



Letter of Notification (LON)

Policy A1.0 New Academic Programs: Approval Process

Institution:	Middle Tennessee State University
Proposed Academic Program:	Legal Studies, MS
Proposed Implementation Date:	May 2025
CIP Code and Title:	22.0000 Legal Studies, General
CIP Code Definition:	A general program that focuses on law and legal issues from the perspective of the social sciences and humanities.
LON Submission Date:	December 19, 2023
Posted Date on THEC Website:	December 19, 2023
Public Comment Period:	December 19, 2023 – January 4, 2024

Letter of Notification Checklist

THEC Academic Policy 1.0 (Section 1.0.6A) Letter of Notification Requirements:

- ✓ Letter of Support from the President/Chancellor signifying institutional governing board or system office support for development;
- ✓ Program overview;
- ✓ Background information;
- ✓ Feasibility Study;
- ✓ Enrollment and graduation projections;
- ✓ Projected costs to deliver the proposed program;
- ✓ Projected revenues for the proposed program;
- ✓ Letters of support.



LETTER OF NOTIFICATION (LON)
M.S. Legal Studies

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Office of the President

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19 December 2023

Steven Gentile, PhD
Executive Director
TN Higher Education Commission
312 Rosa L. Parks Ave, 9th Floor
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Dr. Gentile:

In accordance with Tennessee Higher Education Commission Policy A 1.0, Section 1.0.5A, this letter signifies my support for the development of the **M.S. in Legal Studies** at Middle Tennessee State University. MTSU's Board of Trustees enthusiastically approved the program as a "Degree Under Consideration" in November 2022.

The Board and I believe that the addition of the 30-credit hour degree program will enhance MTSU's portfolio and will strengthen the University's contribution to the workforce demands of the Middle Tennessee region and beyond.

Because of the nature of the three proposed concentrations, the MSLS will be housed in two colleges at MTSU: Jones College of Business and College of Media and Entertainment. The degree will be offered in cooperation with the Nashville School of Law; you will find NSL President and Dean Bill Koch's letter within the attached LON. We are excited about this partnership.

We appreciate THEC staff's consideration of this Letter of Notification and look forward to continued collaboration with your office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sidney A. McPhee".

Sidney A. McPhee
President

CC: Dr. Julie Roberts, THEC Chief Academic Officer
Dr. Mark Byrnes, MTSU Provost

Section I: Overview

Institution Name: Middle Tennessee State University

Academic Program: Legal Studies
Concentrations: General Business, Compliance, and Entertainment
Designation: M.S.

CIP Code: 14.22.0000.11 Legal Studies, General
Definition: A general program that focuses on law and legal issues from the perspective of the social sciences and humanities.

Liaison: Dr. Amy Aldridge Sanford
Vice Provost for Academic Programs
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Proposed
Implementation
Date: May 2025

Section II: Background

Background concerning academic program development

Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) and the Nashville School of Law (NSL) were independently exploring ways to offer more educational opportunities to the communities they serve, including non-traditional students seeking to enhance their career skills. MTSU, through the Department of Accounting in the Jones College of Business (JCOB), has a strong tradition teaching business law as part of its professional programs, including to graduate students in its Master of Accounting program. There has long been interest at MTSU to build on this strength in business law and offer graduate training to working professionals who need to sharpen their understanding of the law but do not need or want to pursue a more extensive juris doctor (J.D.) degree.

For its part, NSL has a longstanding program dating back more than a century to enable working professionals to complete the education leading to a J.D. and qualify to practice law. NSL too has recognized an opportunity to help working professionals not seeking the full J.D. degree but interested in enhancing their career skills and prospects through a focused program of legal study. Through discussions between administrators and faculty at MTSU and NSL, the two institutions recognized a synergy in the talents and resources available to them to develop a graduate program, to be offered by MTSU at NSL's Nashville campus, specifically focused on the needs of these non-traditional students who would benefit from a focused but flexible program of legal study. The following proposal reflects their shared vision for such a program.

Purpose and nature of academic program

MTSU, in collaboration with NSL, proposes a new Master of Science in Legal Studies (MSLS) degree. While a relatively recent addition, the growth of the MSLS degree in the United States responds to the growing need for persons who are not licensed attorneys but who are familiar with the American legal system and have a working knowledge of a broad spectrum of legal concepts and procedures. Professionals who are able to read and understand legal documents, to recognize and avoid risks, to respond effectively when legal issues arise, and to communicate effectively with attorneys are in increasing demand in today's labor market.

Offering an MSLS degree is consistent with the missions of MTSU and NSL and their histories of educating Tennesseans for helping professions. MTSU, founded in 1911, offered programs to train teachers. NSL, also founded in the Middle Tennessee region in 1911, was created to diversify the legal profession by enabling working people the opportunity to earn a law degree at night. From the very beginning, many NSL students studied law not to become practicing attorneys but rather to further their careers in business or public employment. By collaborating on an MSLS, the institutions will broaden educational and professional opportunities for the citizens of Middle Tennessee with an accessible degree and fill a need in the local workforce. There will always be a need for persons who can effectively navigate today's legal and regulatory complexities but who do not desire to represent clients as a practicing lawyer.

MTSU's M.S. in Legal Studies degree program (with concentrations in General Business, Compliance, and Entertainment) is designed for non-lawyer professionals with undergraduate degrees seeking a deeper understanding of the law and the legal systems in the United States but whose duties and responsibilities do not require a J.D. degree. Successful graduates of the program must complete a minimum of 30 credit hours, including a core that includes courses in the U.S. legal system, critical legal thinking, contracts, negotiation, and business organizations. Up to 12 credit hours will be taught by NSL faculty and will transfer to MTSU; the remaining hours will be taught by MTSU faculty.

The primary target audience will be working non-lawyer professionals who desire a broader understanding of the legal systems in the United States, as well as the laws and regulations applicable to commercial activities. An additional target audience will be persons entering the workforce who seek to improve employment opportunities by acquiring a comprehensive understanding of the legal systems in the United States and by gaining proficiency in law-related skills.

Examples would include careers in risk management; music and entertainment business; corporate governance; financial and regulatory compliance; human resources; contract formation and interpretation; government relations; and dispute resolution support.

As students in the MSLS program at MTSU, learners will gain a deeper understanding of the legal systems in the United States, including federal and state courts structures, sources of law, including constitutional law, statutory law, administrative law, and case law. They will acquire or refine their ability (a) to find legal authorities relevant to legal problems, (b) to analyze legal issues using facts and law, and (c) to communicate their analysis and conclusions logically and

concisely both orally and in writing. Learners also will become familiar with processes to resolve disputes, including negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and litigation and will learn appropriate ways to collaborate with and support in-house legal departments and outside counsel.

This MSLS will (a) introduce learners to core legal principles in a variety of law-related fields, (b) deepen their understanding of the increasingly complex legal and regulatory challenges facing commercial activities, and (c) provide them with practical training in a variety of law-related skills that will increase their efficiency and effectiveness.

The delivery of the MSLS courses will combine the efficacy of in-person instruction for skills training and the accessibility of online or hybrid courses when pedagogically appropriate. A significant number of the persons who will enroll in the program will benefit from its location in Nashville not only because they already live and work here but also because of our proximity to the businesses and federal, state, and local government offices that will employ them.

The program's courses, particularly the core courses, will be offered in-person at NSL. Other courses, such as the elective courses in the concentrations of entertainment, business law or compliance, may be presented in hybrid or online formats to provide additional flexibility to learners who are working while enrolled in the program.

The program's faculty will be drawn from the active and former judges, experienced attorneys, and other skilled professionals on NSL's faculty and from the faculty of MTSU's Jennings A. Jones College of Business and its College of Media and Entertainment, many of whom claim current or recent positions in state or regional government, law, or the business world.

