

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the rationale for these partnership programs?

Many attorneys want business or public management skills. Similarly, many public and private sector managers and executives want a deeper knowledge of the law so that they can be even more successful in business or government. A dual degree gives participants a career edge over those who possess only one advanced degree.

How do they work?

Students who participate in a J. D. program and one of Western Michigan University's graduate programs benefit financially because duplicative or overlapping course work is reduced.

Practically speaking, the partnership programs allow participating students to transfer six semester hours of credit from one degree program to the other, resulting in a total course reduction of twelve semester hours if both degrees are completed.

If I am admitted to one program, am I guaranteed admission to the other program?

No. Cooley Law School and Western Michigan University maintain independent admission policies, standards, and committees. It is possible, therefore, that a student's admission may be approved by one institution and denied by the other.

May I apply simultaneously for admission to the J.D. program and to one of Western Michigan University's graduate professional programs?

You may apply simultaneously or sequentially. As a rule of thumb, the earlier you apply to both programs and receive admission decisions, the better. It is recommended that you apply initially to the program that is of primary interest to you. Regardless when you apply and are admitted, you must take a prescribed number of credit hours in the first program before you begin taking courses in the second one.

If you are a Western Michigan University, currently enrolled in the MBA, MPA or MSW program, it is important that you apply for admission to the J.D. degree early enough to ensure that you will have sufficient time to take at least six semester hours of eligible graduate courses after matriculation at Cooley Law School.

How will Western Michigan University and Cooley Law School know that I intend to pursue the partnership programs?

Your student file at both institutions must include a signed, approved "Declaration of Intent." You should secure this form from one of your designated advisors and submit it immediately after admission to the second program.

Am I required to complete the J.D. degree and the Western Michigan University graduate degree by the same date, or may I finish one program before I complete the second one?

There is no standard prescription. The order in which you complete your Cooley Law and Western Michigan University graduate degree requirements is for you to decide in consultation with both program advisors. You may complete both programs by the same date or attempt any other combination of coursework and completion dates that suit your personal circumstances so long as you satisfy the degree completion deadlines imposed by both programs.

Students are always advised to avoid combined course loads at both institutions that might jeopardize their good academic standing. At Cooley Law School, a student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher to remain in good academic standing. At Western Michigan University, a student must maintain a 3.0 or higher.

Are there deadlines for completing the J. D. degree and Western Michigan University's degree?

Yes. All J.D. requirements should be fulfilled within six years of completing the first law course. Similarly, Western Michigan University's policies require that all master's-level requirements must be completed within six years of enrolling in the first Western Michigan University graduate course. Exceptions to these six-year limits may sometimes be granted by both institutions for extenuating, documented reasons.

I have already earned a graduate degree at Western Michigan University. Is it still possible for me to apply to Cooley Law School and pursue this degree partnership program?

Western Michigan University alumni may certainly apply for admission to the Thomas M. Cooley Law School's J.D. degree. However, if you have earned an MBA, MPA or MSW degree before you matriculate in the J.D. program, none of the Western Michigan University credits can be transferred to the JD degree.

What if I began participating in these partnership programs and then decided to pursue only one of the degrees?

You would forfeit your rights under the dual program, and the graduation requirements and all other policies of the institution where you continued your course work would then apply.

May I apply for financial aid at both institutions?

During a given semester, you may receive aid at only one institution. However, you may apply at the Western Michigan University Financial Aid Office during semesters/session in which you are taking most of your MBA, MPA or MSW courses and the Thomas M. Cooley Law School Financial Aid Office during the semesters in which you are completing most of your law courses. Financial aid staff members at both institutions are eager to help you apply financial aid rules to this unique dual program.

Which tuition rates apply?

Cooley Law School tuition rates and fees apply to all J. D. courses, and Western Michigan University tuition rates and fees apply to all graduate courses.

More information can be obtained at www.cooley.edu/partnerships.

For WMU related questions regarding the:

MPA Program	email WMU's School of Public Affairs and Administration at cpa_spaa@wmich.edu
MBA Program	email WMU's MBA Program Director, Jack Ruhl, at jack.ruhl@wmich.edu .
MSW Program	email WMU's School of Social Work at swadmi@wmich.edu

Students are also encouraged to consult with their designated academic advisors about standards, processes and timetables.

Initial questions concerning program requirements or transfer of credits may be referred to the Office of Graduate and Extended Programs (jointdegree@cooley.edu) at Thomas M. Cooley Law School.