

LLM in Law of the Sea Programme

Development Plan 2023-2026

To ensure and develop the academic and pedagogical quality of the LLM programme, it is important to consider the six areas of UiT's quality assurance and development system (QADS):

- 1) program design and leadership: Includes the academic content of the study offer, the organization of the various parts that are included, and how the study offer is managed.
- 2) admission quality: Includes the prerequisites and professional prerequisites the students bring with them when they begin an education and how it affects the learning environment
- 3) quality in teaching and assessment: Includes the pedagogical level of the learning process, the students' own efforts for the acquisition of knowledge, forms of learning and assessment and other matters which are important for students' learning.
- 4) relevance of education: Includes the relevance of the education in relation to society and the needs of working life competence, and the long-term value creation that the education contributes to society, culture, and the individual student.
- 5) framework quality: Includes students' organizational, physical, and psychosocial learning environment, as well as the academic environment around the education.
- 6) learning outcomes: Includes the appropriate design of learning objectives and outcomes, students' academic achievements and achieved learning outcomes.

All of these areas are taken into account in the planning below, albeit to different degrees, in accordance with priorities identified on the basis of UiT's strategy 2022-2030, the Faculty of Law's strategy 2023-2026, and on the basis of feedback provided by:

- The report of the LLM External Evaluation Committee 2022/2023
- Results of studiebarometer 2022/2023

- Evaluation of teaching submitted by the LLM students
- Evaluation of teaching submitted by the LLM student representative
- Evaluation of teaching submitted by LLM teachers
- Other ad hoc feedback received from NCLOS, guest lecturers, etc.

The LLM Programme has recently been the object of a comprehensive external evaluation by an independent Committee. In its report, the Committee concluded that:

*‘as of today’s date, the LL.M. study programme in the Law of the Sea at UiT is **the most active and robust Law of the Sea study programme available**’.*

*‘The programme is closely linked to **the largest and most active Law of the Sea community in Norway, Europe and the world: the Norwegian Centre for the Law of the Sea**. The Centre delivers research of top international quality’.*

In NOKUT’s studiebarometer, the LLM Programme has also fared well, ahead of the other law programmes from UiT, UiO, and UiB also assessed in the studiebarometer.

Notwithstanding, there is room for improvement. Aspects previously identified by the Academic Director and teachers and put on hold until the results from the external evaluation; recommendations from the External Evaluation Committee; specific scores in the studiebarometer; aspects highlighted by students’ evaluations; and other aspects noted in other ad hoc feedback submitted to the Academic Director, need to be taken into consideration and addressed through specific measures.

The plan hereunder focuses on addressing some of the key aspects that need improving and prioritizing. Consequently, the plan hereunder does not focus on general routine changes and updates that are done every semester such as the updating of the syllabus, updating assignments, updating of master thesis theme bank, etc. While the plan below does not generally focuses on these routine aspects, it does point towards punctual measures on elaboration of new assignments and inclusion of certain publications in the syllabus which are interlinked with the creation of a new course and with the objectives of strengthening research based teaching and societal relevance.

Focus Areas for the Period 2023-2026

1. LLM Programme's design and learning outcomes

Objectives: Continue to maintain a high quality and cohesive study programme that is responsive to societal needs

Background: The quality of the LLM Programme depends to a large extent on the cohesion of the courses that are offered and, on the timeliness and societal relevance of the contents of each course of the Programme.

The External Evaluation Committee's report 2022/2023 pointed to the need of reviewing the relationship between JUR-3050 and JUR-3054 to avoid overlaps; and to the need to give greater focus on certain environmental/climate change aspects in JUR-3052. The need to review the contents of JUR-3054 had also been highlighted by the Academic Director and LLM Teachers beforehand but changes were deferred until the external evaluation process was concluded. In particular, there is an understanding that JUR-3054 should be changed altogether in order to focus more specifically on ocean uses – a theme that is of particular societal relevance, and in order to remove fisheries management from JUR-3052 which will enable teachers in this course to give greater focus on newer environmental/climate challenges. Students' evaluations had also point to challenges in understanding the relevance of JUR-3054 as it was partially only a deepening of certain topics covered in JUR-3050.

Another aspect related to the design of the LLM Programme relates to the ECTs. For some students, the LLM degree on its own does not award enough ECTs that would allow them to qualify for a PhD position. Consequently, some students must take additional courses in order to obtain enough ECTs to apply for a PhD. From a recruitment point of view, this has created some challenges to NCLOS/ the Faculty when trying to recruit excellent LLM graduates that don't have all the required ECTs. The External Evaluation Committee's report 2022/2023 pointed to the need of exploring the possibility of giving the students the choice of writing a large master thesis (60 ECTs) or a small master thesis (30 ECTs which is the only current option for LLM students). In their evaluations, students have also noted that they wish to have this option. This is a matter that needs to be considered further as the faculty must ultimately balance the advantages of introducing such change in terms of making the program more attractive and relevant for building the students' careers vis-à-vis the added costs that such change entails both for the faculty and the students.

