

Master of Laws in Environmental and Land Use Law Academic Assessment Plan

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Office of the Provost

*University of
Florida*

*Institutional
Assessment*

*Continuous Quality
Enhancement*

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Academic Assessment Plan for Master of Laws in Environmental and Land Use Law

Levin College of Law

A. Mission

This one-year, post-J.D. program provides an opportunity for law school graduates to either develop or enhance their competency in environmental and land use law. We strive to provide academic and skills training opportunities by providing both doctrinal courses and opportunities for clinical and field courses (including current courses in Belize, the Florida Everglades, and Costa Rica). The LL.M. program also fosters interdisciplinary competency by requiring students to complete 6 of the 26 required credits from relevant graduate-level courses in UF departments outside of the law school (including offerings in wildlife ecology, interdisciplinary ecology, environmental engineering, and soil & water science).

The LL.M. program aligns itself with the College's mission by educating professionals and advancing legal scholarship. <http://www.law.ufl.edu/about/about-uf-law/vision-mission> The Program provides an opportunity for students to develop a "high level of accomplishment" in a specific area of law; to "develop the skills necessary" to practice environmental and land use law through its interdisciplinary component.

The LL.M. program and College of Law missions align directly with the university's threefold mission, in its emphasis on teaching (developing enhanced competency in environmental and land use law), research and scholarship (advancing legal scholarship by requiring each LL.M. student to produce a research paper of "publishable quality") and service (providing students with clinical and other opportunities to use their legal skills to serve the public). Preparing legal professionals to serve their clients, the justice system and the public helps to serve the university's aspiration to "advance by strengthening the human condition and improving the quality of life".

B. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

SLO Type	Student Learning Outcome	Assessment Method	Degree Delivery
Knowledge	Students identify, explain, describe, and apply the fundamental rules, policies and issues relevant to environmental and/or land use law.	Through reaction papers evaluated by the director and in a substantial research project evaluated by the Director, ninety percent of students will demonstrate a thorough understanding and comprehension of the fundamental rules, policies and issues relevant to environmental and/or land use law.	Campus
Skills	Students conduct and apply environmental and/or land use research and scholarship.	Through a substantial written research project of publishable quality evaluated by environmental and land use faculty members and the Director, ninety percent of students will demonstrate the ability to conduct, apply and communicate environmental and/or land use research and scholarship.	Campus
Professional Behavior	Students identify the ethical rules and professional responsibilities applicable to environmental and land use lawyers.	Ninety percent of students will demonstrate satisfactory awareness and comprehension of such rules and responsibilities through their attendance at and participation in the Environmental Capstone Colloquium, organized and evaluated by environmental and land use faculty members.	Campus

C. Research

Although this is not specifically a research degree, each candidate for the LL.M. degree must complete a substantial written project of publishable quality in conjunction with a seminar or the Conservation Clinic, approved by an authorized faculty member. Each student must also complete Research Methods in Environmental and Land Use Law which is taught by the Director of the LL.M. Program.

D. Assessment Timeline

Program: Master of Laws in Environmental and Land Use Law

College: Levin College of Law

Assessment	Assessment 1	Assessment 2
SLOs		
Knowledge		
Students identify, explain, describe, and apply fundamental rules, policies, and issues	Assessment of reaction papers at conclusion of Capstone Colloquium	Assessment of substantive knowledge in written project by instructor and Director
Skills		
Conduct and apply legal research and scholarship	Successful completion of requirements for Research Methods course	Final paper assessed by Instructor and Director
Professional Behavior		
Environmental Capstone Colloquium	Assessment by Director of professional conduct and leadership at conclusion of Capstone Colloquium	

E. Assessment Cycle

Assessment Cycle for:

Program: Master of Laws in Environmental and Land Use Law College: Levin College of Law

Analysis and Interpretation: July-May

Program Modifications: Completed by November 15

Dissemination: Completed by May 15

SLOs	Year	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Content Knowledge							
Students identify, explain, describe, and apply rules, policies, and issues				X	X	X	X
Skills							
Conduct and apply legal research and scholarship				X	X	X	X
Professional Behavior							
Completion of Environmental Capstone Colloquium				X	X	X	X

F. Measurement Tools

Knowledge. The assessment of knowledge for students in the LL.M. program includes a combination of the traditional assessment methods used at the College of Law with specialized assessment methods tailored to the LL.M. students are required by their pedagogical needs and their status as graduate students. Students' knowledge is assessed by the Director's review of reaction papers the students submit in connection with the Environmental Capstone Colloquium, in which they demonstrate their knowledge in connection with the assigned reading. In addition, students' knowledge is assessed in the evaluation of their substantial written project. (See Appendix A below).