Alignment with state master plan and institutional mission

The proposed MSLS addresses the state master plan by:

- Addressing Tennessee's economic development and workforce needs, specifically growing demand from business and non-profit entities for expertise in regulatory compliance.
- Providing an affordable graduate degree geared to adult learners.
- Increasing credential attainment and family prosperity in a high-paying field of employment.

The proposed program aligns with MTSU's institutional mission and mission profile by:

- Providing a high-quality, affordable academic program that prepares students to thrive in their chosen profession.
- Increasing access to post-baccalaureate education for adult learners.
- Developing and sustaining academic partnership with NSL.
- Building on institutional strengths, specifically the AACSB-accredited JCOB concentrations in healthcare and music business and the Department of Recording Industry, which are economic sectors especially relevant to the Middle Tennessee region.

Institutional capacity to deliver the proposed academic program

The MSLS degree program will involve two colleges at MSU: the Jones College of Business and the College for Media and Entertainment – in particular CME’s Department of Recording Industry. The graduate faculty capacity is solid, with 37 graduate faculty in current graduate programs. MTSU’s partnership with the NSL will provide instructional capacity for foundational law courses not offered by MTSU.

Additionally, MTSU’s College of Graduate Studies will provide administrative support for recruitment, enrollment, monitoring of retention and graduation, and student support services, and MTSU’s University College will provide administrative support for the program’s off-campus instructional site at the NSL.

Existing programs offered at public and private Tennessee institutions

There are only two universities in Tennessee currently offering the equivalent of MTSU’s proposed degree in MSLS. See Table 2 below. The programs are so new that there is no enrollment or completion data available.

Table 2. Existing Tennessee Programs

Institution	Start Date	Degree	Mode	Major	TN CIP Code
University of Tennessee, Knoxville	Fall 2020	C4	Traditional; Online	Legal Studies	14.22.0000.11
University of Tennessee, Knoxville	Summer 2021	MLS*	Traditional; Online	Legal Studies	14.22.9999.00
Vanderbilt University	Fall 2022	MLS	Online	Legal Studies	14.22.0000

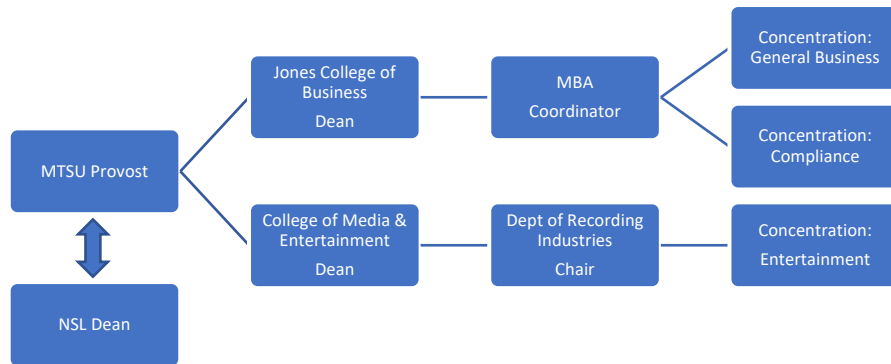
*Dual degree with Master’s in Social Work.

Accreditation

There are no plans for program accreditation. MTSU is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award baccalaureate, masters, specialist, and doctorate degrees. The proposed program will fall within the scope of this institutional accreditation. MTSU’s next reaffirmation of accreditation will be in 2026.

Administrative structure

Two of the M.S. Legal Studies concentrations – General Business and Compliance – will report through the MBA Coordinator in the Jones College of Business. The third concentration – Entertainment – will report through the Chair of the Department of Recording Industries in the College of Media and Entertainment.



Section III: Feasibility Study

Student interest

According to a Hanover Research Study (see Appendix A) commissioned by MTSU and conducted in October 2022, there is higher-than-average student and labor demand growth at the regional level for legal studies master’s programs. This indicates such a new program is not only viable, but also has a high likelihood of success.

Based on degree completions in the Southeast, student demand has grown annually each year from 2016 to 2020, except in 2018. This demand for the master’s in legal studies has grown faster than the regional average for all master’s degree fields. During that same five-year period, the total number of legal studies master’s conferrals grew faster than the number of programs offered in the region, indicating that there is student interest in the field that is outpacing the rate at which programs are being offered in the region.

The proposed program offers a distinctive opportunity for students to tap into the expertise of a longtime Nashville institution, Nashville School of Law, along with one of the state’s largest universities, MTSU. This program sets itself apart from other offerings with this unique combination of resources in an environment that allows for study while students remain in their full-time employment.

Local and regional demand

The Hanover study points out that Nashville area job ads rarely request a master’s in legal studies, but labor market trends indicate stronger than average employment growth in occupations aligned with MTSU’s proposed tracks. Data from ABA suggests that non-JD enrollments at ABA law schools have shown steady growth in the past decade. Non JD enrollments include MLS as well as degrees and certificates intended for foreign lawyers seeking expertise in U.S. law, and certificate offerings and master’s degrees for JD graduates.

Locally, Rutherford County has experienced explosive population growth (more than 34%

between 2010 and 2020),¹ while the Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin region is expected to see 14% growth over the next decade.²

Regionally, job growth has increased 5.6% just in the last year, with noted increases in professional & business services (5.2%), information (11.8%), education and health services (4.2%), and government (2.8%),³ all career areas that lend themselves to an advanced degree such as the master's in legal studies.

Employer demand

The MSLS is a career advancement degree, designed to benefit those in occupations related to law. Growth at all geographic levels for these occupations is above average, and growth is expected to be stronger in Tennessee than regionally or nationally. Regionally, Financial Managers are expected to see the most growth (20.8%). Other areas in which growth is expected are Compliance Officers and Human Resources Managers. An MSLS will equip learners in these areas with deeper insight into legal issues that may affect their work.

The master's of legal studies can be applicable in a variety of industries.⁴ An Indeed.com report singles out the advantages candidates in the health care field have if they possess an MSLS degree. In 2020, the Nashville health care industry directly employed 167,919 people, with \$1.6 billion invested in health care companies over the past 10 years.⁵

The Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook notes that workers with legal studies degrees are typically employed in management, business and financial occupations, with double-digit growth projected in financial managers, paralegals, and legal assistants. Twenty-one percent of financial managers, nine percent of managers, and 20% of all other managers with legal studies degrees held an advanced degree.

Community and industry partnerships

It is anticipated that there will be many Nashville area partnerships with business and industry. Letters of support (see Appendix B) include the following:

AllianceBernstein – Kyle DiGangi, Senior Vice President and Chief Compliance Officer
Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce – Ralph Shulz, President and CEO
Nashville School of Law – William C. Koch, Jr., President and Dean

Section IV: Enrollment and Graduation Projections

The institutions anticipate an initial enrollment of five students, with gradual growth as the programs take hold, and a doubling to ten students by year 3. The annual attrition rate for MTSU graduate students is about 10%. See Table 1 below.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/rutherfordcountytennessee>

² Boyd Center Population Projections <https://tnsdc.utk.edu/estimates-and-projections/boyd-center-population-projections/>

³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.tn_nashville_msa.htm

⁴ Hanover Report Page 7.

⁵ Nashville Chamber of Commerce 2022 Regional Economic Development Guide

Table 1. Projected Enrollments and Graduates

Projected Enrollments and Graduates				
Year	Academic Year	Projected Total Fall Enrollment	Projected Attrition	Projected Graduates
1	2024-25	5 new	0	0
2	2025-26	12 total (7 new)	0	5
3	2026-27	17 total (10 new)	1	7
4	2027-28	21 total (12 new)	2	10
5	2028-29	24 total (15 new)	2	12

Section V: Projected Costs to Deliver the Proposed Program

The Financial Projections form can be found labeled as Appendix C.

