



# ROBERT H. MCKINNEY SCHOOL OF LAW

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INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Indianapolis

## **Policies and Procedures Governing the Pursuit and Award of the Doctor of Juridical Science Degree**

### **SJD Studies**

The SJD degree at the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law is the terminal degree in law, offered primarily to qualified Master of Laws (LL.M.) graduates who aspire to academic appointments in law at universities in the United States and/or abroad. The SJD is a research-based dissertation degree, i.e., the students in the program mainly work on their doctoral thesis, an original piece of academic writing that will normally amount to several hundred pages. In their research and other activities, the students are guided and monitored by a principal dissertation supervisor with support from other faculty at the law school.

### **Application**

Applications are welcome from graduates of the LL.M. Program at Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law, or another ABA accredited American law school, who submit a detailed research proposal and who have found a member of the faculty to supervise their doctoral dissertation. Only tenured members of the faculty may act as principal supervisors. With the consent of the principal supervisor, other full-time faculty members of the law school can act as co-supervisors and/or other qualified individuals may act as consultants to the supervisor(s), particularly if they have substantive knowledge or experience of importance to the subject of the dissertation. After a candidate has found a member of the faculty to supervise the dissertation, the candidate's application and dissertation proposal will be reviewed by an admissions committee which will make a decision whether to admit the candidate.

### **Duration of the Program**

The expected duration of the doctoral program is three years. Early submission of the dissertation is possible after approval by the supervisor. In any case, the dissertation must be complete, submitted and successfully defended within five (5) calendar years of admission into the SJD Program. During the five year period, students are entitled to request one leave of absence of up to two (2) years, subject to approval by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. A leave that has been approved does not count against the five year maximum duration of the program.

### **Residency Requirement**

Every admitted SJD candidate is expected to be in residence at the law school for a minimum of two semesters following admission. Every candidate is entitled to be in residence during the entire Program. "In residence" for this purpose shall mean regular physical presence accompanied by active participation in the academic life of the law school and shall include, but not be limited to: regular consultations with the candidate's dissertation supervisor; attendance at or participation in faculty colloquia; offering special presentations on topics within the candidate's area of research for the benefit of the law school and wider legal community; and appearance as guest lecturer in classes at the law school. At the discretion of the dissertation supervisor, a candidate may be required to be on campus for additional periods or occasions after the first two semesters.

SJD candidates who are in residence on campus may be invited or required to participate in other law school and faculty activities. At the discretion of the supervisor(s), a candidate can be asked to make a presentation of his or her research work before the faculty or another group of scholars. Candidates may also be invited to give lectures to students and/or seek appointment as adjunct faculty to co-teach or teach courses in their area of specialization.

Regardless of residency, candidates will be registered for eight (8) SJD Research hours of credit in each of the first two semesters of enrollment, and eight (8) SJD Dissertation hours of credit in the semester during which the dissertation will be defended. Tuition for all credit hours must be paid at the beginning of each semester in which the credits are applied. At least thirty days prior to the beginning of the semester in which the candidate expects to defend the dissertation, the candidate must inform the SJD academic advisor of his or her intent to defend during that semester.

### **Work in Progress Reports**

The work program of the SJD student is a matter to be agreed upon between the supervisor and the student. At a minimum, every candidate is required to submit a written work-in-progress report to the supervisor by the 15th of January and September of each year and to discuss the work to be done in the subsequent semester. A copy of the progress report must be sent to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

### **Completion of the Doctoral Thesis**

Successful completion of the SJD Program and award of the SJD degree depends on submission of a dissertation of publishable quality that constitutes an original and substantial scholarly contribution to the area(s) of law agreed between the student and the supervisor. While word length is not evidence of quality, ordinarily the dissertation will be between 100,000 and 150,000 words in length.

#### *First Draft and Feedback – Due Dates*

No later than six (6) months before the intended date of graduation, the candidate shall submit a first complete draft of the doctoral dissertation to his or her dissertation supervisor(s). The supervisor(s) shall give detailed feedback to the candidate regarding any changes or improvements required before the dissertation will be accepted as final. This feedback shall be provided within two months.

#### *Final Draft – Format and Due Date*

On the basis of the feedback, the candidate shall submit the final draft of the dissertation to the candidate's supervisor no later than eight (8) weeks before the intended date of graduation. The final draft may be in digital form to facilitate review by the Defense Committee. After the dissertation is successfully defended, the candidate shall arrange for it to be printed and bound in accordance with university guidelines. Information regarding the printing and duplication of dissertations may be found in Guide to Dissertations and Theses, which is available from the University Graduate School and the IUPUI graduate office. Candidates are encouraged to get a copy of this guide.

## **Oral Defense of the Doctoral Dissertation**

### *Defense Committee - Composition*

Once a dissertation has been accepted as final by the supervisor(s), the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies shall schedule a dissertation defense and compose a Defense Committee. The Defense Committee shall consist of three (3) voting members. One of the three (3) voting members shall be either the principal supervisor or (if applicable) the co-supervisor; the other two (2) shall be full time members of the faculty. With the consent of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and the candidate's supervisor, an individual from outside the law school may serve as one of the three Defense Committee members.

Thirty days prior to the scheduled defense of the dissertation, the candidate must submit to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies a summary of the dissertation (no longer than one page) for the public announcement of the defense. The announcement shall contain a summary of the dissertation which contains a brief statement of the principal results and conclusions. If the candidate has published any scholarly articles relevant to the topic of the dissertation, bibliographical references should be included in the summary. The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies will ensure that a copy of the announcement is sent to every full time member of the Law School faculty, as well as other potentially interested members of the academic community.

The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies shall appoint a person with appropriate skills and resources to attend the proceedings of the Defense Committee and to record those proceedings.

### *Defense Procedure – Oral Presentation and Examination*

The defense shall be an oral examination before the Defense Committee and any interested public during which the candidate first presents his or her research result in oral format (30-45 minutes). The presentation by the candidate shall be followed by a period of questions by all members of the Defense Committee. The questions shall cover both the written dissertation and any issues brought up in the candidate's presentation. After the questions by the members of the Defense Committee, the Committee may invite questions or comments from the audience before declaring the end of the oral examination.

### *Defense Procedure – Voting and Approval*

A defense shall be successful and an SJD degree shall be awarded if all three voting members of the Defense Committee shall vote in favor of the candidate. A vote in favor may be conditioned on the candidate making revisions to the dissertation, in which case the candidate's supervisor shall report to the Defense Committee when the revisions have been made. If the decision is not unanimous, majority and minority reports may be submitted to the Dean of the Law School, who will consult with the

Associate Dean for Graduate Studies to determine whether a new defense shall be scheduled with different examiners. If another defense is scheduled, the candidate may be given time to make improvements to the dissertation. The dissertation shall pass if it is either approved by the Dean of the Law School or by all members of a new Defense Committee. In exceptional cases an SJD degree shall be awarded 'with honors' if all three voting members of the original Defense Committee so decide.

## **Graduation**

SJD candidates who have successfully defended their dissertation shall be entitled to participate at the next subsequent commencement proceedings of the Law School and take part in a hooding ceremony at that event. Successful graduates will receive their diplomas as soon as practicable after the commencement proceedings.