

MA/JD Dual-Degree Program in Forensic Psychology & Law: FAQ's

What is the MA-JD Program?

The Four-Year MA/JD dual-degree program offers qualified students the opportunity to earn both a Master of Arts degree in Forensic Psychology at John Jay College (JJC), and a Juris Doctor degree in Law at New York Law School (NYLS), which may be completed in as little as four years.

The MA/JD Dual Degree Program will capitalize on New York Law School's nationally renowned expertise in Mental Disability Law with John Jay College's highly recognized specialization in Forensic Psychology, to develop lawyers who will be uniquely trained to advocate for the mentally disabled, as practitioners, policy makers and legal scholars. [Graduates will also be able to work as MA Psychologists exempt from doctoral-level licensure in limited NY State civil service job settings; and as MA Psychologists in various other states, depending upon their licensing laws].

What is the Focus of the Program?

The focus of the program is on forensic psychology, and mental health disability law. In addition to the MA in forensic psychology, students will be required to include 12 online credits about aspects of mental health disability law offered by NYLS.

How Many Credits are Required for Graduation?

The curriculum is composed of the existing required and elective courses for the MA and for the JD, requiring a combined total of 128 credits, including 42 credits for the completion of the MA Program in Forensic Psychology and 86 credits for the completion of the JD Program in Law. However, 12 New York Law School online credits focusing on mental disability law will be credited towards both the JD and the MA Program. Likewise 12 MA credits from the John Jay Forensic Psychology MA Program will be credited also to the New York Law School JD program. Consequently, due to the 24 transfer credits applied in the dual degree program, the actual number of credits taken will be 104, resulting in graduation for full-time students in four years instead of five.

What is the Course Sequence?

Students may begin their training in either the MA or the JD program, but the first year must be exclusively in one program, followed by the second year exclusively in the other program. Students may then mix their courses between the two programs in their third and fourth years.

The MA Program in Forensic Psychology will consist of 24 required credits; 15 forensic elective credits, including 12 credits from the NY Law School Mental Health and Disability Law track; and 3 credits of externship. The JD from New York Law School will consist of 41 required credits, 12 credits from the Mental Disability Law Studies, 12 transfer credits from the JJC MA Forensic Psychology Program, and 21 additional law school elective credits.

A typical course sequence for a student choosing to start in the MA Program would look like this:

First Year at JJC would cover Mental Health Professionals & the Law, Research Methods, Psychopathology, Statistics, Human Growth & Development, Criminal Psychological Assessment, Advanced Forensic Assessment, and Clinical Interviewing.

Second Year at NYLS would include Civil Procedure, Contracts, Torts, Legal Reasoning, Property, Criminal Law, Advocacy, Legislation, and Lawyering.

Third Year at both would include Survey of Mental Disability Law, Forensic Psychology Elective, Constitutional Law I, Two NYLS electives, Professional Responsibility, Mental Health Disability Elective, Constitutional Law II, and Evidence.

Fourth Year at both would include two NYLS Mental Health Disability (online) Electives, 5 additional NYLS electives, and the JJC psychology externship.

What are the Admissions Requirements?

Applicants must apply to both programs for the joint dual-degree program. For admission to the MA Program, a bachelor's degree, with an undergraduate minimum GPA of 3.0; GRE's scores, with a minimum score of 1000 combined in Verbal and Quantitative [or the equivalent LSAT percentile]; a minimum of 12 combined psychology credits in undergraduate and graduate coursework; plus Statistics, and Research Methods, which can be taken upon admission to the program; plus a personal statement and recommendations. For further Graduate Admissions information at JJC, go to <http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/451.php>

NYLS JD admissions are competitive, and applications must be submitted in electronic format, and include an LSAT score, resume, and at least one letter of recommendation. Additional biographical, education, employment and other information is also required. For further details, go to <http://www.nyls.edu/>.

What are Possible Post-Graduate Careers?

Attorneys with a specialization in Forensic Psychology and Mental Health Disability Law may consider work with nonprofit organizations or public interest law firms, representing individual clients denied services or rights, or advocating for systematic change. They may represent people with mental health disabilities regarding informed consent, guardianship, and access to community services. They may also work for nonprofit corporations such as hospitals; or government agencies at the state or federal level. Some possibilities include departments of mental health and disability, human services, state juvenile and adult correctional services, and health services; and various mental health profession regulatory agencies. Further career and employment information is available from NYLS at www.nyls.edu.

Where Can I Obtain More Information About the Dual-Degree Program, and About New York Law School and John Jay College of Criminal Justice?

The JJC website is www.jjay.cuny.edu. The NYLS website is www.nyls.edu. These sites will direct students to the Admissions Offices of each program. Also, those with questions about the dual-degree program may contact the JJC office of Coordinator James Wulach, Ph.D., J.D., at jwulach@jjay.cuny.edu, or call 212-237-8782; or at NYLS applicants may contact Lianne J. Bass, Esq., administrator of the Online Mental Disability Law Program, at 212-431-2125, or call 212-431-2125.