Skills. Each student must produce a substantial written research project of publishable quality evaluated by environmental and land use faculty members and reviewed by the director. Students must select and develop a topic with faculty assistance and approval. They then develop a working bibliography and research plan. Each student must produce a number of drafts and receive critiques of this work on their way to submitting a final paper. The writing, analytic and research skills are assessed using the rubric attached as Appendix A. The final paper is reviewed by the Director and kept in the student's file.

Professional Behavior. Professional behavior starts with student professionalism. The students participation in the Capstone Colloquium requires their attendance at each session having read the pertinent material and prepared to comment knowledgeably on it upon request by the instructor. In addition, the LL.M. program students serve as group leaders and play a significant role in mentoring and assisting the J.D. students in their preparation for each capstone session. LL.M. students' professionalism is assessed by the Director as part of successful completion of the Environmental and Land Use Law Capstone Colloquium taught by the Director.

G. Assessment Oversight

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Christine A. Klein	Levin College of Law	kleinc@law.ufl.edu	(352) 273-0964
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Appendix A: Rubric for Assessment of SLO #2 (Skills) Completion of Substantial Research Paper

Each LL.M. student is required to complete a substantial research paper as described above.

Criteria	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Proposed thesis statement, outline, and bibliography	Thesis statement is clear and of a scope that can realistically be developed during one academic year; outline lays out a project that will make a meaningful contribution to the existing literature and that amply supports the thesis statement; bibliography shows grasp of subject and identification of suitable research resources.	Thesis statement shows a project that is over- or under-ambitious, reflecting inadequate grasp of subject and failure to identify suitable research resources.
Complete First Draft	Reflects self-initiated critical analysis of a particular area of law. Shows familiarity with the wealth of research materials available to the student. Shows proper research techniques, writing style, topic development and analytical skills. Demonstrates knowledge of basic rules, policies and issues relevant to topic.	Fails to reflect familiarity with relevant research materials, critical analysis or research techniques, or writing style, topic development or analysis of subject are deficient or shows deficiency in knowledge of basic rules, policies, and issues relevant to topic.
Final Paper	A substantial written project of publishable quality that demonstrates original systematic scholarship based on individual research. Must show critical thinking. Requires a final grade of at least a "B". A = Outstanding A- = Very Good B+ = Good B = Satisfactory	Fails to demonstrate original systematic scholarship based on individual research, or critical thinking. Any final grade less than a "B" on the university scale.

Figure 1. University of Florida Graduate/Professional Program Assessment Plan Review Rubric

Related resources are found at <http://www.aa.assessment.edu>

Program:

Year:

Component	Criterion	Rating			Comments
		Met	Partially Met	Not Met	
Mission Statement	Mission statement is articulated clearly.				
	The program mission clearly supports the College and University missions, and includes specific statements describing how it supports these missions.				
Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Assessment Measures	SLOs are stated clearly.				
	SLOs focus on demonstration of student learning.				
	SLOs are measurable.				
	Measurements are appropriate for the SLO.				
Research	Research expectations for the program are clear, concise, and appropriate for the discipline.				
Assessment Map	The Assessment Map indicates the times in the program where the SLOs are assessed and measured.				
	The Assessment Map identifies the assessments used for each SLO.				
Assessment Cycle	The assessment cycle is clear.				
	All student learning outcomes are measured.				
	Data is collected at least once in the cycle.				
	The cycle includes a date or time period for data analysis and interpretation.				
	The cycle includes a date for planning improvement actions based on the data analysis.				
	The cycle includes a date for dissemination of results to the appropriate stakeholders.				

University of Florida Graduate/Professional Program Assessment Plan Review Rubric, continued

Component	Criterion	Rating			Comments
		Met	Partially Met	Not Met	
Measurement Tools	Measurement tools are described clearly and concisely.				
	Measurements are appropriate for the SLOs.				
	Methods and procedures reflect an appropriate balance of direct and indirect methods.				
	The report presents examples of at least one measurement tool.				
Assessment Oversight	Appropriate personnel (coordinator, committee, etc.) charged with assessment responsibilities are identified				