Faculty & Instructional Staff

It is anticipated that up to two adjuncts a semester (at a cost of \$1,500 a credit hour) will be needed to teach courses for the first five years.

Non-Instructional Staff

No new costs anticipated within the first five years of the program.

Graduate Assistants

There are no anticipated costs associated with graduate assistants.

Accreditation

MTSU will notify/seek approval from SACSCOC for the proposed degree [which option will depend on percentage of new content]. MTSU will also seek approval of the Nashville School of Law as an off-campus instructional site. SACSCOC’s fee for each of these approvals will be \$500 for a total \$1,000. If SACSCOC authorizes a substantive change committee site visit, the administrative fee will be \$2,000 plus the actual cost of the visit (travel expenses, etc. for each reviewer.

The Jones College of Business is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). The proposed MSLS will fall under the scope of AACSB accreditation. Since most of the courses that will be offered under MSLS, with concentrations in Business and Compliance are in the JCOB, the MSLS program will be included in the AACSB review process. The JCOB was reaccredited by AACSB in the Spring of 2021, the MSLS will be reviewed in the next AACSB review of JCOB in 2026.

Consultants

As part of the THEC approval process, the program will require an external reviewer in the planning year, with a one-time cost estimated at \$4,000, which includes a \$1,500 stipend.

Equipment

There are no anticipated costs associated with equipment.

Informational Technology

There are no anticipated costs associated with information technology.

Library Resources

The Walker Library at MTSU maintains a subscription to Westlaw, a database heavily utilized by lawyers and other legal professionals. There will be no additional library costs associated with the proposed degree.

Marketing

MTSU will allot \$5,000 during the planning year of the program for marketing.

Facilities

MTSU room rental at NSL is estimated at approximately \$3,000 a semester, beginning in Semester 2.

Travel

There are no anticipated new travel costs.

Other resources

There are no anticipated costs associated with other resources.

Section VI: Projected Revenues for the Proposed Program

Tuition

Students will pay NSL in their first semester and begin to pay MTSU in their 2nd semester. MTSU revenue is calculate as 6 CH per semester (equivalent of \$3,708 per student per semester) beginning in the student's 2nd semester in the MSLS.

Grants

None anticipated.

Other

None anticipated.



ACADEMIC PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Master's In Legal Studies

Prepared for Middle Tennessee
State University

October 2022

In the following report, Hanover assesses demand for master's degree programs in legal studies, specifically highlighting demand trends within Tennessee, the Southeast region, and the nation. This report includes an examination of student and labor market demand, and an analysis of potential competitor programs.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on an analysis of degree completions, labor market demand, and market competitors, Hanover recommends that Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU):

CONSIDER A BUSINESS OR FINANCE-FOCUSED MASTER'S IN LEGAL STUDIES PROGRAM THAT CAN BE COMPLETED IN ONE YEAR AT A COST OF \$24,900 FOR IN-STATE STUDENTS.

While no Tennessee institutions report conferrals in relevant fields, higher-than-average student and labor demand growth at the regional level indicate that a new master's in legal studies program is viable and has the potential to be successful. Student demand has grown 13.8 percent annually from 2016 to 2020, which is faster than the regional average for all master's degree fields (2.5 percent). Based on competitor trends, MTSU should require 30 credits as planned and consider charging \$24,900 or less for tuition. This lower tuition value will be especially important if the program is to compete with a new Master of Legal Studies offered by Vanderbilt University at an estimated total cost of \$50,000. Additionally, MTSU should consider structuring the program to include core courses such as commonly required first-year law courses – whether offered by MTSU or Nashville School of Law – as well as elective and concentration courses. Additionally, MTSU should focus its marketing efforts on business and finance professionals, particularly in Nashville.

OFFER A FLEXIBLE ONLINE OR HYBRID DELIVERY OPTION IN ORDER TO APPEAL TO NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS AND WORKING PROFESSIONALS.

Three of the nine competitor programs reviewed in this report offer at least a hybrid delivery model, and six of the nine programs offer online delivery. The new Vanderbilt program is also designed for online delivery with a single campus intensive. With this in mind, Hanover recommends that MTSU offer a 100 percent online option alongside the planned on-campus program in order to appeal to students who plan on working throughout their degree, and other nontraditional students. Most reviewed programs are catering to this audience since working professionals are largely the demographic that enrolls in a master's in legal studies. Even though MTSU is focusing its program to have a localized reach, offering an online option provides widens the prospective applicant pool to most of Tennessee and ensures that it does not lose students to other local competitors with online options.

INVESTIGATE THE POSSIBILITY OF CONCENTRATIONS IN HEALTHCARE AND CYBERSECURITY ONCE THE PROGRAM HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE ITS APPEAL TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS IN HIGH-GROWTH INDUSTRIES.

These concentrations are in-demand fields that will allow MTSU to market its degree broadly across a variety of industries. The University may also wish to consider education or human resources in the near future but should prioritize finance, business, healthcare, and cybersecurity. Additionally, offering more concentrations will help MTSU align with regional competitor programs offering similar options within their own legal studies programs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY FINDINGS

Regional student demand for legal studies master's programs has increased in recent years, and national trends suggest a stable to growing market for this degree. Master's completions in legal studies programs have grown faster than average in the Southeast. However, conferral data at the state and national levels do not parallel the higher-than-average student growth trends displayed at the regional level. Since student interest is highly concentrated within the Southeast, MTSU should consider ways to tap into the regional market.

Labor market trends indicate stronger-than-average employment growth in occupations aligned with MTSU's proposed tracks, but Nashville area job ads rarely request a master's in legal studies. While secondary sources suggest that students can come from a variety of industries and backgrounds and still find a master's in legal studies helpful in advancing their career, the degree shows little evidence of demand within central Tennessee. Because the volume of relevant local job postings is very low, MTSU should market its program as a career advancement program rather than a program for students looking to switch careers.

Business law, finance law, and healthcare law are in-demand master's in legal studies concentrations. These fields are commonly offered concentrations among benchmarked programs. They are also common categories for advanced legal studies programs, according to the ABA. Additionally, a degree focused on these areas would be best-positioned to fill potential local occupation gaps for finance professionals and healthcare managers.

A large portion of master's of legal studies programs offer distance learning. Six of the nine benchmarked programs offer their programs online and the majority of the top largest programs in the region also provide distance learning options. Online learning can accommodate a wider audience of students and also furthers the program's general reach.

SOUTHEAST BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

Comparison of legal studies completions and relevant labor market to all completions and all occupations in the region



Annualized Degree Completions Growth Rate, 2016-2020

FAST FACTS



183

Highest number of 2020 graduate legal studies conferrals in the Southeast, from the Master of Arts in Law at Regent University.



13

Number of active job postings in Nashville within the past six months that request a Master of Legal Studies.



