Important Information for
LLM Thesis, Dissertation & Research Portfolio Students

Director of Postgraduate Studies
Contact: marnie.lloydd@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
- 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.

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 of 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 could discuss options for suspensions, extensions, change their enrolment to do the LLM by coursework or withdraw from the programme (with fees adjusted accordingly).

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

Proposal guidelines

A 1,500-2,000 word proposal should be submitted to the Law Postgraduate Committee within one month of registration. It should include discussion of:

- the problem the thesis is seeking to address;
- the state of the literature/law in the area;
- the central thesis the work will advance;
- methodology/resources to be relied on;
- proposed table of contents;
- proposed bibliography.

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
- 12 months
- 18 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 around the half-way mark and the core argument or thesis should be reasonably defined. At least one week prior to their seminar, students need to send to law-postgraduate@vuw.ac.nz a one page abstract/summary setting out the key elements of their thesis/dissertation project (background, research question, approach, findings/argument to date, any challenges etc), together with a (not-more-than-one-page) brief structure/chapter outline. This will be circulated one week prior to the seminar.

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.

$200 LLM Grant
Full-time LLM students may apply to be reimbursed for study-related expenses incurred during their programme of study. A maximum of $200 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:

1. *a) plan and actively pursue the research.*
2. *b) identify and deal with any research-related problems.*
3. *c) comply with administrative requirements.*
4. *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-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 on 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.