

DISTANCE LEARNING COURSE | Continuing Education Programme

International Water Law and the Law of Transboundary Aquifers

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**UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE**



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Acquire solid competencies of legal and institutional frameworks for transboundary water cooperation: rise to one of the major challenges for sustainable management, protection of fresh water resources, peace and global security

The governance and protection of fresh water is one of the biggest challenges facing the planet over the next decade. With the steady increase of the world's population, urbanization and environmental degradation, the competing demands of States will continue to grow and amplify the risk of disputes. In 2017, the World Economic Forum stated that water crises will be among the highest global risks for the coming fifteen years.

The 6th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of the Agenda 2030 aims to "ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" and to "implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation". Instruments and norms of international water law are paramount to the achievement of the SDG 6 which will become crucial in coming years.

Legal knowledge and skills are required by professionals to negotiate and implement legal and institutional frameworks on transboundary water resources. The strengthening of capacities is essential for efficient and effective water cooperation and the sustainable management of water resources and the maintenance of peace and global security.

The e-Learning Course on International Water Law and the Law of Transboundary Aquifers combines legal knowledge and expertise with new technologies, stimulating dynamic interactions between the participants and experts, to equip them with the required knowledge and skills.

This course benefits from the University of Geneva Law Faculty's longstanding expertise in international law and Geneva Water Hub's dedicated Platform for International Water Law.



Objectives

- To gain sound knowledge of international water law.
- To acquire an in-depth understanding of the multifaceted aspects related to the governance of water resources.
- To foster reflection on the linkages between international water law and other areas of international law.
- To foster reflection allowing a more effective use of legal tools to improve access to water and solve water-related disputes.

Skills and Competencies

- Interpret and apply the legal instruments, principles and norms of international water law in order to contribute to prevent and settle water disputes.
- Identify and use key instruments and principles of the law of transboundary aquifers.
- Explain the current legal developments in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and contribute to the creation of instruments promoting equitable access and sustainable use of water resources.
- Develop legal skills for the negotiation and implementation of fresh water agreements.
- Promote cooperation to prevent conflicts arising from water use and the sharing of fresh water resources.



Audience

Professionals from different backgrounds including law, international relations, hydrology, engineering or economics. Government officials (diplomats, technical and scientific specialists working in transboundary water issues), international organizations staff, civil society representatives, academics and professionals from the private sector.

Pedagogical Approach

- A structured and asynchronous modular e-learning course specially designed for professionals working on a full time basis.
- A focus on theoretical and practical knowledge as well as hands-on experience with case studies.
- Interactive lessons, webinars, thought-provoking videos and an updated audio-visual library.
- Strong collaborative activities such as peer-reviews and discussion groups to facilitate learning.

Tutoring and Coordination

Personalized support and feedback is provided for all activities, both online and offline. An online tutor guides participants through their learning experience and facilitates collaborative work and knowledge exchange throughout the course.

Evaluation

All modules comprise online assessment exercises and written assignments. The final exam consists of a case study.



Structure

The course includes 6 thematic modules each one lasting one or two weeks and a 7th module consisting in the resolution of a case study.

The completion of the course corresponds to 4 ECTS credits equivalent to 120 learning and training hours.

A one-week module corresponds approximately to 12 hours of teaching and learning per week including audiovisual material and reading of legal texts and literature. Depending on the module, the participants will have between 3-4 hours of online activities (i.e. discussion forums, quiz, answers to case-studies, webinars, etc.) and an average of 8 hours of personal work (i.e. reading of legal texts and literature and preparation of online activities) per week.

A two-week module includes an average of 24 hours of learning and teaching.

The seventh module consists of about 10-12 hours of learning and teaching including the preparation of the final case study.

Module 1 |

Sources and Concepts of International Law

1 week | 11 to 17 October 2021

11 hours | online and offline

- Explaining the characteristics of international actors in the development of international water law.
- Defining the sources of international water law.
- Comparing diplomatic and judicial methods for settling international water disputes.

Module 2 |

The Evolution of International Regulation on Transboundary Water Resources

1 week | 18 to 24 October 2021

14 hours | online and offline

- Analyzing the key aspects and scope of the 1997 Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses and the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.
- Describing the activities of the League of Nations, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations in the development of international water law.
- Differentiating between the work of the International Law Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).



