

# ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY / LAW, M.E.L.P. / J.D. (DUAL DEGREE PROGRAM WITH THE VERMONT LAW SCHOOL)

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## Accreditation

The University of South Carolina is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission on Colleges to award Juris Doctor degrees. Because of its geographic location, Vermont Law School is accredited by a different body, and has no relationship with the Commission on Colleges. Both law schools are fully accredited by the American Bar Association. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission on Colleges accreditation of the University of South Carolina does not extend to or include the Vermont Law School or its students. Although the University of South Carolina has faculty-approved regulations and accepts certain course work in transfer toward a credential from Vermont Law School, or collaborates in other ways for generation of course credits or program credentials, other colleges and universities may or may not accept this work in transfer, even if it appears on a transcript from the University of South Carolina. Such a decision would be made by the institution subsequently considering the possibility of accepting such credits.

## Admission and Degree Requirements M.E.L.P. (30) / J.D. (90)

Students in the program may earn both degrees by completing 90 hours of J.D. study and 30 hours of M.E.L.P. study. Up to 9 hours of law study at South Carolina may be applied toward the M.E.L.P. degree and 9 hours of graduate study at Vermont may be applied toward the J.D. degree.

1. Students who enter the program must:
  - a. Be admitted to Vermont Law School's Master of Environmental Law and Policy (M.E.L.P.) Program.
  - b. Be admitted to the University of South Carolina (USC) School of Law.  
(a & b mean that the student must meet all entrance requirements of each school and be accepted as a student therein.)
  - c. Be admitted to the Dual Degree Program. Admission to the dual degree program must be made by application to both programs and both programs must approve the student's admission to the dual degree program.
  - d. Each program shall maintain appropriate records on each student in the program.
2. The program is prospective in operation.
  - a. Those students already holding a M.E.L.P. degree or a law degree will not be eligible for admission to the program.
  - b. Students currently enrolled in either school may enter the program and appropriate credit will be granted by both schools with due care exercised to effect the transition to insure the closest compliance with these regulations as the individual situation of each student permits.
3. Students will often complete the dual degree program in three years (including full-time summer study). Students shall begin the program by completing the first full year in USC's School of Law. At the end of that year, a student will enroll in the 1-credit USC course entitled Introductory Environmental Law and Policy. A student will thereafter enroll in Vermont M.E.L.P. courses via summer school, distance learning, and internships. A minimum of six (6) M.E.L.P. credits through distance learning must be earned during the course of the second and third years of study at USC's School of Law. The entire program for both degrees must be completed within a period of five academic years unless substantial reasons acceptable to the Joint Committee are given. In such event, each case will be judged on its individual merits and decisions in the case of other students will not serve as precedent.
4. Students must maintain the academic requirements presently in effect or as may be placed in effect to remain in the program.
  - a. Failure to maintain the requisite academic standing requirements of either school will preclude the student's continuation in the program in the semester he or she becomes ineligible.
  - b. The student may continue to complete the degree requirements in the school whose academic standing he or she has met.
  - c. A student dropped from the program for academic deficiency may not re-enter.
5.
  - a. The University of South Carolina School of Law will grant up to 9 hours credit toward the J.D. degree for work completed on the Vermont Law School campus toward the M.E.L.P. Degree with a minimum grade of C. The student must take the course for a letter grade if the course is offered on this basis. A grade of C or better shall be recorded on the student's USC transcript as a pass. No degree credit will be granted by the School of Law when the candidate earns a grade of less than C in the Vermont Law School course. Several courses published in the M.E.L.P. Program may be excluded as courses available for credit in the M.E.L.P.-J.D. dual degree program. These courses duplicate courses taught through the University of South Carolina's School of the Environment. This will be handled on a case-by-case basis as the program progresses.
  - b. Vermont Law School will grant up to 9 hours of credit toward the M.E.L.P. degree for specified course work completed in the USC School of Law. No credit will be granted when a candidate earns less than a C grade in the School of Law. All Graduate School academic requirements will be applicable to students participating in the Dual Degree Program. VLS will award credit toward the M.E.L.P. degree for up to nine hours earned in the following School of Law courses: LAWS 731; LAWS 651; LAWS 709  
It may be possible to earn M.E.L.P. credit through other USC School of Law courses, as approved by the Joint Committee on a case-by-case basis.
6. Students enrolled in this program must take the one-credit LAWS 816, Introductory Environmental Law and Policy, at the end of their first year.
7. Students enrolled in this program must have completed the requirements for both degrees to come within the provisions of paragraph 5.
8. The School of Law will assign a P, F, or W grade as may be appropriate for purposes of determining the Law School G.P.R. with respect to non-Law School courses taken in the M.E.L.P. Program.

