JOINT JURIS DOCTOR AND MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Hirsh Health Law and Policy Program
The Hirsh Health Law and Policy Program of The Milken Institute School of Public Health (SPH) offers unique educational opportunities to law students, practicing lawyers, and health professions students. Endowed by Harold and Jane Hirsh and home to GW’s joint degree programs in law and public health, the program is designed to foster an interdisciplinary approach to the study of health policy, health law, public health, and health care. The Hirsh Program’s overall goal is to advance a greater understanding regarding how the law influences and shapes all facets of health care and public health, as well as how the changing system affects traditional areas of the law. At the same time, the program seeks to achieve the pragmatic objectives of preparing law degree candidates and practicing lawyers for the broad range of health law-related careers that are available today.

Established in 1997, the Hirsh Program is structured to allow students to take maximum advantage of its location in Washington, DC, the center of the national health policy and law debate. The program is designed to provide a solid grounding in individual and population health, from the health care and public health systems themselves to extensive coursework in advanced health policy and law. The program serves juris doctor (JD) and master of laws (LL.M) candidates as well as lawyers pursuing health law careers and all manner of health profession students.

Joint Degree Admissions Information
JD students are required to focus their studies exclusively to the first-year curriculum. Applicants to the joint law-public health degree/certificate program may apply for admission to SPH at the same time they apply to GW Law School or after admission to the Law School. JD candidates who do not apply concurrently to the Law School and SPH are encouraged to file the MPH or certificate application by the spring semester of their first year of law studies. LL.M candidates are encouraged to apply to SPH at the time they apply to the Law School or during their first semester on campus.

Applicants to the joint law-public health program must complete the application processes for both the Law School (JD or LLM) and for the Milken Institute School of Public Health (MPH or certificate). Admission to the joint degree program requires admissions acceptances from both Schools. However, because admission to each School is separate and distinct, applicants who are accepted by one School but not the other are free to enroll in the School to which they have been accepted.

Applications for both programs are available on the Law School website (http://www.law.gwu.edu/Admissions/Pages/default.aspx) and SPH website (http://publichealth.gwu.edu/admissions). Whether applying simultaneously to both Schools or as a current GW Law student, applicants must complete the SOPHAS application as indicated at the SPH website (http://publichealth.gwu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions).

Internship/Research Opportunities
The Hirsh Program offers extensive assistance in arranging internships in congressional offices, federal agencies, and the hundreds of national health organizations located in and throughout the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. Through its affiliation with the Department of Health Policy, the program also engages in extensive law-related health policy research, offering Hirsh Program students paid and unpaid training opportunities during their period of study. Visit the Department’s website (http://www.gwhealthpolicy.org) for a description of the types of research in which it engages.

REQUIREMENTS

M.P.H. Requirements
The course of study for the M.P.H. degree consists of 45 credits in one of several focus areas (http://publichealth.gwu.edu/node/766), including a supervised practicum. Because the Milken Institute SPH accepts 8 Law School credits toward completion of the M.P.H. degree, juris doctor (J.D.) and master of laws (LL.M.) students need only complete 37 credits of coursework through SPH to obtain an M.P.H. degree.

Depending upon the focus area in which a J.D. student chooses to study, the joint degree can be earned, as a general rule, in three-and-a-half or four years of full-time study, including summer enrollment. J.D. candidates selecting joint degree studies in one of the more science-oriented areas, such as epidemiology or biostatistics, should anticipate a four-year course of study. Candidates selecting a less scientific area, such as health policy or health management, can expect to complete their joint degrees in three-and-a-half years. Full-time LL.M./M.P.H. candidates should anticipate completing the joint degree in approximately two years. Part-time J.D. and LL.M. candidates pursuing joint degrees will, of course, have longer courses of study.

Certificate Requirements
The course of study for the graduate certificate consists of 18 credits in one of several focus areas (http://publichealth.gwu.edu/node/768). However, because the Milken Institute SPH accepts 6 Law School credits toward completion of the certificate program, J.D. and LL.M. students need only complete 12 credits of coursework through the SPH to obtain a graduate certificate in public health. Upon an individual’s subsequent acceptance to the M.P.H. degree program, credits from the graduate certificate may be transferred to the M.P.H. degree program. Full-time J.D. candidates can complete a graduate certificate during their regular course of study in the Law School. Full-time LL.M./
certificate candidates typically complete the program in one-and-a-half years.