



Double the employability

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Trista Yeung

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Jointly offered by the university's Business School and Faculty of Law, the BBA-JD allows students to complete the two degrees in five years at a tuition fee that is lower than usual. Compare this with a total of six years for a four-year BBA degree and a JD degree, which requires two years.

The university's database shows that gaining entry to the existing JD program is highly competitive, with the application success rate at only about 20 percent. About 25 percent of JD applicants are business students.

Christopher Gane, professor of law and dean of CUHK's Faculty of Law, said the program is the first of its kind in Asia and is designed for students seeking cross-disciplinary knowledge.

"It is important to offer students from different disciplines the opportunity to study law in a graduate program as an alternative to the existing undergraduate LLB program. Business studies provide an excellent foundation for entrants to the legal profession - for whom an understanding of business is essential. The legal qualification offered by the JD widens the opportunities available to business studies students," he said.

Graduates are equipped to assume leadership roles in business and in different sectors - including the government, community service, law enforcement, education and media. Those looking to enter the legal profession can apply for entry to the Postgraduate Certificate in Laws program to practice as a barrister or a solicitor.

Andy Wong, the university's assistant dean for undergraduate studies, said integration is the core of the double-degree program. "Students follow the BBA curriculum in their first three years of studies, followed by JD-focused courses in the next two years," he said.

"They get to learn the integration of knowledge in the third or fourth years through real-life case studies. They are encouraged to analyze different situations and search for solutions under a business and legal mind-set, which is what professionals are doing today."

Tina Wong, who obtained her BBA and JD degrees separately from CUHK two years ago, said demand is rising for talent with interdisciplinary knowledge and skills amid a complicated business environment. "Business is not just about numbers, but also about how one's interest can be protected to the largest extent by agreeing on good legal terms," said Wong, a trainee solicitor at multinational legal firm Jones Day.

"During our undergraduate studies in business, we learned how to market products to boost sales and how to use financial models to provide insights into business structures, as well as evaluate key performance drivers.

"But we often neglected various underlying legal issues, such as how to avoid potential claims from other parties and what to do to prevent others from stealing ideas. This is where law comes in, which helps provide a more complete picture of how to run a business and how to uphold a company's best interests, whether commercial or legal without affecting business progress."

The intake for the first year in school year 2017-18 is up to 40 students and the tuition fee is estimated at around HK\$42,100. Interviews are to be conducted on a selective basis.

Website: www.bschool.cuhk.edu.hk/program/ibba/steam/introduction/general-info.html