9,050

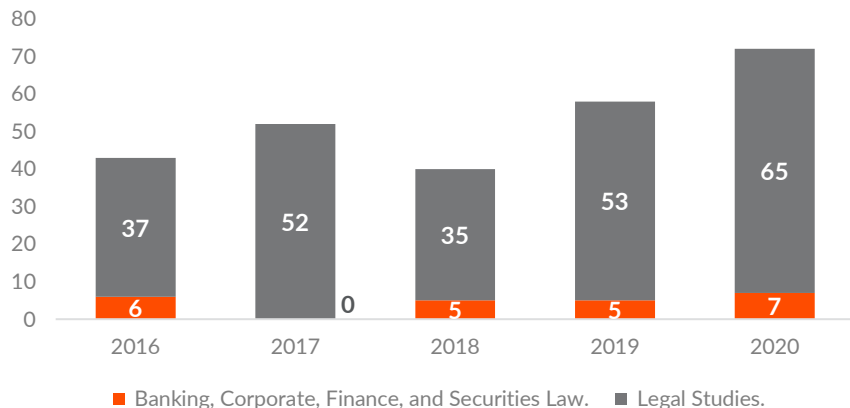
Number of monthly Google search hits "Business Law" has gotten in the past year. The next-most searched-for specializations are International Law (4,050) and Entertainment Law (3,300).



STUDENT DEMAND ANALYSIS – IPEDS DATA

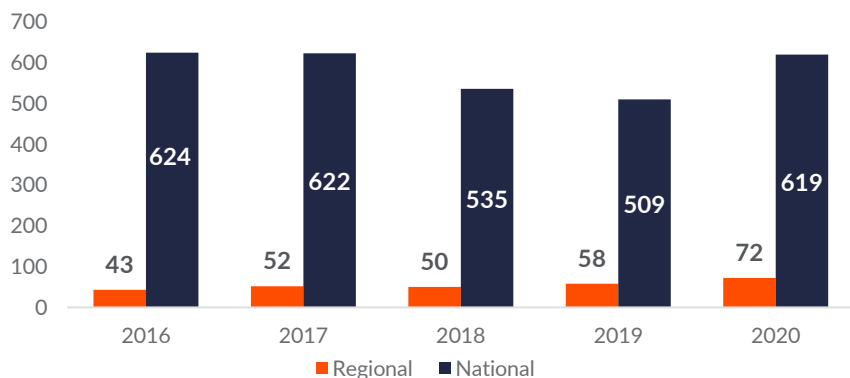
SOUTHEAST DEGREE COMPLETIONS

Regional distribution of degree completions from 2016 to 2020



SOUTHEAST DEGREE COMPLETIONS VERSUS NATIONAL DEGREE COMPLETIONS

Regional and national distribution of total 2020 degree completions in observed fields



Source: [IPEDS](#)
Additional programs are not displayed due to lack of conferrals. See table on the left for more details.

ANALYSIS

Student demand for Master of Legal Studies degrees and other master's degrees in legal fields remains muted within the Southeast region, with low, but rising, conferrals in the past five years. No Tennessee institutions report master's degree conferrals in any of the legal specialties of interest to MTSU, and regional conferrals peaked at 72 in 2020. With between 509 and 624 conferrals nationally, master's degrees in legal studies should be considered a niche field with limited demand volume.

While it is too new to appear in the IPEDS conferrals data, Vanderbilt University has developed a Nashville-based Master of Legal Studies, which is offered online in partnership with the online program management firm AllCampus. The October 2022 press release about this program [describes](#) it as "new," although Vanderbilt has offered an LLM for foreign lawyers [since](#) 2002. The online Master of Legal Studies [targets](#) working professionals in the United States who wish to augment their legal knowledge. It can be completed in five semesters of online study with one campus intensive and costs an estimated \$50,000 to complete.

TOTAL DEGREE COMPLETIONS

Aggregate degree completions by geographic level (2020)

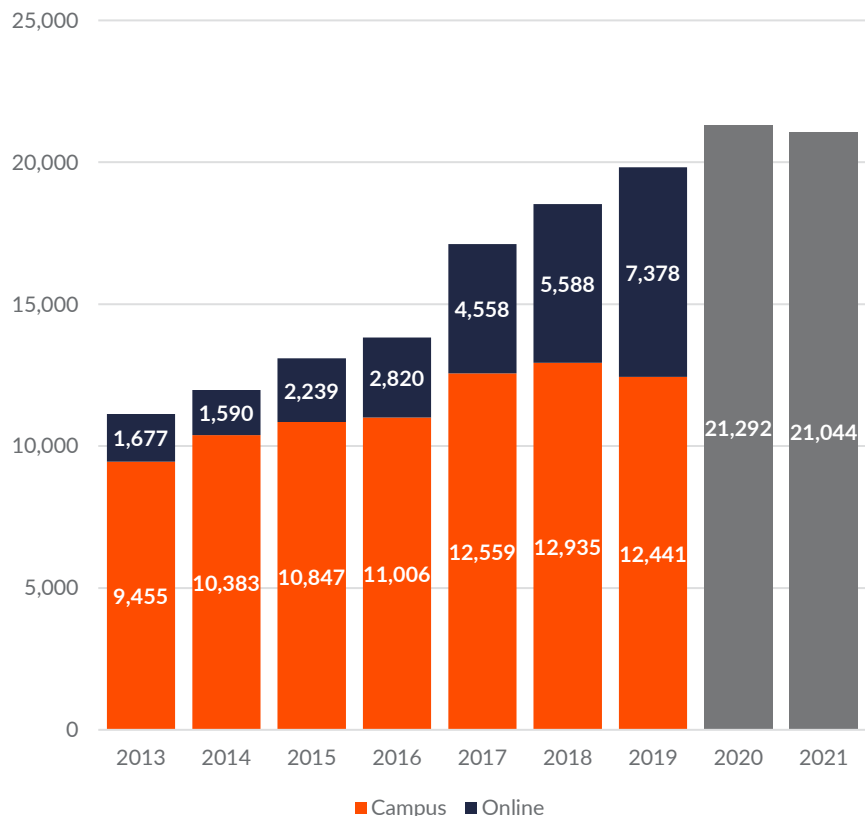
	Tennessee	Southeast	National
Banking, Corporate, Finance, and Securities Law	0	7	246
Arts and Entertainment Law	0	0	--
Compliance Law	0	0	--
Legal Studies	0	65	373
Total Completions, Observed Fields	0	72	619
Growth Rate, Observed Fields	-100.0%	13.8%	-0.2%
Growth Rate, All Fields	0.3%	2.5%	1.7%



STUDENT DEMAND ANALYSIS – ABA DATA

NATIONAL NON-JD ENROLLMENT TRENDS

National enrollment trends in non-JD programs, which can include certificates as well as master's degrees in legal studies targeting non-lawyers, lawyers trained at foreign institutions, and US-trained lawyers.



Source: American Bar Association, [2022](#). Data from 2020 and 2021 do not provide an online versus on-campus segmentation. Totals shown as gray bars reflect all delivery modalities.

ANALYSIS

Data from the American Bar Association (ABA) suggests that non-JD enrollments at ABA law schools have shown steady growth in the past decade, with an increasing share of programs offered online. The ABA data does not offer more granular insight into the types of non-JD credentials offered, so these data include Master of Laws/Legal Studies offerings as well as degrees and certificates intended for foreign lawyers seeking expertise in U.S. law, as well as certificate offerings and master's degrees for JD graduates.

There are ABA-accredited offerings in fields of interest to MTSU, as shown below. Note that the table does not include programs in potentially-related fields (e.g. taxation or labor and employment law), and there may be additional general LLM degrees that offer concentrations in these fields but are not classified under these categories by the ABA.