Measures: see table below

Objective	Areas of UiT's QADS	Description of Measures	Responsibility/ Roles	Time-frame	Results/Indicators
Achieve better overall cohesion across the different courses offered in the programme, and update the programme so that the content of the courses is more in line with recent societal challenges/ developments in law of the sea	1, 4, 6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Devise a new course to replace JUR-3054 2. Adjust the content of the remaining courses (JUR-3050, JUR-3052 and JUR-3053) to ensure overall coherence with newly created course 3. Devise new learning objectives and outcomes for the newly created course 4. Adjust the learning objectives and outcomes of the other remaining courses so as to ensure overall coherence, and to clarify and improve them 5. Convene a general LLM teacher's meeting to discuss the planning of the semester and to ensure that different teachers teaching in the same course coordinate their activities (done in the past but with new teachers and courses it will be essential to continue with these). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.-4. LLM Working Group (which includes Academic Director) 5. Academic Director convenes and oversees LLM Teachers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.-4. August-November 2023 Implementation of new course and corresponding changes to the other courses and learning outcomes from the academic year 2025/2026 onwards The new course will have to be re-evaluated after it has been taught the first time (so during 2026) 5. 2023-2026 ahead of the start of each semester 	<p>Avoidance of major overlaps between courses</p> <p>Courses offer a logical progression from fundamental/introductory content to more advanced/specialized content</p> <p>Course contents address new developments in law of the sea and relevant societal challenges</p> <p>Students find the courses' contents relevant</p>
Improve the LLM Programme's relevance for students' progression within	1, 3, 4, 6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Examine the potential to introduce a large master thesis (60ECTs) to the programme alongside the current small master thesis (30ECTs) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. LLM Working Group (which includes Academic 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2023 2. 2024 	<p>More LLM students can qualify for PhD positions</p>

academia (and other careers)		<p>2. Further develop the LLM career orientation session and move it from the end of the academic year to the beginning of the LLM programme so that students are aware from the start of the relevance of the programme for their future careers. Potentially invite different guests from different backgrounds to share their experiences, including former LLM alumni.</p> <p>3. Revise courses' learning outcomes and materials and assignments in a way that ensures that students acquire the knowledge, competences and skills that are going to be relevant for society/future employers (e.g. policy and legal knowledge, critical and analytical thinking, problem-solving skills, digital competence, initiative, organization skills, responsibility, awareness of ethics, etc.) <i>(this measure interlinks with measures listed above and with measures linked with active student teaching and learning below)</i></p>	<p>Director)/ Student Affairs Committee/ Faculty Board</p> <p>2. Academic Director</p> <p>3. LLM Working Group (which includes Academic Director)/ during Aug-Nov 2023</p> <p>Academic Director from 2024 onwards together with the LLM Teachers</p>	<p>Prepare for spring semester's session (class of 2023/2024) but also for the fall semester (class of 2024/2025)</p> <p>3. 2023-2026 During periodic revisions of learning outcomes and periodic revisions/up dates of assignments and other learning activities</p>	<p>Students are even more aware of the careers they can pursue with the LLM in law of the sea degree, including possible recruitment for NCLOS/Faculty of Law</p> <p>Feedback from alumni on employment success and feedback on relevance of LLM Programme in this (last formal inquiry to LLM students on this was conducted in 2018)</p>
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2. Active teaching and learning

Objectives: Continue to encourage student active participation in the teaching and learning; strengthen the Programme's research-based approach to teaching and learning; and strengthen the student's understanding of the relevance of the law of the sea and of practitioners' work within the law of the sea towards solving relevant societal challenges

Background: Active teaching and learning provides increased learning outcomes, deep learning, and greater engagement and inspiration amongst students. The students' learning outcomes and experience of the teaching correlate with the different methods of teaching used.

Through active participation in teaching and learning, the students achieve better learning of the subject itself, and develop their professional skills, as described in the study plan. Studiebarometer results and individual evaluations from students show that the latter consider that there is already a high level of active teaching and learning with high level of student participation and self-study in the LLM Programme. Still, there are areas for improvement where the Programme/teachers can contribute to strengthening further student development and management of their studies, strengthening the connection with working life-oriented aspects, and strengthening research-based approaches to teaching and learning. Focusing on these areas will also target areas in which LLM scored lower in the Studiebarometer (even if in these areas the LLM is still above the results from UiT, UiO, and UiB) – especially feedback (3,7), learning environment (3,6) connection to professional environment (3,4) and knowledge of scientific methods and research (3,5).

