

THE COMMON LAW MASTER PROGRAM

Motives and goals of creation

A better understanding of the Common Law System is needed due to the development of economic relations between Tunisia and the countries of Anglo-Saxon legal tradition. But it is also necessary, particularly with regard to the phenomenon of globalization.

International trade is characterized, through the past few decades, by domination of technical and legal mechanisms of the Common Law. The orientation of economic policy in Tunisia, which is to integrate into the global economy, requires the preparation of lawyers to this knowledge. For this reason, the creation of a Master Degree which is the first of its kind in a country affected by the legal culture of Civil Law is useful, even necessary.

Career opportunities

The skills and qualifications of this program's graduates are highly sought after by employers and legal professionals in Tunisia and abroad. The Common Law Master graduates are very demanded by major law firms in Tunisia. Many of them also work in governmental departments, the judiciary system, international organizations, transnational corporations and banks. Every year, a good number of these students continue with their education to doctorate level at the Faculty of legal, political and social sciences of Tunis. Some others are able to obtain scholarships to study abroad.

Resources

The students have access to the Common Law Center at the faculty's library. The Center provides access to many legal textbooks, law journals and periodicals and some on-line legal databases apart from a Westlaw subscription on line. The center is also equipped with five computers and students have unlimited free internet access. The students can also borrow materials from the Center for one day upon presentation of their student card. It's important to notice that the regulation of the faculty's library extends to the Center.

The courses structure

The program is scheduled over two years. The three semesters are dedicated to theoretical studies. In the last term, students must prepare a dissertation.

During the three semesters, the courses are divided into fifteen modules. Each module contains two subjects. Students are tested in each of the modules but only in one of the subjects composing the module. Students sit for written exams in these modules twice a year.

The courses also include an American Corporate Law module. This module is separate and constitutes the subject matter of the oral exam at the end of the year.

Legal English is another separate module. Assessment in this module is a mixture of class participation and oral and written exams. The modules have different credit depending whether there are mandatory or optional. In order to succeed students must obtain an average of 10/20.

In the last term (fourth semester), a Master dissertation is prepared as an original piece of work by the student. Students may choose to prepare a dissertation on any legal topic. However, the choice of the topic must be submitted to the approval of the competent commission in the university. Only students that succeed in the three terms are allowed to submit a dissertation topic. Because the dissertation is such an important component of the program, students have the right to be supervised by a Professor. It is important to remember that the dissertation is an independent research project undertaken by the student with the supervising Professor offering guidance and advice.

Examinations

The first session of the written exams are scheduled over a week, usually in the beginning of January and late May. Students who fail to obtain an average of 10/20 in the first session, have the right to sit for the second session of the written exams, usually in late May or early June.

In order to succeed students must obtain a total of 90 points in all sessions (by the addition of the scores obtained in each exam).

The oral and written exams of the Legal English module are scheduled throughout the First Term of the academic year. They are scheduled independently from both the written and oral sessions.

Attendance

Attendance is compulsory. Students have an allowed limit of 4 absences per module. Students who exceed this limit are eliminated from the first session of exams in the relevant module. Students who exceed the limit of 6 absences are eliminated from the first and the second sessions of the exam in the relevant module.

Valuable Testimony

In a speech given at International Law Conference, Damascus, held on 7-8 July 2008, Professor Alastair Mullis underlined that the Master of Common Law at the Faculty of Legal, Political and Social Sciences of Tunis “represents an extraordinary attempt to redress lack of expertise in common law and knowledge of the English language in Tunisia. The Program (...) offers teaching to approximately 20 highly qualified students each year in English by law professors from the common law world about a number of core legal subjects. It also introduces the students from a common lawyer’s perspective, to several areas of international commercial law. It has been remarkably successful both in terms of the academic opportunities offered to the students and their achievements but also in terms of the impact it has made on the practice of law in Tunis”.

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