

Important Information for LLM Thesis, Dissertation & Research Portfolio Students

Director of Postgraduate Studies

Contact: marnie.lloyd@vuw.ac.nz

The Director has oversight of the Programme and approves admission, progress reports, examinations, and course choices.

Senior Academic Administrator - Postgraduate

Contact: law-postgraduate@vuw.ac.nz

The Senior Academic Administrator - Postgraduate can assist with general queries and will liaise with the Director when necessary.

Study Rooms

LLM study rooms are located in the Law Library and on the second floor.

Access is by key/swipe card - speak to the Library staff at the service point on the ground floor of the Library.

- LLM Students: Level 2, room 226

Enrolment - Finding a Supervisor and Getting Underway

Before going through the enrolment process, a student must contact the Director of Postgraduate Studies to discuss or confirm supervisory arrangements as enrolment is dependent on supervisor availability.

Students will only receive a Confirmation of Study when the Director is satisfied both that a supervisor is confirmed and that the supervisor is satisfied that the student has presented a viable outline of the proposed research topic.

When preparing your initial outline, you may find the Law School's LLM Research Proposal [template](#) is helpful. The proposal template covers what is required in your formal research proposal.

Students are free to directly approach a prospective [supervisor](#) and, if doing so, should present an outline of the proposed research and discuss it with them. All research proposals and proposed supervisory arrangements will require the approval of the Director before a Confirmation of Study is issued.

If the student has not already approached a supervisor, the Director is happy to help in terms of inspecting/refining an outline and suggesting a suitable academic for the student to approach.

Master's Thesis Regulations

All Master's research students should familiarise themselves with the [Master's Thesis Regulations](#).

Deadlines

- Research Proposal – due within one month of commencement (2 months for part-time students)
- Completion – within 12 months on commencement (24 months* for part-time students)
** Part-time LAWS 592 students must complete the dissertation within 2 years of commencement but have up to 3 years to complete the other courses in their programme of study.*

Word Limits

- **LAWS 591 Thesis** must not exceed 50,000* words, inclusive of all footnotes and other scholarly apparatus (e.g. abstract, tables, bibliography, appendices).
- **LAWS 592 Dissertation** must not exceed 35,000* words in length, inclusive of all footnotes and other scholarly apparatus (e.g. abstract, tables, bibliography, appendices).
**These word limits are exclusive to the LLM and differ from the standard university regulations.*

Formal Approval of Research Proposal

Enrolment in the thesis, dissertation or portfolio must be regarded as “provisional” until the research proposal is approved. Normally students can work on aspects of their proposal as part of LAWS 581: Advanced Legal Study.

The [Master’s Thesis Regulations](#) require that a formal research proposal be submitted to the School Research Committee. For full-time students this is within one month of commencement (two months for part-time). If this proposal is not approved students either will change their enrolment to do the LLM by coursework or withdraw from the programme (with fees adjusted accordingly).

Applications for Financial Support of Research

Criteria for Assessing Postgraduate Students Applications for Financial Support of Research

The following criteria for consideration of applications by postgraduate research students for financial support of their research have been stipulated by the Law Faculty Research and Postgraduate Committee:

1. The need for financial support of research should be clearly set forth in a candidate’s initial application and will be a relevant datum in the scrutiny of the applicant’s proposed candidacy. Application of the following criteria will therefore be relevant to funding needs that were not anticipated at the application stage. In all applications for funding to which these criteria apply, the candidate should provide reasons for not having earlier anticipated the need for financial support. This is particularly the case for LLM students given the standard enrolment period is 1 year and funding needs should have been anticipated before a research proposal is submitted.
2. A very clear nexus between the need for the funding and the successful completion of the PhD or LLM should be demonstrated in the application. It is not anticipated that postgraduate students will receive Law Faculty funding merely to promulgate their research by, for example, attendance at relevant conferences. While such activities may have career benefits, successful candidates (and supervisors who write in support of the application) will need to establish in addition a nexus between the funding and the successful completion of their research.
3. Applicants will be expected to confirm that they have no other sources of funding available.
4. The Associate Dean (Research) may seek advice from the Director of Postgraduate Studies and other relevant faculty members as to an applicant’s contribution to the intellectual environment of the Law Faculty. Such contributions include attendance and participation in postgraduate students’ seminars and faculty academic enrichment events, including faculty and Law Faculty visitor research-in-progress presentations; attendance at public lectures and other events hosted by the Law Faculty and its associated Centres.
5. The Associate Dean (Research) will consult with the Faculty Manager (or as appropriate her delegate) as to relevant budgetary considerations.
7. Applications are contestable and must be submitted **3 months** in advance of the planned event

Applications are submitted online. Please email law-postgraduate@vuw.ac.nz to request access.

