid arrangements made available by the Law School. But they are not eligible for fellowships or other research-related funds offered by the History Department.