ABA DIRECTORY OF LL.M. PROGRAMS BY FIELD

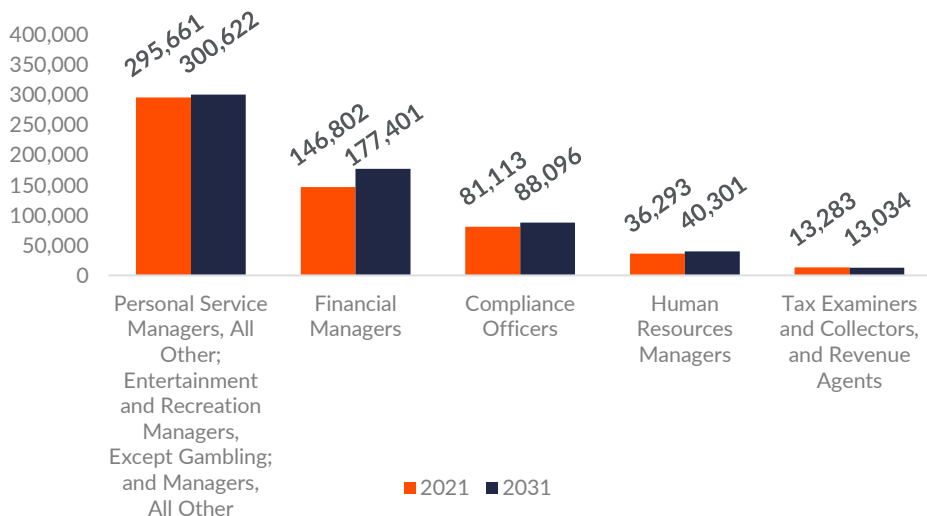
This list includes all [ABA-accredited](#) LLM programs in MTSU's fields of interest.

Media and Entertainment	Banking and Finance	General Business
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pepperdine University • Southwestern Law School • University of Miami (Entertainment, Art, & Sports) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boston University, • Chicago-Kent School of Law • Fordham University, • Wayne State University • WMU Thomas M. Cooley Law School • Widener University, • St. John's University, (bankruptcy law) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic University, • University of Dayton • Florida State University • George Washington University • Loyola University-Chicago • University of Minnesota • New York Law School • University of San Diego • Suffolk University Law School • Western New England University

LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS

SOUTHEAST REGION CURRENT AND PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT

Regional legal studies-related positions as of 2021 and 2031 (projected)



TOTAL LABOR MARKET

Aggregate projected employment growth by geographic level

	Tennessee	Southeast	National
Estimated Employment (2021)	56,898	573,152	2,369,264
Projected Employment (2031)	63,165	619,454	2,489,046
Total Annual Openings, Observed Occupations	5,281	50,996	201,129
Employment Growth, Observed Occupations	11.0%	8.1%	5.1%
Employment Growth, All Occupations	7.6%	7.0%	4.3%

Source: [JobsEQ](#)

ANALYSIS

Growth at all geographic levels for legal studies-related occupations is above average, indicating that program graduates will have strong employment prospects. Labor market projections predict above-average growth at the state, regional, and national levels for legal studies-related occupations. Regionally, *Financial Managers* are expected to see the most growth (20.8 percent). Employment in reviewed occupations and for all occupations is expected to be stronger in Tennessee than regionally or nationally. It is therefore likely that the state will be an especially favorable market for new graduates.

The master of legal studies degree can be applicable in a variety of industries. While Hanover reviewed the most relevant employment outcomes for legal studies professionals, this graduate degree can be applied to a multitude of occupations and sectors. According to a 2021 report released by [Indeed.com](#), a national aggregator of online job listings, a master's in legal studies can be even be useful for candidates in the healthcare field. For example, the authors note that:

...if you're a nurse with an interest in moving into an administrative role, earning an MLS along with a degree in health care administration can give you the skills to assess medical laws.

A Master of Legal Studies is a flexible degree and should be marketed for its versatility. Employees seeking to move into administrative roles or managerial roles in many industries can benefit from acquiring advanced legal knowledge. A September 2022 [article](#) in *Forbes* notes that:

...while [the Master of Legal Studies] isn't a requirement for most positions, it equips learners with deeper insight into legal issues that may affect their work.

The authors contend that the degree is "useful in many occupations and fields."



REAL-TIME POSTINGS INTELLIGENCE: LEGAL STUDIES

TOP LEGAL STUDIES-RELATED OCCUPATIONS

Nashville metropolitan statistical area legal studies-related positions by occupation.



EXEMPLARY JOB POSTINGS

Position	Employer	Location	Skills and Requirements
Client Onboarding Specialist	UBS	Nashville, TN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree in Finance, Business, Legal Studies, and/or similar discipline Understanding of rules, regulations, and regulatory requirements (BSA/US Patriot Act/OFAC/Dodd Frank) preferred
Senior Manager - IT Vendor Management	HUB International	Nashville, TN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor's degree in Finance, Business Administration, Legal or related discipline MBA or related graduate degree Contract Management Certification 7+ experience managing complex global IT contracts and relationships

Note: For this analysis, Hanover retrieved job postings data for legal studies-related positions in Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, TN from [JobsEQ](#), a proprietary database providing real-time job postings aggregated from thousands of websites. All data reflect the 180-day period as of September 2022.

ANALYSIS

There are very few local job opportunities that specifically request a **Master of Legal Studies**. Within the past six months, JobsEQ's Real-Time Intelligence tool identified only 13 active job postings for legal studies professionals in Nashville. The positions that make up the majority of job postings for graduates are in finance, which indicates MTSU should prioritize finance professionals when marketing its legal studies degree.

TOP SKILLS AND JOB TITLES

Top Skills	Top Job Titles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Agile Asset Management JavaScript Auditing Data Analysis E-commerce Invoicing Marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client Onboarding Specialist (5 ads) Client Service Transition Coordinator (3 ads) Client Onboarding Analyst (2 ads) Compliance Manager (2 ads) Senior Manager (2) Regional Distribution Manager (1 ad)

TOP NASHVILLE MSA EMPLOYERS

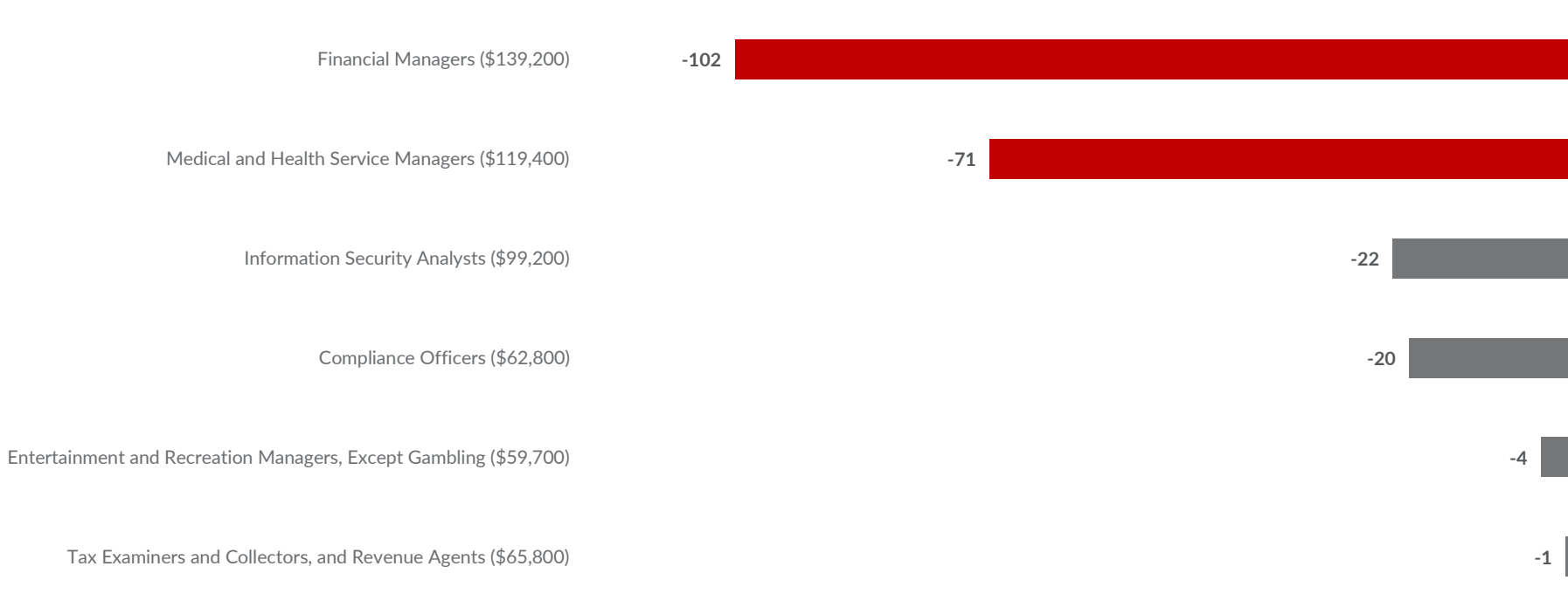
- UBS (10 ads)
- SpecialtyCare (2 ads)
- Believe (1 ad)
- Hub International (1 ad)
- Zurich NA (1 ad)