Measures: see table below

Objective	Areas of UiT's QADS	Description of Measures	Responsibility/ Roles	Time-frame	Results/Indicators
Contribute to student's better management of their study progress	3, 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a digital crash-course explaining the LLM Programme, the expectations in terms of student self-learning, where to find relevant sources, how to prepare for classes, digital tools that can assist the students in their learning progress – apply to Student Affairs Committee for funding/hours to accomplish this 2. Harmonize lecture and seminar plans so that each plan indicates the topic to be addressed in each class, the readings that correspond to each class, and (since the syllabus can be overwhelming) what readings should be prioritized by the students for each class 3. Institute a mentorship programme offered to LLM students - possibility to use both LLM alumni, or teachers/PhD students from NCLOS 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic Director and eventually LLM Teachers - 2. Academic Director to instruct on and oversee that LLM Teachers deliver the harmonized plans 3. Academic Director and eventually NCLOS Director 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2024 2. 2024-2026, the harmonized lecture and seminar plans should be published at least 15 days ahead the start of the courses 3. Starting in the fall semester of 2024 	<p>Students understand more clearly their role in their self-learning process</p> <p>Students understand more clearly how to structure their study-time, how to prioritize the different readings, how to prepare for different type of assignments</p> <p>Students have more opportunities to exchange views on how to best prepare for the classes, assignments, exams with others</p>

Contribute to students' development and study progress	3, 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organize meeting with LLM Teachers ahead the start of the academic year to focus (amongst other matters that may be relevant) on the importance of formative assessments, how constructive oral and written feedback should be given to students, the importance of having office hours to receive students as necessary (New teachers, and new PhD students with little or no experience in teaching in the LLM Programme/ familiar with Norwegian quality standards for higher education) 2. Reinforce to censors and supervisors the importance of giving constructive and comprehensive feedback from which the student can understand what/how she/he need to improve 3. Instruct teachers to use the learning objectives and outcomes more actively in their lectures and seminars 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic Director and LLM Teachers 2. Academic Director, censors and supervisors 3. Academic Director instructs and oversees LLM Teachers in this matter 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher's meeting ahead the start of each academic year 2024-2026 2. 2023-2026 in each censors / supervisors meetings 3. 2023-2026 Can be one of the issues discussed in the general LLM Teachers' meeting ahead the start of each academic year and ad hoc as necessary 	<p>Students are satisfied with amount and depth of feedback provided by the teachers throughout the courses.</p> <p>Improvement in student's grades in mandatory assignments, exams, thesis is visible as the LLM programme progresses</p> <p>Students become more aware of how the teaching and learning activities contribute to student's learning process and to the attainment of the learning objectives and outcomes</p>
Include more working life-oriented learning activities in the LLM programme	3, 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update and devise new learning materials/assignments for all LLM courses, particularly the new course that is to be created to replace JUR-3054. These materials/activities are to take into consideration real-life problems, societal and environmental challenges linked to the field of law of the sea. The format of assignments should also vary (already a good variation that should be continued but perhaps include the writing of legal briefs to ministry) 2. Invite guest lecturers for the different LLM courses that are representative of different professional sectors (professors of law, judges 	Academic Director and LLM Teachers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2024-2026 Each semester after each course is done the Teachers and Academic Director must review the learning materials and activities in order to introduce necessary updates/ changes for the next academic year 	<p>Assignments are based on real challenges encountered by law of the sea experts/ practitioners</p> <p>Students feel that assignments and other learning activities enable them to attain the courses' learning outcomes and particularly to develop their skills and competences</p>

		<p>of international courts, public officials, members of NGOs, etc.)</p> <p>3. Explore alternatives for student visits to institutions located in Tromsø other than the ones that are already visited every year (Arctic Council Secretariat) – see other institutions located at FRAM Centre, Norges Råfisklag, others to learn about problems/ challenges they face that are interlinked with law of the sea</p>		<p>2. 2023-2026 Each semester there should be invited guests as far as budget allows.</p> <p>3. 2024-2026 Visits must link to the courses and since the availability of external entities for these varies the effort to organize these must be a continuous process</p>	<p>Students feel motivated/inspired from working with real life situations and from meeting different professionals/experts</p>
Continue to enable active student participation in a safe environment	3, 5	<p>1. Strengthen the LLM Teacher's pedagogical skills in this respect, including advice on how to deal with challenging issues such as students overtaking class discussions, students that don't engage in discussions or group assignments, etc. Advise teachers to participate in faculty's pedagogical seminars and in UiT's pedagogical programmes.</p> <p>2. Consider re-convening a short pedagogical course, in English, tailored for teachers in the LLM programme (particularly PhD students and new professors)</p>	<p>1. Academic Director</p> <p>2. Academic Director and Vice-Dean for Education</p>	<p>1. 2023-2026 Can be one of the topics of the general meeting with LLM Teachers ahead of the start of the 2024/2025 academic year. Participation in the several pedagogical seminars and courses offered in the period 2023-2026</p> <p>2. 2024 preferably ahead of the start</p>	<p>Increased participation of all students</p> <p>Students understand that there is a low threshold/ low formality to participate, ask questions, ask for feedback, ask for office hour with teachers.</p>

