“Our economy operates in a complex legal environment,” observes Donald Tobin, a tax lawyer and the new dean of the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law. “Like it or not, almost all companies have to deal with regulatory compliance, liability and other legal issues. They’ve become a part of daily life for American business.”

To help corporations and other employers successfully meet their legal responsibilities and challenges, Maryland Carey Law has created a new degree designed especially for working professionals: the Master of Science in Law (MSL).

“This is a great opportunity for people who don’t want a law degree but confront legal issues and problems every day at work,” Tobin says. “The MSL will give employees specialized legal knowledge to succeed in jobs that require or are complemented by an understanding of the law.”

The law school is accepting applications now for the new MSL; classes will begin in the fall.

Building on Maryland Carey Law’s nationally ranked specialty areas—the law school’s Law & Health Care Program is ranked number one in the country, and its Environmental Law Program number six by U.S. News & World Report—the MSL degree offers three concentrations for some of today’s most highly regulated industries: health care law, environmental law and crisis management.

The MSL is a 30-credit degree with courses offered in the evening at the University of Maryland’s College Park campus. “We expect the majority of our students will be holding down jobs, so this was developed as a four-semester, part-time program that working professionals can complete in two years,” said Susan Krinsky, associate dean of student affairs at Maryland Carey Law. “Students will be asked to choose one of the three concentrations when they apply.”

Faculty for the program will include both full-time professors from Maryland Carey Law as well as highly experienced attorneys currently working in one of the three concentrations.

“Prospective students told us they wanted to draw on the experience of practicing professionals, who were immersed in the application of current law to a particular industry and we’re responding,” noted Barbara Gontrum, associate dean for academic affairs.

In the first semester, students will acquire an overview of public and private law and pursue courses in legal writing, research and analysis. The second semester focuses on the legal system and introduces students to legal concepts in their concentration. The second year is devoted exclusively to seminars in a student’s concentration plus a year-long capstone project that draws on his or her employment experience.

“Employers need staff who understand the ramifications of the Affordable Care Act or new environmental regulations,” argues Associate Dean José Bahamonde-González, who is actively recruiting students for the program. “The degree is also valuable to professionals in Maryland, Washington and Virginia, where emergency response and crisis management are vital.”

The MSL’s concentrations were developed by leaders in those fields, including Diane Hoffmann, professor of law and director of the law school’s top-ranked Law and Health Care Program; Robert Percival, Robert F. Stanton Professor of Law and director of the law school’s Environmental Law Program; and Michael Greenberger, law school professor and founding director of the University’s Center for Health and Homeland Security, who heads the Crisis Management concentration.

The degree is part of the University of Maryland MPowering the State, a collaborative partnership between the University of Maryland Baltimore and the University of Maryland, College Park.

To learn more about the new Master of Science in Law, go to: www.law.umaryland.edu.