NASHVILLE MSA LABOR MARKET – PROJECTED OCCUPATION GAPS

Occupational gaps indicate that the Nashville market will likely need highly-educated professionals in finance, health, and information technology fields. These occupations are in-demand within the local market and should be targeted for MTSU's prospective program in legal studies. Marketing to financial and healthcare professionals could maximize MTSU's potential applicant pool, especially if the University offered relevant concentration options.

POTENTIAL OCCUPATION GAPS IN THE NASHVILLE METROPOLITAN AREA, KNOWLEDGE OCCUPATIONS ONLY, 2021-2031



Note: Average salary for the SOC code cluster is shown in parentheses. Red SOC clusters indicate a higher risk of a shortage, while gray SOC clusters in the chart above indicate a lesser risk of shortage or oversupply.

Source: [JobsEQ](#)



CONCEPT RESEARCH

SEARCH ENGINE ANALYTICS

Legal studies-related priority metrics over the past 12 months



60
Overall Priority Score

Average demand score based search engine volume, difficulty score, and organic CTR; note that a priority score of 80 or above is considered "high demand"

8,996
Average Volume

Average monthly volume of Google searches for legal studies-related terms, with a total range of 201 – 1,700 over the past 12 months

48
Difficulty Index Score

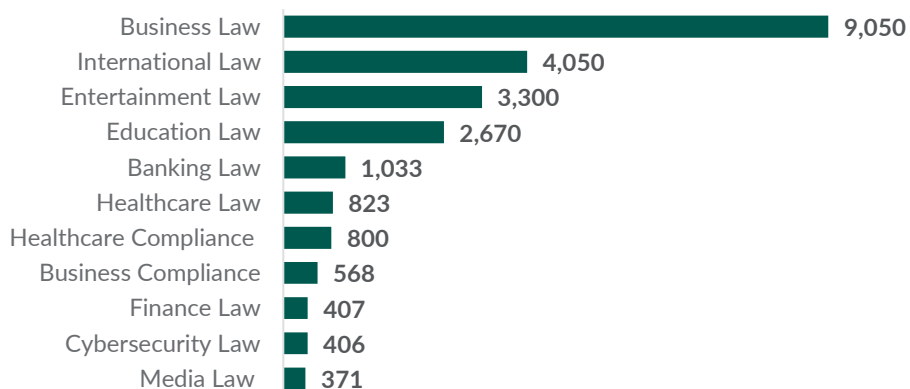
Average keyword difficulty index, an estimation of how easy (0) to difficult (100) it is to rank more highly than competitors on the first page of search results

87
Organic CTR

Average organic click-through-rate (CTR), an estimation of the percentage of clicks available to traditional, organic links on the search engine results page (SERP), as opposed to paid advertisements or graphics

MONTHLY SEARCH VOLUME BY LL.M. FIELD

Top non-JD graduate programs by category excluding LL.Ms, certificates, and doctorates.



ANALYSIS

Search engine analytics and ABA program categories suggest that **healthcare law and business law would be particularly viable concentration offerings for MTSU**. Monthly Google searches for business law are more than twice as numerous as the next highest searched concentration option, rendering it one of the most popular options for MTSU to consider. While healthcare law is not the most searched concentration option, it remains one of the more commonly searched topics and is a popular category for non-JD ABA graduate programs. When considering how to prioritize additional concentrations, MTSU should consider where potential students are focused within the legal field – in this case, areas such as business law, international law, education law, tax law, health law, appear to be feasible options.

TOP NON-JD PROGRAMS BY CATEGORY

Top non-JD graduate programs by category excluding LL.Ms, certificates, and doctorates. Note that some LL.M. programs listed by the ABA may be open to non-JDs, however.



Note: For this analysis, Hanover retrieved search engine analytics data from [MOZ.com](https://moz.com), a proprietary search engine optimization (SEO) firm. These data reflect the "actual" average keyword search volume in the United States over the past 12 months as of September 2022. Hanover supplements this data with naming conventions from the [ABA](https://www.abajournal.com) (below right).



COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

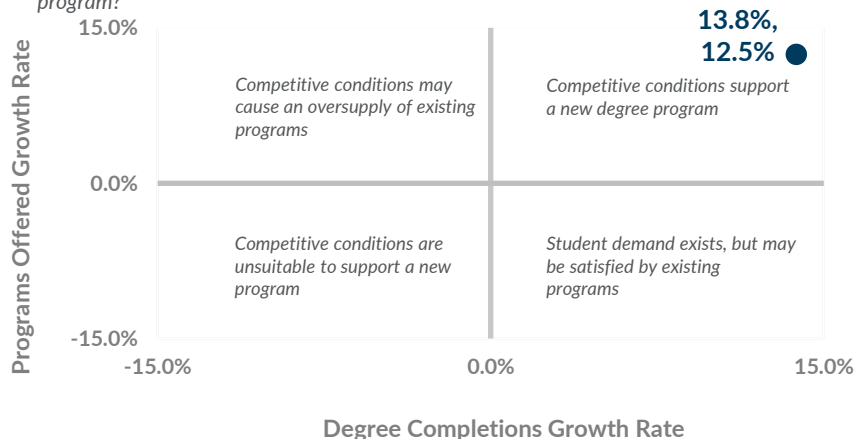
ANALYSIS

The Southeast regional market supports the addition of another master's in legal studies program. From 2016 to 2020, the total number of legal studies master's conferrals grew faster than the number of programs offered in the region. This indicates that there is apparent student interest in the field that is outpacing the rate at which programs are being offered. MTSU's key competitor institutions offer online and hybrid delivery, which expands their overall prospective audiences.

While MTSU may not be competing with a large range of on-campus competitor programs, planners should be aware of the number of online, regional programs that students may be considering. For instance, none of Southeast region's the five largest law-related master's degree programs by 2020 conferrals volume are classified as potential competitors according to the CIP codes they are reported under.

SOUTHEAST MARKET SATURATION

Within the region do competitive conditions support an additional master's in legal studies program?