- a. The Joint Committee assigned to administer the program will take appropriate action to insure that each school is notified of the grades earned so that the proper entries are made on the student's record.
  - b. The Joint Committee will adopt any forms necessary to carry out the objectives of this program.
9. The Joint Committee shall consist of one or two designees from Vermont Law School appointed by the Director of the Vermont Law School Environmental Law Center, one or two faculty members from the USC Law School appointed by the Dean of the Law School, and the USC Law School Associate Dean for Academics. They shall each endorse all applications to the J.D.-M.E.L.P. program and take all necessary administrative action to insure that the purposes, spirit, and intent of the program are fulfilled.
- The student may not take courses for credit under the dual degree program in one program where there is substantial duplication of material with a course which the student has taken in the other program.
- a. The Committee shall decide all questions of duplication or preemption of courses the student desires to take. It is understood that each committee member will confer with the member of his or her faculty whose course or seminar the student desires to take for credit in this program where it appears that there is substantial duplication of material or preemption of the course by a similar course in the other program.
  - b. If the Joint Committee shall be in disagreement with regard to the duplication of material or preemption then each shall confer as follows:
    - i. Vermont Law School's representative(s) of the Joint Committee shall confer with and abide by the decision reached by the Director of the Environmental Law Center.
    - ii. The USC School of Law's representative(s) on the Joint Committee shall confer with and abide by the decision reached by the Curriculum Committee of the School of Law.
    - iii. Each member of the Joint Committee shall be permitted to present and discuss the matter on which there is disagreement with the Committee of each program.
    - iv. In the event a student is aggrieved by a decision of the Joint Committee denying him or her permission to take a course in either program he or she desires to take under this Dual Degree Program, the student may appeal the decision to the Committee of the school in which he or she seeks to undertake such work.
10. The Joint Committee shall make every effort to accommodate the needs of the student consistent with the aims and objectives of the program. The Committee members shall counsel with the student, recommend alternative courses and otherwise assist him or her in furthering his or her career objectives through the Dual Degree Program.
11. A Program of Study shall be approved by the Joint Committee prior to attending the Summer Session at Vermont Law School. Each student must submit his or her proposed schedule to the Joint Committee in sufficient time prior to registration to permit the Joint Committee to act on it. Therefore, students in the program should confer with the Joint Committee at regular and frequent intervals when schedules become available.
12. The Joint Committee may make other such regulations concerning matters not contained herein which have not been anticipated and which are in keeping with the objectives of the program and the desires of both faculties, keeping always in mind the wishes of the student and his or her career objectives.
13. Any student withdrawing from one of the programs in the Dual Degree Program will be required to satisfy all of the requirements of the degree program in which he or she retains candidacy.
14. Enrollment in the J.D.-M.E.L.P. Dual Degree Program will not preclude simultaneous enrollment in the J.D.-M.E.E.R.M. Dual Degree Program.
15. The University of South Carolina is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission on Colleges to award Juris Doctor degrees. Because of its geographic location, Vermont Law School is accredited by a different body, and has no relationship with the Commission on Colleges. Both law schools are fully accredited by the American Bar Association. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission on Colleges accreditation of the University of South Carolina does not extend to or include the Vermont Law School or its students. Although the University of South Carolina has faculty-approved regulations and accepts certain course work in transfer toward a credential from Vermont Law School, or collaborates in other ways for generation of course credits or program credentials, other colleges and universities may or may not accept this work in transfer, even if it appears on a transcript from the University of South Carolina. Such a decision would be made by the institution subsequently considering the possibility of accepting such credits.