



MARINE AFFAIRS INSTITUTE

THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF RHODE ISLAND

DEPARTMENT OF MARINE AFFAIRS

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## **JD/MMA JOINT DEGREE PROGRAM**

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

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*Considering the JD/MMA Joint Degree?* This handout provides answers to some of the frequently asked questions about the joint degree program. If you have additional questions or need clarification, please contact the Director of the Marine Affairs Institute, Julia Wyman, as indicated on Page 4.

#### *Why Pursue the JD/MMA?*

##### **What are the benefits of pursuing the two degrees together?**

The Juris Doctor/Master of Marine Affairs builds upon the comprehensive base of marine law and policy courses offered at the School of Law and University of Rhode Island Department of Marine Affairs. The program offers students an opportunity to broaden their understanding and analysis of complex marine issues without giving up the benefits of a traditional legal education. Students have access to full-time and adjunct faculty members at the School of Law and at URI with the nation's oldest Marine Affairs Program at its renowned College of the Environment and Life Sciences.

As our reliance on limited ocean resources grows, lawyers with interdisciplinary skills will be in demand. The joint degree program offers opportunities to:

- Gain exposure to different disciplines;
- Expand your perspective on legal issues;
- Acquire different analytical skills;
- Develop relationships with colleagues from different disciplines; and,
- Meet experts and acquire a foundation of knowledge in the marine field.

Joint Degree students benefit from combining a substantial research project in the social sciences with traditional legal studies, development of research and writing skills and a focus on marine law from maritime commerce and shipping to coastal zone management and sustainable management of marine resources.

##### **What are my opportunities at RWU if I decide not to pursue the MMA at URI?**

RWU offers a number of opportunities to students to focus in marine law even without pursuing both degrees. It offers courses in maritime and admiralty law and ocean and coastal law. The Law School also annually sponsors teams to compete in the Admiralty Law Moot Court Competition and Environmental Law Moot Court Competition, and has active student organizations in both maritime and environmental law that sponsor networking opportunities and speaking engagements. All students are eligible to apply to the Marine Affairs Institute to serve as a Sea Grant Law Fellow, an opportunity to do a legal research project for a governmental, non-profit or private marine organization.

### Application/Admission

#### **Do I have to apply to both institutions?**

Yes - because you will be receiving two degrees from two universities, you do have to apply for the URI program separately from application to the School of Law. Though the application process is open, the URI Department of Marine Affairs generally begins consideration of applications on February 1.

**Students must apply to the URI Graduate School via electronic application by January 15.**

On-line application procedures are available through the URI Graduate School at <http://www.uri.edu/gsadmis/>.

#### **Do I have to take the GRE?**

An applicant's LSAT score counts as the GRE so applicants are not required to take the GRE.

#### **When should I apply to the programs?**

**Law students interested in the JD/MMA joint degree program apply for the URI MMA program during their second year at RWU.** During the first year of law school, interested students are encouraged to attend an informational session during their first semester at which they can speak with URI professors. During the first year and first semester of the second year, students are encouraged to seek letters of recommendation from RWU law professors for the URI application and to work in the field (either through paid summer positions or internships) to show interest in this area of law and policy.

The admissions process is separate; you must be admitted to both schools. You will be notified about your admission directly by each institution. The Marine Affairs Institute has no role in the admissions decisions at RWU or URI.

| KEY DATES                                  |  |
|--|--|
| January 15                                 | Application Deadline - <i>online to URI Graduate School</i>                        |
| February/March                             | Review of applications by Marine Affairs faculty at URI                            |
| February/March                             | Notification of Acceptance from URI Graduate School - <i>directly to applicant</i> |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2nd Friday in September | Orientation for Marine Affairs Graduate Students at URI - <b>MANDATORY</b>         |
| May - 3 <sup>rd</sup> year                 | Commencement   |
| Summer - 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year              | Bar Exams  |
| Fall - 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year                | Final Semester at URI  |

### Tuition/Cost of Joint Degree

#### **How much does the additional degree cost?**

Tuition for each program is based upon a per credit cost; as tuition costs fluctuate, an applicant should contact the Registrar's offices at both RWU and URI regarding the exact cost per credit hour. **Joint Degree candidates pay for a total of 81 hours at RWU** (i.e., 9 credit hours transfer from URI) **and pay for a total of 24 credit hours at URI** (i.e., 6 credit hours transfer from RWU).

