Higher Degrees by Research

Fostering excellence in legal and socio-legal research

Higher Degrees by Research are for the intellectually curious – those who seek to advance scholarship and develop complex ideas in a chosen field through advanced legal and socio-legal research.

These research based programs give students the unique opportunity to explore a subject or issue of interest through intense independent research, accompanied by an expert supervisor, resulting in a progressive thesis.

Why do a Higher Degree by Research?
Higher Degrees by Research are suited to those who want to develop expert knowledge in a particular subject area incorporating original scholarship.

Higher Degrees by Research include:
- Master of Philosophy
  - Independent supervised research assessed solely on the basis of a 50,000 word thesis.
- Doctor of Juridical Science (SJD)
  - Doctorate for law graduates with relevant experience which is a combination of coursework units and 50,000-60,000 word thesis.
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
  - Independent supervised legal and socio-legal research assessed solely on the basis of a 100,000 word thesis. The work presented must be a substantial and original contribution to scholarship, demonstrating mastery of the subject of interest as well as an advance in that field of knowledge.

Why study at UWA Faculty of Law?
Our academics bring a wealth of specialised research expertise with experience drawn from legal and judicial practice, government, industry and community organisations.

Our research supervisors have a wide range of international backgrounds and connections covering many areas of law.

The UWA advantage
- UWA is a research-intensive university and one of the internationally recognised Australian Group of Eight Universities – the nation’s leading research and comprehensive institutions.
- UWA is ranked UWA 91st in the world according to the Shanghai Jiao Tong University's internationally recognised Academic Ranking of World Universities (2013).

Potential areas of research

**International Law**
- Public international law
- Human rights
- International trade law
- International criminal law
- International environmental law
- International commercial law

**Commercial Law**
- Taxation
- Commercial arbitration
- Banking and finance
- Financial markets and securities
- Australian business Law
- Corporate law

**Resources Law**
- Oil and gas regulation
- Mining law
- Energy law
- Climate change and emissions trading
- Corporate governance

**Law and Society**
- Criminology and criminal justice
- Governance and regulation
- Legal history
- Research ethics
- Social justice
- Legal and social theory
- Indigenous peoples and the law

**Other potential areas**
- Intellectual Property
- Native title
- Medicine and health law
- Public law
- Environmental law
- Alternative dispute resolution
- Constitutional law
- Cultural heritage

law.uwa.edu.au/courses/postgrad/research
UWA scored five star rankings in student demand, graduate outcomes, graduate starting salaries, getting a full-time job, research intensity and research grants according to the Good Universities Guide 2014 – the foremost non-government ranking of Australian universities.

QS Rankings in 2013 placed UWA at 84th in the world.

The Times Higher Education Supplement in 2012/13 ranked UWA 190th in the world.

Admission requirements
Most of our graduate research degrees require an undergraduate degree from an approved tertiary institution with first or upper class second class honours or demonstrate 65%+ achievement in coursework studies as well as adequate research preparation, but because the admission requirements vary depending on the type of higher degree by research option, we recommend you check the specific admission requirements for your program at studyat.uwa.edu.au.

International students are also required to demonstrate a minimum overall IELTS score of 7.5, with a minimum of 7.5 in the Reading and Writing bands and 7.0 in the Listening and Speaking bands.

How to apply
If you want to be admitted to research-only master’s or PhD programs you can apply at any time of the year and there are several steps to follow:
- Find out more at law.uwa.edu.au/courses/postgrad/research
- Contact our Graduate Research Coordinator for further information
- Prepare a brief outline (4-5 pages) of your proposed project
  - Central research question, problem or theory to be researched
  - Explain the contribution of the research to literature
  - Include a preliminary review of the literature in the field
  - Describe the research methods and approach

Program cost
Australian students
Australian and New Zealand citizens and permanent residents are exempt from paying a contribution toward the cost of their research courses if UWA provides them with a Research Training Scheme place.

This exemption applies for up to four years full-time equivalent study for a doctorate by research and two years full-time equivalent study for a Masters by research.

International students
All international students at UWA must pay tuition fees for research programs, unless they have a scholarship that covers the fees.

Scholarships
Find out more about scholarships at scholarships.uwa.edu.au

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‘I’d always wanted to come to Australia and ended up choosing to study my PhD at UWA because I felt that the supervisors were genuinely interested in the research development of their students.’

‘I’ve come to learn that this is consistently true, because the teaching team have always been really encouraging. For example, I’ve had access to scholarships, professional development seminars, expert research advice and supportive progress meetings, all of which really enhances my higher degree by research learning experience.’

Student profile
Dilyara has studied and worked across a range of jurisdictions worldwide and took particular interest in effective international dispute resolution as a result of her diverse cross cultural experiences.

Her research highlights the barriers that exist with the combined use of mediation and arbitration, some of which are due to a lack of clarity relating to certain legal issues, and others which originate in the differences inherent to the legal culture of the practitioners involved.

As part of her research she will compare the experiences of lawyers, arbitrators and mediators worldwide in the hope that this comparison will shed further light to the known barriers of the combined use of arbitration and mediation. Her findings build on existing research which identifies process efficiencies for the combined use of mediation and arbitration and with these benefits in mind, she aims to find ways to overcome known barriers and improve knowledge and awareness of efficient dispute resolution solutions for international business.

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