Research Proposal: Confirmation of Master’s Thesis Research Proposal Form

Submit the proposal and the [confirmation form](#) to the Senior Academic Administrator - Postgraduate for consideration by the School Research Committee.

Students enrolled in the dissertation (LAWS 592) may submit a somewhat shorter Research Proposal than that submitted for the thesis (LAWS 591).

Extension & Suspension

- Extensions require formal application.
- Students wishing to extend or suspend should initially discuss the matter with their supervisor.
- Extension/suspension applications are submitted by completing the [form](#) and returning it to the Senior Academic Administrator – Postgraduate.
- Extension requests must be accompanied by a detailed plan for completion outlining the time requested.
- A suspension will block access to University services (including supervision).

Progress Reports for Thesis and Dissertation Students

Full-time students are required to complete **two progress reports**

- at the end of the third month of enrolment
- at the start of the eighth month

Part-time students are required to complete **three progress reports**

- 6 months
- 16 months

Reports are submitted to the Senior Academic Administrator – Postgraduate. The progress report templates are located [here](#).

Please note: the student should ensure that the supervisor has completed his/her section of the report before it is submitted to the Senior Academic Administrator – Postgraduate.

Seminars

All Master's research students are required to conduct a seminar in front of fellow research students and Faculty staff. Students are also expected to attend and actively engage in seminars given by other postgraduate research students (LLM & PhD).

The seminar should be a tool to help develop the dissertation/thesis.

Seminars should be conducted at the half-way mark and the core argument or thesis should be reasonably defined. A paper of between 2,500 and 3,000 words is required (footnotes need not count).

Seminar dates are pre-scheduled each year to align with enrolment and faculty deadlines, you will be provided these dates when your enrolment is confirmed. If the dates provided are not suitable for any reasons, please contact your supervisor and Senior Academic Administrator to discuss.

\$100 LLM Grant

Full-time LLM students may apply to be reimbursed for study-related expenses incurred during their programme of study. A maximum of \$100 is available per full-time student in relation to things like bulk photocopying, books, and field trips. Please contact the Senior Academic Administrator for details on how to apply.

Please note that applications from international students who have completed must be submitted at least one month prior to departure from NZ.

Supervision

It is the student's responsibility to be in touch with their supervisor. Students should discuss expectations with the supervisor so both parties are clear about what is expected. In addition, students should give their supervisor plenty of notice when they are intending to hand in some work for feedback.

If students encounter difficulties with their supervisor that cannot be resolved by discussion between them, they should contact the Director of Postgraduate Studies (law-postgraduate@vuw.ac.nz).

Candidates' Responsibilities (from 11.5 of the Regulations):

Completing a Master's thesis programme requires progressive development of skills, competence, and confidence. Candidates must take responsibility for independently pursuing their studies with the guidance of their supervisor in a manner which develops their own intellectual independence. This includes taking reasonable steps, consistent with available resources, to:

- a) plan and actively pursue the research.*
- b) identify and deal with any research-related problems.*
- c) comply with administrative requirements.*
- d) meet ethical guidelines.*

Submission and Examination

When the thesis/dissertation is ready to be examined the following must be submitted directly, and by the due date, to FGR-Masters-Exams@vuw.ac.nz. Please email the law-postgraduate@vuw.ac.nz to be sent the forms.

1. an electronic copy of the full paper in Word format
2. an Authorship Statement form
3. a Supervisor's Statement form (signed by the supervisor)

Examination averages around two months but may take longer. Once Examination is complete you can then [submit](#) your thesis to the Library. Upon submission, students will be invited to complete an online Exit Survey in relation to their research experience.

Students should not make plans relating to graduation unless there is a gap of at least four months between the submission of the thesis or dissertation and the graduation date – and the University cannot guarantee graduation even within this timeframe.

The degree can only be conferred when the Faculty has received an official receipt issued by the central Library at Kelburn and the final grade is entered into the system.