

Programs of the University of Buenos Aires Law School Integrating Research and Teaching

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During 2010, the University of Buenos Aires Law School approved four new programs to integrate research and teaching. In Argentina the law career is an undergraduate study. At UBA it usually takes six years of study to get the law degree. Research at the Law School is organized around the Ambrosio Gioja Institute, created in 1983. The members of the Institute are the full-time professors of the Law School, full-time researchers financed by CONICET (National Council of Science and Technical Research), and members of approved research projects. Research projects are mainly of two types: UBACYT projects financed by the University, and DECYT projects, financed by the Law School (the latter are designed as the first step in the system, and serves as an institutional recognition of different groups starting to do academic research).

One of the priorities the new Dean identified is to get students involved in the world of academic research. It is important to stress to students that the academic life is one of the valid options for a law graduate, as more and more full-time positions become available in the university system. And some familiarity with legal research is important even for those that want to pursue other paths (with an average professional life that would peak in 2040 and last until 2070 or more, who knows?)

Accordingly, the Law School put in place a number of programs to achieve this goal.

1. The Program of Research Assistantships makes it possible for students to work during a semester with researchers at the Law School, gathering information, checking citations, discussing drafts. In exchange students get academic credits for their work. The process of selection is composed: students choose professors, and professors choose students. At the moment, more than one hundred students applied to the Program, and more than thirty of them were selected by researchers.
2. The Program of Credits Recognition for Research Work allows students to get academic credits for their involvement in DECYT or UBACYT projects, during a longer period (one academic year). The possibility of earning credits for research work is an important incentive to attract students to research activities. Some forty students are taking advantage of this new program, which has less than two months of life.
3. The Program of Research Seminars funds courses that take the form of research work, that is, aim at producing relevant and original legal knowledge. These courses (the first ones will be offered in the second semester –August-November-) are designed as spaces for advancing scholarship.
4. Lastly, the Program for Research Oriented Courses, offers funding for courses in the advanced segments of the career which explore new legal problems.

These programs are being implemented in this year 2011, and after evaluated, there would be adjustments to make. There is one common feature in these activities.

They are all susceptible of a global “adjustment”, for example opening to our students the possibility of assisting researchers from foreign institutions.

These programs are of particular interest for students considering an academic career, but are designed to improve the education of all students. Merging research and teaching may strengthen important skills, which could be useful even out of the academic life, such as argumentative skills, writing skills, familiarity with other disciplines, etc.