



Law

Be part of Otago's unrivalled law community.

"I loved studying Law at Otago. The incredible levels of support made the experience extra enjoyable and enabled my success. As the saying goes, 'E hara taku toa i te toa takitahi. Engari, he toa takitini: Success is not the work of one, but the work of many'."

Jacobi Kohu-Morris
Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Ranginui
BA (Philosophy, Politics and Economics)
and LLB(Hons)
Judge's Clerk (NZ Court of Appeal)

Otago's Faculty of Law has been providing world-class legal education for almost 150 years. Our academics will help you develop skills for a career that can drive social change in your chosen profession and in the world.

Law is part of all social activity. It defines relationships, protects rights, imposes obligations and gives structure to government and commercial enterprise. A Law degree from Otago is a professional degree that can lead to expected and unexpected careers. Many graduates find careers as lawyers in private practice, but others prefer to work in business, government, the public sector or welfare agencies.

Be part of Otago's unrivalled law community. Innovative, supportive and inclusive – we'll empower you to follow your path.

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Why study Law?

A Bachelor of Laws will give you the ability to question and challenge, analyse complex issues, find solutions to a wide variety of problems and contribute to decision making at all levels. You'll develop precise language skills and gain an excellent grounding in analysing, decision making, negotiation, researching and forming legal and other arguments. These are all skills employers love and Aotearoa New Zealand needs.

Many Commerce, Science, Physical Education, Health Science, Arts, and Consumer and Applied Science students enrol in first-year Law to enhance their studies with an understanding of how the law works.

Background required

There are no specific subjects that you need to study at school for entry into first-year Law. In general, we advise you to take subjects that you do well in, and you enjoy. Good language (English) and analysis (Maths) skills are useful. You could develop your language and analysis skills by taking part in activities such as drama and debating.

Law at Otago

The Bachelor of Laws (LLB) and the Bachelor of Laws with Honours (LLB(Hons)) degrees are both four-year professional programmes.

LAWS 101 The Legal System is the first-year paper for the law degree. It can also count toward another degree. In addition to LAWS 101, you will need to take four to six non-Law 100-level papers.

Entry into second-year Law is limited to approximately 250 places and selection is based predominantly on the mark you achieve in LAWS 101.

The second-year course consists of papers in Criminal Law, Law of Contract, Property Law and Public Law, and a programme of research and writing. These papers are fundamental to understanding law and provide a foundation for advanced papers in subsequent years.

During your third and fourth years of study, you will complete two compulsory papers – LAWS 301 Law of Torts and LAWS 302 Jurisprudence. These are generally taken during your third year. If you wish to practice as a barrister or solicitor, the LAWS 463 Legal Ethics paper is compulsory.

You may be invited into Honours as a result of exceptional performance in your second-year Law papers. The LLB(Hons) involves additional supervised research and the completion of a dissertation.

LAWS 101 The Legal System

LAWS 101 is an open-entry full-year course consisting of three lectures and one tutorial a week. You will learn how to read, interpret and apply Case Law and Statutory Law, how to reason and justify arguments, and how to write clearly, effectively and persuasively. You'll also work in small tutorial groups and focus on developing the basic skills of analysing a legal problem.

Double degree options

Many Law students at Otago complete double degrees, using Otago's flexible cross-credit system, which can lead to even greater job opportunities. You can combine your LLB with study for a degree in Commerce, Arts, Science, Health Science and other degrees. If you intend to do a double-degree programme, you should include some papers from the second degree in your first year. By cross-crediting papers between the two courses, two degrees can usually be completed in five years of study.

Professional options

Law at Otago is a professional degree. If you wish to practice law following your LLB degree, you must also complete a professional legal studies course. This ensures that lawyers entering all areas of practice have the skills required to represent clients competently and ethically.

Student exchange

The University of Otago has exchange agreements with more than 90 institutions worldwide. If your marks average B or better, you may qualify to attend one of these institutions for one semester or a year. You pay only your New Zealand fees and complete your qualification within the same time frame as if you'd never been away. Law students are able to take Law papers at the Law Faculty of specifically approved overseas universities.

Career opportunities

With world-class teachers, up-to-date courses and invaluable real-world training, it's not surprising that so many Otago law graduates have gone on to successful, interesting and varied careers.

They are trusted advisers, skilled advocates and leaders in business and government. They work in law firms throughout Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas. They can also be found in not-for-profit organisations like the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation and Amnesty International. Government departments, local bodies, iwi authorities and businesses also require lawyers for specialist legal advice.

Law students who complete double degrees find this often opens up even more career opportunities in areas like the media, public relations, entertainment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and trade, and IT consultancies.

For questions about
Law

otago.ac.nz/law



Download a Law Prospectus:
otago.ac.nz/publications

PROFILE

Nerys Udy

Ngāi Tahu

LLB(Hons) and BA (History and Māori Studies), Judge's Clerk to the Chief Justice in the Supreme Court

"I didn't intend to study Law – my passion is History – but after taking first-year Law and learning about how it can both harm and heal our society when used in the right way, I decided to study both.

I majored in History and minored in Māori Studies for my BA, and I found that they sat really well alongside my Law degree. I strongly believe that understanding history is critical to understanding our current selves. And it is very complementary to law, which questions how our society is structured and how we can affect that structure with the law.

My minor in Māori Studies allowed me to deepen my knowledge of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga. This was fulfilling and made me a better Law graduate, as I can understand both the introduced common law system and the original tikanga legal and social system of Aotearoa New Zealand.

I now work as a Judge's Clerk to the Chief Justice in the Supreme Court. This two-year role provides a great opportunity to develop my legal skills and do exciting work. My Otago LLB has set me up for this role, and the skills I developed in my BA have also been critical, as I need to look at issues from numerous perspectives. In particular, my knowledge of te reo has added a new depth to my work – a few weeks ago, I was researching historical sources written in te reo Māori, and I realised that it was adding value to what I could provide to the workplace.

I would say to anyone thinking about coming to Otago that the Dunedin experience is incredible, and it will stick with them. There are plenty of challenges to moving so far down south to study but living in a university town surrounded by like-minded students and top-quality lecturers is something you can't beat."

