

**FDEF**  
**Department of**  
**Law**  
**-**  
**Research strategy**

# Research Strategy

## Department of Law

(last amended 18 January 2025)

### MISSION

The Department of Law (the DL) at the University of Luxembourg was established in 2020 from the former Research Unit in Law, at the Faculty of Law, Economics and Finance. It is the DL's mission to engage in cutting-edge research in the full bandwidth of law to respond to the pressing societal challenges and real-world problems, advance the study of Luxembourg law and contribute to its development. Embedded at Europe's judicial capital and one of the world's leading financial centres, the DL is leading the study of European law in all legal fields and strives to be one of the premier European academic hubs for legal research, with the ambition to gain global reputation as a legal centre of expertise on Luxembourg, as well as EU law.

### STRATEGIC COMMITMENT

The DL is committed to be one of Europe's leading departments known for its multi-jurisdictional, transnational and comparative approach to law that develops and engages in the interdisciplinary research needed to respond to societal challenges, such as digital transformation and sustainability. Central to this commitment are:

- (1) to contribute to the enhancement of legal scholarship with groundbreaking research at the highest standards and
- (2) to offer reliable knowledge directly to societal and institutional stakeholders at national, European and international level

with the objective to serve society during radical economic, environmental, political and technological changes of the 21st century. This commitment follows

- (1) from our natural responsibility as the only Law Department in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg devoted to research in Luxembourg law,
- (2) from our location, in the direct vicinity of major EU institutions, to engage in the study of law governing the EU and EU institutions, in partnership with the Luxembourg Centre for European Law (LCEL) at the University of Luxembourg, and
- (3) from our exceptional capacity with a unique blend of competencies for research of multi-level regulatory systems by applying transnational, comparative, multijurisdictional, and interdisciplinary research methods.

## OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIC GOALS

The DL's commitment defines its strategic research goals: to produce outstanding scholarship within the greater research community and to provide expertise to national and supranational private and public institutions. We aim to fulfil this commitment based on the objectives to shape

- (1) interpretation (doctrinal analysis),
- (2) development (identifying gaps, need for regulation), and
- (3) policy (how to regulate, case law)

in all legal fields through a four-dimensional approach: comparative, interdisciplinary, transnational and multijurisdictional research with the highest quality standard.

To meet the needs as law department focusing on Luxembourg law, the DL's research includes various fields such as private law, public, criminal, banking, commercial, financial, tax, technology law and legal theory.

As cross-disciplinary topics, it is our strategic goal to lead on legal research and policy advice relating to digitalisation and sustainability, with a special focus on

- (1) multilevel regulatory systems,
- (2) sustainable and societal development,
- (3) artificial intelligence / machine learning,
- (4) crypto and distributed ledger technologies.

We have chosen our research foci in light of the insight that these topics form archetype examples of how to regulate and legislate technical, societal, financial and legal innovations and transformations across all legal and regulatory fields – an overarching topic where the DL is committed to lead in Europe, and potentially beyond.

These focus topics are not only aligned with the research priorities set by the Luxembourg government, as implemented by the University of Luxembourg, but also follow directly from the needs of Luxembourg as legal centre, EU court centre and international financial centre:

- Luxembourg law and institutions are embedded in the EU legal, regulatory and supervisory systems, one of the most advanced and complex multi-level regulatory systems; the matter of multi-level regulatory systems is also at the heart of any international activity of the Luxembourg state (such as in the United Nations, NATO, the Council of Europe, to name but a few), but also of international finance, space, intellectual property and many other fields of regulation.
- Radical developments concerning sustainability and their embedding in Luxembourg and EU Law justify our focus on these matters, with societal development, governance (including, for instance, judicial independence, human rights, rule of law matters), social cohesion (including migration and cross-border labour market dynamics) and the EU's commitment to an efficient, stable, sustainable and inclusive financial system as the main research themes.
- We understand artificial intelligence / machine learning as meta term of advanced datafied applications across all sectors of the economy, the state administration, the EU supervisory system and societal relations (including communication channels). The need to understand the impact of these advanced datafied applications on all parts of society and all private and public institutions, as well as their embedding in Luxembourg and EU law, forms the rationale for this research focus.
- Crypto and distributed ledger technologies introduce fundamentally new concepts of ownership and cooperation, with potential use cases including business applications (like securities and fund settlement), but also fundamental parts of societal organisation, like the concept of value transfers and money.



## IMPLEMENTATION

We will implement our strategic research goals through 15 measures organised loosely across five axes relating to the research community, research outputs and quality assessments, grants and funding, existing and new positions of professors as well as research-based outreach and policy advice.

### As to the research community

- (1) fostering an inspiring, collegial and inclusive research environment bringing together senior and younger colleagues from different backgrounds and traditions, including colleagues and guests at the LCEL to ensure critical mass,
- (2) deeply respecting research collaborations combining various jurisdictions and disciplines, including colleagues and guests at the LCEL,
- (3) furthering interdisciplinarity, excellence initiatives and research groups as well as research-based teaching.

### As to the position of professors and the hiring strategy

- (4) committing to a clear focus of activities of professors on topics within our priorities,
- (5) encouraging colleagues at all steps to lead in their field through both world-class research and third mission / outreach,
- (6) when hiring, aiming for an expertise spanning multiple jurisdictions, proficiency in several languages, and a dedication to include expertise of non-legal disciplines in their research.

