

**Final Assessment Report**  
Submitted by SUPR-G to SCAPA

<b>Program:</b>	<b>Faculty of Law Graduate Programs</b>	
Degrees Offered:	LLM., MSL., and PhD	
Approved Fields:	<b>MSL</b> (no fields) <b>PhD</b> (no fields) <b>LLM</b> (no fields)	
External Consultants:	Dr Michael Pratt Associate Dean, Graduate Studies & Research, Faculty of Law, Queens University	Janine Benedet Associate Dean, Academic Affairs, Peter Allard School of Law, University of British Columbia
Internal Reviewers:	Kristen Wallentinsen; PhD Student	Dr Andrew J. Watson Affiliation Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University
Date of Site Visit:	February 4 <sup>th</sup> 2016	
Evaluation:	<i>Good Quality</i>	
Approved by:	<i>SUPR-G on March 21, 2016</i> <i>SCAPA on March 30, 2016</i>	

**Executive Summary**

The Faculty of Law Graduate Programs offer 3 degrees including a Masters of laws (LLM) degree established in 2004, a Masters of Studies in Law (MSL; 2010) and most recently a PhD program (2013). The faculty aspires to maintain high quality in both the students that are enrolled and in the curriculum that is delivered in all 3 programs. The faculty expects to reach a steady state enrollment of 12-13 Masters Students per year and 2-3 PhD students per year. Increasingly, Law professionals require a doctoral degree to compete successfully for academic positions. The MSL degree uniquely provides an opportunity for non-law professionals to gain a fundamental understanding of law principles and practices in specific areas related to their overall discipline. The LLM degree currently provides law professionals with an opportunity to conduct research and complete a thesis project. Through the review process, the program proposes to eliminate the 3 research fields in the LLM degree as they no longer apply to the increasingly diverse areas of expertise within the Law Faculty complement. In addition, the program proposes to add a project based option within the LLM degree program. It is expected that this would greatly increase interest from law graduates for enrollment in the program and thus will enable student recruitment. Overall the Law graduate programs were judged to be thriving and have many assets including a strong student community and curriculum, enthusiastic and academically strong faculty mentors and a very dedicated program director and assistant. "The intellectual life of Western Law is vibrant, with the school playing host to numerous visiting speakers every semester, carrying on its own lunchtime speaker series and hosting other academic and professional events throughout the year"(External reviewers report).

**Significant Strengths of Program:**

- Learning outcomes comprehensively address program objectives
- Credentials and publishing records of faculty are generally excellent
- Good mix of senior and newer faculty; capable of delivering high quality programs
- MSL program is attracting students from diverse backgrounds
- Positive support from students in the program
- Thoughtfully-designed and impressive suite of 3 mandatory grad courses

- Program director is very engaged and committed to program(s) success
- Student Services Coordinator is a strong champion for the students
- Ample student study space

**Suggestions for improvement & Enhancement:**

- Ensure intake and cohort numbers are sufficient to ensure a genuine graduate community is maintained; more of a concern for the PhD program; 2 per year may be conservative
- Offer MSL students a short stand-alone course or workshop introducing them to legal research methods
- Improve communication between faculty instructors for all 3 courses to minimize redundancies
- A program “handbook” would be very useful for students to have
- Graduate students are not as aware as they should be regarding campus resources to facilitate their progress and needs during their degree; they often approach JD student resource offices that feel ill equipped to cover all graduate student needs
- Communication with students regarding their inclusions in department events such as the lunch time seminars could be improved

<b>Recommendations required for Program sustainability:</b>	Responsibility	Resources	Timeline
Introduction of a project based option in the LLM	Program Director and SGPS		September 1, 2016
Elimination of the LLM fields	Program Director and SGPS		September 1, 2016
As programs mature, survey outcomes from students graduating from all programs	Graduate programs committee and director	As are available	2017
Student recruitment plan derived and delivered	Graduate programs committee and director	As are available	Fall 2016
Update program websites	Graduate programs committee and director	As are available	Fall 2016
Graduate students should be exposed to Indigenous legal traditions and indigenous legal theory	Graduate programs committee	9001/9011 course instructor; introduced in approaches to legal scholarship course	Fall 2016
Consider MSL student course or workshop to reduce redundancies for other students taking 9002	Graduate programs committee	May have MSL student complete JD course “orientation to law and legal system”	Fall 2016
Define PhD chapter defense as a “qualifying exam”	Program director	none	Fall 2016