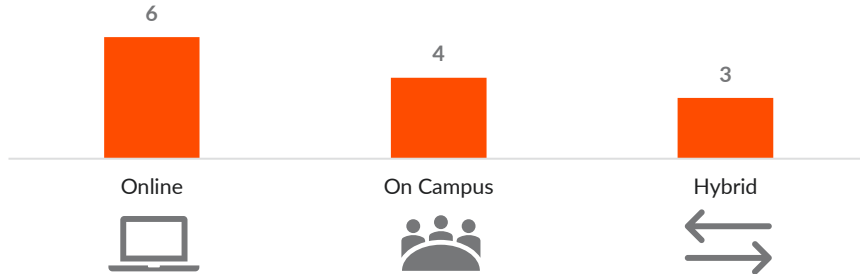
FIVE LARGEST PROGRAMS IN THE SOUTHEAST

Institution	Program / (CIP Code)	2020 Degree Completions (IPEDS)	Completions Growth Rate (2015-2020)	State
Regent University	<u>Master of Arts in Law</u> (Legal Professions and Studies, Other)	183	39.7%	VA
Tulane University	<u>Master of Jurisprudence</u> (Legal Professions and Studies, Other)	95	N/A	LA
Liberty University	<u>Juris Master</u> (American/U.S. Law/Legal Studies/Jurisprudence)	83	N/A	VA
Florida State University	<u>Juris Master</u> (Advanced Legal Research/Studies, General)	72	191.3%	FL
American Public University	<u>Master of Arts in Legal Studies</u> (Legal Studies)	40	4.9%	WV

PROGRAM TRENDS

DELIVERY FORMAT

Online delivery formats are most popular among reviewed competitors, followed by on-campus and then hybrid format.



CONCENTRATIONS

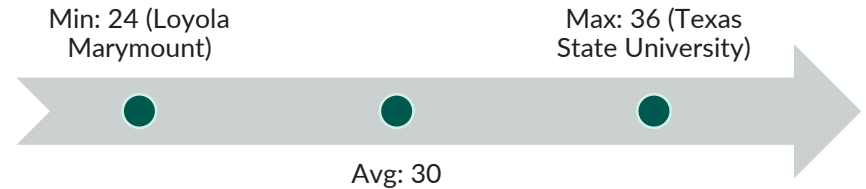


Cybersecurity, finance, and healthcare are the top three concentrations offered by benchmarked institutions. Other common concentrations include labor relations or human resources, and business law.

MTSU should move forward with its proposed concentrations. Even though entertainment law is not well-represented among competitors, it may still be helpful to have in order to appeal to Nashville's market. However, MTSU should also consider adding in a cybersecurity concentration in order to align itself with competitor trends.

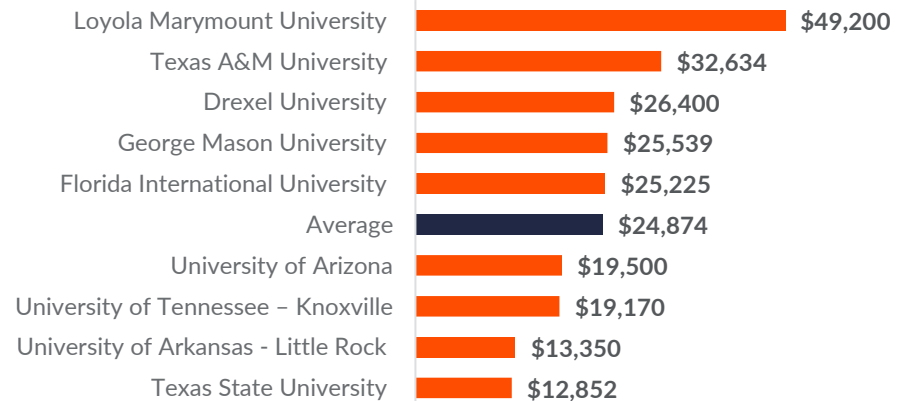
CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

Reviewed degrees require an average of 30 credits. Two institutions concentrate their credits within core courses, three institutions require half core credits and half specialized credits, and three programs require more specialization credits than core credits.



TOTAL TUITION

Total program cost ranges from \$12,852 at Texas State University to \$49,200 at Loyola Marymount University. If MTSU were to offer a master's degree in legal studies, the total program cost should be around or lower than \$24,874.



Note: Where applicable, tuition reflects in-state rates. Some tuition rates include fees.

PROGRAM BENCHMARKING

The benchmarked programs include institutions from Middle Tennessee State University's competitor list and Master of Legal Studies programs located in the South East region. Hanover prioritized public universities with similar profiles to MTSU when finding competitor institutions.

Institution	Program	Delivery Format	Core Requirements	Concentrations	Program Tuition	2020 Conferrals	Enrollment in Non-JD Programs*
Drexel University Philadelphia, PA	Master of Legal Studies	Online, hybrid	30 total credits: 18 core credits, 12 advanced credits. Courses include : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to the Legal System Compliance Skills: Auditing, Investigation, and Reporting Ethics and Professional Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cybersecurity and Information Privacy Financial Regulatory Compliance Health Care Compliance Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Regulatory Compliance Human Resources Compliance Higher Education Compliance NCAA Compliance and Sports Law Criminal Law 	\$26,400 (\$880/credit)	56	273
Florida International University Miami, FL	Juris Master	Online	30 total credits: 15 core credits, 15 specialization credits. Courses include : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to American Law Legal Analysis and Writing Torts and Criminal Law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banking Education Healthcare 	\$25,225 \$841/credit** (includes fees)	11	36
George Mason University Arlington, VA	Juris Master	Online, hybrid	30 total credits: 15 core credits, 15 specialization credits. Courses include : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to US Law for JM Students Legal Research and Writing for JM Students Economics for Lawyers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal Justice Financial and Commercial Services Government Contracts and Regulations Employment and Labor Relations Intellectual Property and Technology National Security, Cybersecurity, and Information Privacy 	\$25,539 (in-state) \$42,518 (out-of-state) \$851/credit (in-state) \$1,417/credit (out-of-state)	3	187
Loyola Marymount University Los Angeles, CA	Master of Science in Legal Studies	On-campus	At least 24 total credits: 8-9 core credits, 15-16 specialization credits, and elective credits. Courses include : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracts Business Associations Criminal Law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Law Criminal Justice Cybersecurity and Data Privacy Entertainment and New Media Law Sports Law 	\$49,200 \$2,050/credit	10	105

Source: Institutional Websites (see embedded hyperlinks)

*Data gathered from the [American Bar Association](#) and includes all non-JD enrollment for 2021

**Tuition calculated based on the per-credit



PROGRAM BENCHMARKING

Institution	Program	Delivery Format	Core Requirements	Concentrations	Program Tuition	2020 Conferrals	Enrollment in Non-JD Programs*
Texas A&M University School of Law Fort Worth, TX	Master of Legal Studies	On-campus, hybrid, online	30 total credits with core credits and elective courses. Courses vary based on specializations .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General degree Business Law and Compliance Intellectual Property, Technology, and Innovation Cybersecurity Law and Policy Energy and Environmental Law Energy, Oil, and Gas Law Health Law, Policy, and Management International Tax Real Estate and Construction Law Policy, and Management Risk Management Wealth Management 	\$32,634 \$16,317/semester (in-state, fees included) \$48,618 \$24,309/semester (out-of-state, fees included) \$33,826 \$16,913/semester (online)	58	672
Texas State University San Marcos, TX	Master of Arts in Legal Studies	On-campus, offered by the Department of Political Science	36 total credits: 27 core credits and nine elective credits. Courses include : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to the Paralegal Profession and Legal Technology Legal Research Legal Theories and Analysis 	N/A	\$12,852 \$357/credit (in-state) \$27,540 \$765/credit (out-of-state)	33	N/A
University of Arizona Tucson, AZ	Master of Legal Studies	Online	30 total credits: 15 core credits, 15 specialization credits. Courses include : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The American Common Law System I and II The American Public Law System Legal Analysis, Writing, and Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance and Legal Risk Management Criminal Law and Policy Environmental Law and Policy Family and Juvenile Law Health Law and Policy Human Rights Indigenous Peoples Law and Policy Intellectual Property International Trade and Business Law Mining Law and Policy Tax Law and Policy 	\$19,500 (\$650/credit)	41	1,989