### As to research output and quality assessment

- (7) writing “best in class” research output (monographs, articles, edited volumes, book chapters),
- (8) respecting “best in class” standards for knowledge dissemination as defined in each jurisdiction and legal tradition represented in the research of the DL,
- (9) rejecting any assessment of research results leading to the levelling of differences in academic standards across countries when publishing according to “best in class” standards.

### As to grants and funding

- (10) enhancing grant applications and acquisition of collaborative funding on our focus topics,
- (11) encouraging seasoned grant writers and mandating new hires to apply for excellence grants,
- (12) ensuring research independence at all times.

### As to research-based outreach and policy advice

- (13) conducting research with openness to address challenges to the legal systems as they arise over time and in the context of new events and influences,
- (14) organising leading conferences within our focus topics, in order to network and establish regular intellectual exchange with decision-makers,
- (15) contributing policy reports and policy advice to Parliaments, Governments and Regulatory Authorities.

# RESEARCH ORGANISATION

The DL is organised in five research areas following, beyond research considerations, also administrative and teaching coordination functions.

## 1. Banking, Financial and Commercial Law

Research in banking, financial and commercial law focuses on matters related to Luxembourg as banking, financial and one of the largest global investment fund centres. Matters concerned include, firstly, the regulation of commercial activities in every stage of life of the enterprise, both at national and European level. Secondly, the DL analyses the private law and regulatory aspects of Luxembourg commercial and financial law, including, but not limited to, the law of collective investment schemes, asset management, private banking, securities and markets, securitisation, secured transactions, private equity, compliance and anti-money laundering / counter-terrorism financing, and bankruptcy. Thirdly, the DL studies the latest trends of relevance for Luxembourg as financial centre, with sustainability, digitalisation, cross-border distribution and globalisation at their core, and seeks to contribute to integrating these trends into existing legal paradigms and the current European law and Luxembourg constitutional framework. Focus topics include investment funds, banking, company and insolvency law, financial regulation of financial technologies, the EU sustainable finance framework, and financial inclusion.

## 2. Criminal Law and Legal Theory

Research in criminal law and legal theory records and studies criminal justice systems and legal systems in general in their national as well as transnational dimensions. It does so with an interdisciplinary, foundational, critical and socially engaged methodology that enables it to come to grips with the challenges that modern legal systems face today. Among the key research themes that receive specific attention and will continue to do so in coming years are: digitalisation, including the ever-increasing sophistication of artificial intelligence, the controllability of criminal law regulation, in particular the efficiency of its enforcement, the development and genesis of criminal law institutions in the area of freedom, security and justice, in particular the parameters of a European criminal justice system, the role of private actors in law enforcement, the rise of extremist political movements in Europe and elsewhere in the world as challenges for democratic rule of law states. The research initiatives are guided by the need to understand the potential impact of these developments on the normative and political legitimacy of criminal law in particular, and on constitutional democratic legal systems in general.

## 3. Private Law

All fields of private law are covered by our research, including the law of obligations, civil procedure, labour law, private international law and consumer law. Individual and collective research undertaken is based on a variety of methods but includes necessarily and inherently a strong comparative law perspective, looking primarily but not exclusively at neighbouring jurisdictions, with which Luxembourg private law shares a large community of sources and legal discussions, as well as cross-border relations and situations. The research is impact-focused aiming to contribute significantly to the development of national and European law in the field. Key research themes that are already taken up or define the essential research lines of the future, are the impact of data and artificial intelligence on private law, the private law embedding of technical innovations such as crypto-assets, and digital access to decision-making, to name but a few. Over the last few years, significant involvement in the reform of the Luxembourg Civil Code, under a mission contract with the Luxembourg government, is to be pointed out (prescription law, law of contracts, general law of obligations upcoming). It is based on a systematic comparison with the law of the neighbouring countries, also aided by specific publications of some members of the private law research area.

## 4. Public and Tax Law

International political developments in recent years have shown more than ever the need for strong institutional public law frameworks at every level of governance: domestic, European, and international. The research in public law and tax law seeks to contribute to shaping the changing legal and political landscapes in a positive way. It is characterised by a strong comparative law expertise and its close cooperation with domestic and European policymakers. In the coming decade, research in the field of public and tax law aims to continue its path of excellence in legal scholarship, interdisciplinary collaboration, and research with policy impact. A primary focus lies on research that contributes to sustainability objectives in respect of European governance and public finance and the crucial interaction between the two. In this field of classic EU Law, the DL seeks to leverage its expertise through close cooperation with the newly created Luxembourg Centre for European Law (LCEL). Another focus of particular importance for Luxembourg as a financial centre lies in the analysis of the global taxation framework, and the societal impact of tax policy.

## **5. Technology Law**

The research on technology Law is characterised by an interdisciplinary and cross-cutting approach analysing existing legal frameworks for their suitability to accommodate all kinds of developments in a highly dynamic technology environment. We approach the areas of law concerning media and the online environment, data use, intellectual property (IP), space and telecommunication, as well as cyberpolicy and AI with a focus on EU law but considering all relevant elements of public international law and including national approaches especially in the Luxembourgish context. The research is foundational and practice-oriented, accompanying policy and implementation efforts as well as offering expertise to government and private actors. In the search for national and European resilience and sovereignty in a digitally transformed world, it is our goal to expand the current research lines further, in particular on the legal aspects of regulating the communication sphere, green innovation, life sciences technologies, innovation standards, as well as cyberpolicy. Focus topics include the regulation of space exploration, also in a commercial dimension, the EU legislation on platforms and intermediaries with special consideration of data protection and AI, sustainability aspects in patent frameworks, and rules on ensuring security of cyberspace.





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