

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
In Orbit - Postgraduate Space Education (4)

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SPACE LAW AND POLICY IN POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION: THE EXAMPLE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SPACE UNIVERSITY

Abstract

Space law emerged as a regulatory field around the time of the launch of the first objects into outer space. Ever since, it has claimed its position as a branch of international law governing the activities of States in outer space. In recent years, the developments in space technology and the growing commercialization of the space sector have pointed to the need for comprehensive teaching of space law in non-legal contexts. This paper will illustrate the evolution in the teaching of space law through the example of the interdisciplinary postgraduate education offered by the International Space University (ISU) and particularly the Space Studies Program and the Interactive Space Program. At postgraduate level space law usually forms part of a dedicated curriculum, often taught alongside air law. Such master programs in air and space law target students with a legal background and professionals wishing to follow a specific career path. Nevertheless, basic space law education is increasingly required by students and professionals without primary legal education, who need to obtain elementary knowledge on issues they encounter in their research and work. Indeed, a general understanding of legal issues involved in space activities can facilitate the design and operation of space missions or the incorporation of startups, notwithstanding the need for a legal professional in later stages. In the framework of the ISU Space Studies Program, the Policy, Economics and Law Department (PEL) consists of a variety of subjects and activities to appeal to the interests and needs of participants from non-legal backgrounds. The curriculum covers general subjects, such as telecommunication law and space contracts, as well as specific subjects related to recent trends and developments in the space sector, such as space resource utilization and cooperation in human spaceflight. It is also structured to ensure maximum participation by the group, including panel discussions, workshops and role-play. During the Interactive Space Program, a virtual program focusing on a specific topic, the content of the PEL Department Activities is tailored accordingly. The paper highlights the importance of inclusive and interdisciplinary education and the mutual benefits of interaction among space disciplines. The authors explain the teaching methods they use in the PEL Department and underline how these provide the participants with useful skills for their future careers. They also address the challenges raised in an online classroom setting.