Source: Institutional Websites (see embedded hyperlinks)

*Data gathered from the [American Bar Association](#) and includes all non-JD enrollment for 2021

**Tuition calculated based on 15 credits per semester



PROGRAM BENCHMARKING

Institution	Program	Delivery Format	Core Requirements	Concentrations	Program Tuition	2020 Conferrals	Enrollment in Non-JD Programs*
University of Arkansas - Little Rock Little Rock, AR	Master of Studies in Law	On-campus	30 total credits: nine core credits, 21 elective credits. Courses include : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Procedure • Contracts • Real Property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Law • Civics • Criminal Law • Labor, Employment, and Human Resources Law • Public Service/Public Interest Law 	\$13,350 \$445/credit (in-state) \$29,310 \$977/credit (out-of-state)	12	0
University of Tennessee - Knoxville Knoxville, TN	Master of Legal Studies	Online	30 total credits: 12 core courses, 18 elective courses. Courses include : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Structure and Operation of the American Legal system • Introduction to Legal Reasoning and Communication • At least two courses from the first-year JD curriculum 	N/A	\$19,170 \$639/credit (in-state) \$49,500 \$1,650/credit (out-of-state)	N/A	7

Source: Institutional Websites (see embedded hyperlinks)

*Data gathered from the [American Bar Association](#) and includes all non-JD enrollment for 2021




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March 31, 2023

Dr. Robert Smith, Interim Executive Director
Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Dear Interim Director Smith,

We at AllianceBernstein L.P. are writing in support of the proposed M.S. in Legal Studies, a graduate program to be offered by Middle Tennessee State University in partnership with the Nashville School of Law. We are of the opinion that this is a great step in the efforts of the State in Work Force Development.

The M.S in Legal Studies as it is proposed will provide graduates of the program requisite legal knowledge that would be helpful across many industries, without necessarily becoming practicing attorneys. The regulatory environment in our industry and other industries requires skilled workers that can help small and large companies navigate that environment.

MTSU and NSL must be commended for pulling forces together to create a program that leverages the existing competencies of both institutions. The well-regarded faculty at MTSU will be joining forces with the faculty at NSL (who are respected practicing attorneys and judges) to bring a program that is very practical to the State. We also think the public and private nature of the partnership will make for a unique contribution in the education space.

For those of us in the Financial Services industry, we think that having a well-trained pool of employees especially in the area of Compliance (one of the Concentrations in the proposed degree program) will be a welcome addition to the talent pool in our geographic region. The BLS projection is that demand for employees in the field of compliance will continue to grow for the next decade. It should be noted that demand for skilled talent in Compliance is not limited to the financial services industry. Many of the industries represented in the Middle Tennessee area, such as Healthcare, Logistics, Manufacturing and Tourism and Hospitality have an increasing demand for Compliance professionals. According to a recent report by Robert Half (Global HR Consulting firm), the demand for compliance professionals will continue to increase as the regulatory environment gets more complicated.

We believe that the proposed M.S. in Legal Studies will be a great addition to the portfolio of degree programs available to Tennessee residents, and will create an additional pool of skilled talent, that many employers will find very attractive. We are excited at the prospects of having such a program in our growing and diverse business community.

Sincerely,



500 11th Avenue North, Suite 200
Nashville, TN 37203
615.743.3000

nashvillechamber.com

July 31, 2023

Dr. Robert Smith, Interim Executive Director
Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Dear Interim Director Smith,

We are writing to support the proposed M.S. in Legal Studies, offered as a graduate program by Middle Tennessee State University in partnership with the Nashville School of Law.

The Chamber is committed to supporting efforts that will strengthen the workforce in Tennessee. This program fills a critical vacuum of workforce needs. The value of legal education transcends the practice of law as it is a component of many occupations.

It is projected that the compliance field will continue to grow over the next decade, driving up the demand for employees in the field. The M.S. in legal studies will not only provide graduates with the legal knowledge required to succeed in many industries, but also the skills to help large and small companies navigate the various regulatory environments across the state.

The Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce is the largest business federation in Middle Tennessee and has been continuously working on behalf of business since 1847. The Chamber is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating economic prosperity by facilitating community leadership. The Nashville Area Chamber represents more than 2,200 member businesses in 15 counties. Through a wide variety of programs and initiatives, the Chamber works to positively impact the economic vitality and enhance the quality of life in the region, while supporting the growth and prosperity of Chamber-member businesses and our partners.

The Chamber is supportive of this proposed program and believes it will be a strong addition to the courses offered to Tennessee residents. We are pleased to offer this letter of support and encourage the Tennessee Higher Education Commission to approve the proposal for the addition of this degree program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ralph Schulz'.

Ralph Schulz
President and CEO



NASHVILLE SCHOOL *of* LAW

From the office of the
PRESIDENT AND DEAN

July 31, 2023

Dr. Robert Smith
Tennessee Higher Education Commission
312 Rosa L. Parks Ave., 9th Floor
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

Dear Dr. Smith:

The Nashville School of Law is a nonprofit educational institution founded in 1911 to provide working men and women an opportunity to earn a law degree. Our founders believed that a legal education opened doors, not just to the practice of law but also to rewarding careers in business and public service. The intervening years have validated that belief. Many of our graduates have become leaders as lawyers and judges, business men and women, and national, state, and local public officials.

Today's businesses have increased their reliance on in-house lawyers and on non-lawyer employees who support their in-house legal staff as well as retained counsel. American law schools have responded by diversifying their programming to reach not only persons desiring to become attorneys but also those who are not interested in becoming attorneys but who are interested gaining a better understanding how the law impacts their particular professional interests. The American Bar Association now estimates that there are more than 125 non-J.D. Masters level programs currently being offered.

The leaders of both Middle Tennessee State University and the Nashville School of Law believe that collaborating to offer a non-J.D. Masters in Legal Studies degree will benefit Tennessee's businesses. The degree will also benefit persons whose career interests require an understanding of the law but not necessarily a J.D. degree. Our shared traditions of academic rigor will enable us to offer a high quality program that will train our graduates to help their employers respond effectively to the legal issues facing their businesses. In addition, the combination of our resources and the location of Nashville School of Law's campus will result in a program that is both convenient and affordable.

Very truly yours,

William C. Koch, Jr.



Financial Projections Form

Institution	Middle Tennessee State University
Program Name	MS Legal Studies

Projected One-Time Expenditures							
Category	Planning	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6*
Faculty & Instructional Staff							
Non-Instructional Staff							
Graduate Assistants							
Accreditation	\$1,000						
Consultants	\$4,000						
Equipment							
Information Technology							
Library resources							
Marketing	\$5,000						
Facilities							
Travel							
Other							
<i>Total One-Time Expenditures</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>

Projected Recurring Expenditures							
Category	Planning	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6*
Faculty & Instructional Staff	\$0	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$18,000	
Non-Instructional Staff	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Graduate Assistants	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Accreditation	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Consultants	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Information Technology	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Library	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Marketing	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Facilities	\$0	\$3,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
<i>Total Recurring Expenditures</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$21,000</i>	<i>\$24,000</i>	<i>\$24,000</i>	<i>\$24,000</i>	<i>\$24,000</i>	<i>\$0</i>
Grand Total (One-Time and Recurring)	\$10,000	\$21,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$0

Projected Revenue							
Category	Planning	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6*
Tuition	\$0	\$18,540	\$88,992	\$126,072	\$155,736	\$177,984	
Grants	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Total Revenues	\$0	\$18,540	\$88,992	\$126,072	\$155,736	\$177,984	\$0