URI tuition is assessed based on the location at the time of application -- thus, a student is assessed as a resident of the state in which she/he lives at the time of application to URI. **When a student applies during the second year at RWU and is residing in Rhode Island, the student will be assessed as an in-state resident.**

### Duration/Allocation

#### **How is the coursework allocated between the two Universities?**

Students in the joint degree program take only RWU School of Law courses for the first two years of study. **Beginning in the third year of study, students take classes at both RWU and URI for two semesters. After completing the J.D. at RWU, students attend one full semester of classes at URI.**

#### **How long does it take to complete both degrees?**

Assuming full-time study (18 hours maximum per semester), the joint degree program can be completed in 3 ½ years, with one full semester at URI.

### Coursework

#### **What are the requirements for the MMA degree at URI?**

Students in the joint program *must* complete the following three-credit Marine Affairs courses as part of the 30-credit requirements in the MMA component of the program:

Economics of Marine Resources  
International Ocean Law  
Marine Affairs Seminar  
Master's Project Research  
Ocean Uses and Marine Sciences

In addition to these 15 credits of required courses, students in the joint degree program take an additional 15 credits in Marine Affairs of which 6 law credits may be transferred from RWU. **The MMA also requires that each student take a comprehensive examination to complete the program.**

#### **What courses are transferable in each program?**

URI Marine Affairs courses which are eligible for transfer towards the law degree<sup>1</sup> are:

|                                     |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Coastal Ecosystem Governance        | International Ocean Organizations |
| Coastal Zone Law                    | Marine Pollution Policy           |
| Economics of Marine Resources       | Master's Project Research         |
| Federal Ocean Policy & Organization | Ocean Uses & Marine Sciences      |
| Fisheries Law & Management          | Port Operations & Policy          |
| International Ocean Law             |                                   |

RWU School of Law Courses Eligible for Transfer toward the MMA degree<sup>2</sup> are:

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Administrative Law                    | Land Use Planning                                 |
| Admiralty Law                         | Law of the Sea                                    |
| Climate Change Law & Policy           | Maritime Practice and Procedure                   |
| Collision and Limitation of Liability | Natural Resources Law                             |
| Environmental Law                     | Ocean & Coastal Law                               |
| International Law                     | Zoning the Ocean: Planning for Ocean Resource Use |

It should be noted that grades at URI do not factor into your law school G.P.A.

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<sup>1</sup> For a total of 9 credit hours toward the RWU Law degree.

<sup>2</sup> For a total of 6 credit hours toward the URI MMA degree.

## Careers

### **Is there a current student or graduate of the Joint Degree program that I can talk to?**

Many alumni of the Joint Degree Program have offered to talk to students enrolled in or interested in applying to the program. Please contact the Marine Affairs Institute so that we may put you in contact with an alumnus in your area of interest (401-254-5392; [marineaffairs@rwu.edu](mailto:marineaffairs@rwu.edu)).

### **What do graduates usually pursue after they complete their degrees?**

The program has ~50 alumni who are now working in law firms, government agencies, and as sole practitioners. Some specific examples include General Counsel for a Marine Insurance firm, attorney for a state Department of Environmental Management, an officer in the Navy JAG Corps, and a National Sea Grant Fellow with the US State Department working on international fisheries issues. Because URI Marine Affairs is the oldest such program in the nation, it has many alumni.

## More Information

### **Where do I find more information?**

**Contacts:** Julia B. Wyman  
Director  
Tel: 401-254-4613  
[jwyman@rwu.edu](mailto:jwyman@rwu.edu)

**Mailing Address:** Marine Affairs Institute  
Roger Williams University School of Law  
10 Metacom Avenue  
Bristol, RI 02809  
  
Fax No. 401-254-5735

**Download** the **Graduation Requirements Table** available at:

<http://law.rwu.edu/academics/institutes-programs/marine-affairs-institute/joint-degree-uri>

**Refer** to the following websites:

Marine Affairs Institute: <http://law.rwu.edu/marine-affairs-institute>

Joint Degree Program: <http://law.rwu.edu/academics/institutes-programs/marine-affairs-institute/joint-degree-uri>

URI Department of Marine Affairs: <http://web.uri.edu/maf/>