Module 3 |

The Principles of the Law on Transboundary Water Resources (Part I)

1 week | 25 to 31 October 2021

12 hours | online and offline

- Examining the content of the principle of equitable and reasonable use, the obligation not to cause significant harm and the principle of cooperation.
- Discussing and providing examples of international judicial decisions dealing with international water law.
- Understanding the role and function of river basin organizations.

Module 4 |

The Principles of the Law on Transboundary Water Resources (Part II)

2 weeks | 1 to 14 November 2021

24 hours | online and offline

- Explaining the role of water in international environmental law and human rights law.
- Defining and assessing the human right to water and sanitation.
- Identifying the norms on the protection of water during armed conflicts.



Module 5 |

The Law of Transboundary Aquifers

2 weeks | 15 to 28 November 2021

24 hours | online and offline

- Understanding and analyzing the principles applicable to the management and protection of transboundary aquifers.
- Examining and assessing the relationship between the International Law Commission's Draft Articles on Transboundary Aquifers of 2008, the 1997 Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses and the Model Provisions on Groundwater Resources of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).
- Identifying the main rules of the existing agreements on transboundary aquifers.

Module 6 |

Water and International Economic Law

1 week | 29 November to 5 December 2021

13 hours | online and offline

- Understanding the linkages between water and international economic law.
- Differentiating between international trade law and international investment law.
- Defining the functions of amicus curiae in arbitrations dealing with water.

Module 7 |

Case Study: Analysis and Legal Resolution

1 week | 6 to 12 December 2021

12 hours | online and offline



Application Information

Admission requirements

- A recognized University degree (Bachelor, Master, Ph.D. or equivalent).
- Two years of relevant professional experience related to the management and protection of water resources.
- Fluency in English, particularly written and reading abilities.
- Applicants must have a computer and a reliable internet connection for the course duration. They must possess basic computer skills such as navigating the Internet and using Microsoft Word.
- Applicants must submit a CV and a motivation letter explaining why the knowledge of international water law is relevant to their work and how it will be applied to carry out their professional duties.

Selection process

- Applications will be subject to a selection procedure on the basis of candidates' academic qualifications and professional experience.
- A maximum of 30 participants will be selected to participate in the course.

Tuition fees and scholarships

- The entire course costs CHF 900.-
- Full and partial scholarships are available for participants coming from non-OECD countries. Candidates asking for a partial or full scholarship have to explain the reasons for this request in their motivation letter.

Application and registration deadline

Qualified candidates can apply/register for the course by completing an online form available at www.unige.ch/formcont/cours/water-law. They can also apply/register by downloading a PDF form available on the same webpage and sending it to info-waterlawonline@unige.ch

The application/registration deadline is 6 October 2021.



Testimonials

"The training used different participatory approaches such as webinar, assignments and quiz which tested factual knowledge and analytical perspective of the subject matter. The support afforded to me, both technical as well as the answers from the expert, was superb. Therefore, I have no hesitation in recommending the course to any person whatsoever."

Sarah Vranckx

Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation, Namibia
2016 Session

"I found the course invaluable. It gave me the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of a wide range of legal topics not only at a national level but also at a global scale. The provided materials and the interactive course design made easy to follow it. The moderator was always supportive and quickly replied to my questions."

Mohammad Daud Hamidi

MA Student in Integrated Water Resources Management,
German-Kazakh University, Kazakhstan
2017 Session

"I strongly recommend it to everyone ... the quality of the content and the materials are invaluable. As a diplomat, the knowledge acquired during this course will be useful for promoting a better governance of our transboundary and local basins."

Juan Carlos Pomadera

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peru
2017 Session

"I found the International Water Law course to be of an exceptionally high standard (...). I have no hesitation in recommending the course as I found the skills acquired and knowledge gained to be useful in advancing one's understanding of the exciting and developing field of International Water law."

Kalaycia Clarke

International Court of Justice, Netherlands
2018 session

"I suspect that there is something in this course for everyone. Those who do not have a legal background will come away with a solid understanding of how lawyers view this issue and perhaps a better understanding of why some things work the way they do. Those who do have a legal background, will be interested to learn about some of the technical aspects of hydrology and will likely learn about the state of transboundary water in an area--either geographic or thematic--that they knew little about. I personally have a legal background in this subject, but was fascinated to learn about how the law that I knew was applied in regions of the world I had not studied on my own. The experience helped to broaden and deepen my knowledge of the field and I suspect this would be true for most people."

Cory Olshansky

Legal Officer, Oceans and Environmental Law Division, Global Affairs, Canada
2019 Session

For more information

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