				of academic year 2024/2025	
Increase research-based teaching and learning, as well as increased connection with NCLOS which also engages and stimulates active student participation	3, 4, 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporate more publications from NCLOS researchers in the LLM syllabus as appropriate 2. Coordinate with NCLOS direction to ensure as much as possible that NCLOS activities that students can attend are not scheduled during mandatory assignments or exams periods; and open the possibility for LLM students to participate in the NCLOS Thursday research lunch seminars (students online only) 3. Explore with NCLOS opportunities for LLM students to engage with NCLOS researchers as research assistants. 4. Assign NCLOS experts to teaching relevant parts of the LLM courses 5. Organize a lunch seminar with NCLOS where LLM students are introduced to NCLOS work and its researchers (done in previous years but not in the last 2 years) 6. Submit suggestions of book/journal purchases to the UiT Law Library so that students have better/increased access to new publications within the law of the sea which they can use for their assignments and master theses 7. Create a video or a set of digital tools to complement the master thesis writing course, particularly focusing on research methodology and methods – apply to Student Affairs Committee for funding/hours to accomplish this 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic Director 2.-5. Academic Director and NCLOS Director 6. Academic Director coordinating with LLM Teachers submitting suggestions 7. Academic Director together with relevant LLM Teachers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.-4. Every semester 2023-2026 5. At the beginning of each fall semester 2024-2026 6. Punctual or more comprehensive suggestions to occur in period 2024-2026 7. Ready to use in Spring 2024 or Spring 2025 the latest 	<p>Increase of number of publications by Faculty researchers in syllabus</p> <p>Students are more aware of relevant and current research themes</p> <p>Students have more opportunities to engage with research community (during NCLOS and other events such as Arctic Frontiers and NAMMCO student symposium)</p> <p>Students find that Improvement of UiT's library access to relevant and updated law of the sea resources facilitates their learning process</p> <p>Students improve their master theses research and writing skills and consequently their theses grades</p>

3. Admission requirements and recruitment

Objectives: Attract quality applicants to the LLM Programme in numbers that enable quality teaching and learning activities for each class, as well as the sustained continuation of the Programme.

Background: The continuity of the LLM Programme is partially dependent on attracting each year enough students. Low numbers of students imply higher costs to the running of the Programme which could put it at risk. Lower numbers also impact the teaching and learning processes since the LLM Programme is developed around a number of interactive teaching and learning activities, including a high number of groups written and oral assignments. The introduction in 2023 of tuition fees for non-EEA/EU students, in the amount of NOK 185 400 per year (not including the costs of living expenses which is also high), will likely have an impact on the number of applicants and it is thus important to increase efforts with recruitment. In effect, we have witnessed a reduction from 19 students in 2022/2023 to only 7 students in 2023/2024 (initially 8 but one withdrew for financial reasons). The LLM External Committee evaluation report 2022/2023 also pointed to the need of clarifying the admission requirements to the LLM Programme.

Measures: see table below

Objective	Areas of UiT's QADS	Description of Measures	Responsibility/ Roles	Time-frame	Results/Indicators
Ensure that the LLM Programme attracts good students	2	1. Adjust the LLM admission requirements	LLM Working Group (which includes Academic Director)	August-November 2023	Increase in students with good qualifications Reduction in number of students that fail courses/re-take courses
Ensure that the LLM Programme attracts each year enough students to enable good student/learning activities	2, 5	1. Review LLM recruitment strategy and identify priority countries/institutions for recruitment both within EU/EEA and outside in countries such as US, Canada, UK (where tuition fees are also high)	1.-3. Academic Director and Administration	1. during 2024 2. during 2024	Increase in number of applications

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Update recruitment materials (brochures, videos), social media materials, etc.) 3. Actively engage in recruitment activities (sending brochures to relevant institutions, participating in LLM fairs, distribute via research networks etc) 4. Explore the possibility for scholarships for non-EEA/EU students (from UiT, Faculty, other funding schemes) 	4. Academic Director and Vice-Dean for Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. every year 2023-2026 with particular emphasis in period before the opening of applications during the fall semester and early spring semester 4. during 2024 ahead of the fall semester 	Increase in number of successful acceptances and actual enrollments
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