



Outline of the Professional Graduate School System

Professional graduate schools were established in FY2003 as an educational course dedicated to fostering highly specialized professionals in response to advancement of scientific technologies and the globalization of society and economy and the accompanying increased needs for such professionals who can play a leading role domestically and internationally.

Purposes under the School Education Act

(Purposes of Graduate Schools and Professional Graduate Schools)

Article 99 (1) Graduate schools aim to teach and study academic theories and applications and cultivate profound knowledge and excellent abilities of students that enable them to gain a deep mastery of depth of academic theories and applications or engage in professions that require advanced expertise, thereby contributing to cultural development.

(2) **Graduate schools that aim to teach and study academic theories and applications and cultivate students' profound knowledge and excellent abilities that will enable them to engage in professions that require advanced expertise are to be professional graduate schools.**

Outline of the System

(1) Standard program length

- Two years (three years for law schools)

(2) Requirements for completion

- Acquisition of not less than 30 credits

*Basically, acquisition of not less than 93 credits for law schools and not less than 45 credits for teaching profession graduate schools

- A graduation thesis is not necessarily required, unlike general master's courses.

(3) Academic staff organizations

- Practitioner teachers should account for 30% or more of required full-time instructors.(*).

*20% or more for law schools and 40% or more for teaching profession graduate schools

(4) Educational content

- Practical education that bridges theories and actual practices is to be provided.
- Centered on case studies and field surveys, interactive and multi-directional discussions and questions and answers should be the basis of classes.

(i) Field work

Students conduct field work on representative concrete cases relating to predetermined themes.

(ii) Workshop

Students respectively bring along cases relating to predetermined themes and make presentations thereon, and instructors lead students to analyze and consider backgrounds and other factors of those cases.

(iii) Simulation

Instructors set conditions relating to themes for classes, present model plans that can be presumed under those conditions, and have students verify the planning and effects, etc. of those model plans.

(iv) Role-playing

Instructors set certain conditions and allocate roles to students under those conditions (for example, roles of supporters and opponents) to have them discuss cases.

(5) Academic degrees

- Master of xxx (professional)

(6) Certified evaluation and accreditation

- Professional graduate schools are obliged to undergo evaluation with regard to the status of their education and research activities, including their curricula and organization of instructors, by an evaluation body accredited by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology once every five years. In this manner, a mechanism to secure the quality of their education is put in place.

(*Practitioner teachers: Academic staff who have advanced practical skills of professional experience in the field they teach (Article 5, paragraph (4) of the Standards for Establishment of Professional Graduate Schools)

Comparison with Master's Courses

		Master's program	Professional degree program		
			Professional graduate schools	Law schools	Professional graduate schools for teacher education
Purposes		Fostering of researchers Fostering of highly specialized professionals	Fostering of highly specialized professionals		
Standard program length		Two years	Two years	Three years	Two years
Requirements for completion		Acquisition of not less than 30 credits Writing of a master's thesis (Research guidance)	Acquisition of not less than 30 credits	Acquisition of not less than 93 credits	Acquisition of not less than 45 credits (of which not less than 10 credits should be practical work at schools, etc.)
Full-time instructors	Minimum number of required instructors	—	1.5 times the number of instructors providing research guidance for master's courses + Number of assistant instructors for research guidance		
	Concurrent services	Instructors can concurrently take charge of undergraduate courses and doctoral courses (a course under an integrated system or a course in the second half) for only one subject area	<p>[Permanent measures] In addition to concurrently taking charge of the second half of a doctoral course, instructors can also take charge of undergraduate courses within the required number of instructors for master's courses, which forms the basis for calculation.</p> <p>[Transitional measures] In addition to the above, instructors can also take charge of master's courses, etc. within the required number of instructors for master's courses, which forms the basis for calculation (only in the case of newly establishing a professional graduate school, for a limited period of five years after the establishment).</p>		
Practitioner teachers		—	30% or more	20% or more	40% or more
Teaching method		—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies • Field surveys • Interactive and multi-directional discussions and questions and answers 	(i) Same as on the left (ii) On the basis of small-group instruction (A 50-student class is the standard for basic legal subjects.)	(i) Same as on the left (ii) Practical work at schools and common subjects are compulsory.
Curriculum Advisory Committee		—	From the perspective of strengthening collaboration with society (exit), professional graduate schools are obliged to establish a Curriculum Advisory Committee with the aim of designing curricula with cooperation of those conducting businesses relating to relevant professions (industrial circles, etc.) and ensuring smooth and effective implementation of such curricula.		
Academic degrees		Master's Degree (○○)	Master of ○○ (professional)	J.D. (Juris Doctor)	Master of Education (professional)
Certified evaluation and accreditation		—	Professional graduate schools are obliged to undergo evaluation with regard to the status of their education and research activities, including their curricula and organization of instructors, by an evaluation body accredited by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology once every five years. In this manner, a mechanism to secure the quality of their education is put in place.		