

PRESS RELEASE

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NUS Law Faculty Launches Three Specialist Masters Programmes

New courses in corporate & financial services, intellectual property & technology and international & comparative law are in line with Economic Review Committee proposals to build Singapore as a regional centre for legal training.

From July 2003, National University of Singapore (NUS) Law Faculty will offer three new specialist Master of Laws (LLM) programmes:

- i) LLM (Corporate & Financial Services Law)
- ii) LLM (Intellectual Property & Technology Law)
- iii) LLM (International & Comparative Law)

These are full-time one-year programmes taught over two semesters, and will be offered in addition to the general LLM degree.

This NUS Law Faculty initiative is in line with the recommendation of the Working Group on Legal Services of the Economic Review Committee's (ERC) Sub-Committee on Service Industries. In its report released in September 2002, the ERC panel stated the aim of establishing Singapore as a regional hub for legal training and research. They recommended that the Bachelor of Laws (LLB Honours) course offered by the Law Faculty be supplemented by Master of Laws programmes in different areas of specialisation.

The current general LLM programme offers a law graduate further training in new or more advanced areas of the law, familiarises students from civil law backgrounds with the common law tradition, and gives students the opportunity to study alongside classmates from Asia and other parts of the world. Over the years, the NUS Law Faculty has had graduate students from more than 30 countries. The new specialist LLM programmes will complement the general LLM by enabling students from Singapore and overseas to enhance their expertise by focusing in-depth on the above three selected areas.

Commenting on the new programmes, Dean, NUS Law Faculty, Associate Professor Tan Cheng Han, said: "These specialisations will take to a new level the legal expertise in vital areas in which Singapore has broad and deep traditional strengths, including financial services, corporate governance and promoting the rule of law and co-operation in the international arena. They will also support the new areas of development such as information technology, telecommunications and research in biomedical sciences. The Law Faculty is committed to helping the legal sector upgrade itself to meet the new challenges as well as the opportunities that will arise as legal practice undergoes significant changes. Such change is inevitable given the changing face of Singapore's domestic economy as well as the challenges posed by globalisation."

Said Associate Professor Dora Neo, Vice-Dean of Graduate Studies: "The three new specialist LLM programmes are a logical development for the Faculty of Law, which has traditionally been strong in commercial law and international law. In more recent years, the Faculty has also taken steps to develop a number of comparative law courses, including Comparative Legal Traditions, Chinese Commercial Law, and Indonesian Business Law. The Faculty has also been steadily building up its suite of courses in the area of intellectual property and technology law, particularly in the latter half of the 1990s. As such, the Faculty of Law's course offerings in these areas are competitive with those found in leading overseas law schools. The Faculty intends to maintain its lead in these areas as well

as develop other areas that are important for Singapore.”

The new LLM programmes will equip practitioners for the increasing opportunities in offshore legal work in Singapore and beyond. These include working opportunities in foreign law firms establishing offices in Singapore and as in-house counsel for local and foreign corporations.

The LLM (Corporate & Financial Services Law) includes electives in banking (domestic and international), company law and corporate finance, financial services and securities, and taxation. This specialisation will enable students to acquire the theoretical base and practical expertise in these subjects.

The LLM (Intellectual Property & Technology Law) focuses on the issues raised by the rapid advance of science and technology. The courses offered include traditional intellectual property law courses, including those on copyright, patents, designs, trademarks and confidential information; as well as others specifically focused on the relevant technologies, such as biomedical law, telecommunications law and Internet law. The issues range from protecting the products of new technologies and patenting new business methods, to bioethics and preventing abuse of genetic information.

The LLM (International & Comparative Law) offers a good mix of public and private international law and comparative law subjects. There are courses that lean toward trade, investment and commercial issues; as well as those covering subjects such as public international law, human rights and environmental protection, which are important for diplomacy.

The specialist LLMs will be taught by academic staff of the Faculty of Law, visiting professors who are leading international academics in the relevant fields, and Singapore-based legal practitioners. A programme director will constantly review and develop each specialisation, with input from local and international advisors to ensure that it remains relevant and attractive to potential students.

Applications to the various LLM programmes offered by the Faculty of Law are open till 31 January 2003. A full list of the courses within each of the LLM programmes together with short descriptions of each course is available at:

<http://law.nus.edu.sg/prospective/postgrad/coursework/coursework.htm>

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