

Legal Assistant Studies

See College of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences, page 246.

Program Description:

The legal assistant profession is one of the occupations projected to grow the fastest through the year 2010 according to the U.S. Department of Labor. A legal assistant (or paralegal) is a valued member of the legal team and works under the supervision of attorneys.

This program is designed to train qualified legal assistants capable of working in a variety of areas of the law and in a variety of work environments. Consequently, the role and job duties of a legal assistant vary depending on the areas of law and work environment in which a legal assistant is employed. Such diversity, varied challenges, and employment possibilities are what makes the legal assistant profession so interesting and rewarding.

There are four different degrees or offerings in legal assistant studies. They are as follows: (1) a four-year baccalaureate degree in legal assistant studies with an emphasis in legal administration, criminal law, personal injury, labor law, legislative/constitutional law or a selected minor as approved by the legal assistant studies coordinator; (2) a two-year associate's degree in legal assistant studies; (3) a post-baccalaureate (one-year) certificate in legal assistant studies (which is available to students who already have a bachelor's degree in some other discipline and wish to make a career change or advancement); or (4) a minor in legal assistant studies which can complement various majors (and may also be helpful to students who are planning on attending law school). The requirements for these programs are based upon the guidelines of the National Association of Legal Assistants.

Career Descriptions*:

Litigation Legal Assistant — conducts legal, factual and computerized research; drafts legal pleadings and documents; interviews clients and witnesses; investigates, gathers and organizes case information; assists at trial.

Corporate Legal Assistant — drafts and/or analyzes various legal documents; attends meetings, negotiations or closings; performs legal and factual research; monitors compliance with applicable industry regulations; assists attorneys with preparation for collective bargaining, contract negotiations, administrative hearings or trials.

Criminal Law Legal Assistant — conducts comprehensive interviews of defendants, law enforcement, victims, and/or witnesses; performs case and field investigations; locates and coordinates usage of applicable experts; prepares motions, briefs or other legal documents; acts as a litigation assistant during trial and any appeal.

Governmental Legal Assistant — works as an immigration specialist; civil rights analyst; environmental protection specialist; mediation specialist; legislative analyst; workers compensation claims examiner, etc. (even the White House has employed legal assistants).

Real Estate Legal Assistant — conducts title searches; drafts real estate closing documents; monitors compliance with title, survey, disclosure and/or regulatory requirements; schedules and participates in real estate closings.

**Note: The above career descriptions are only a sampling of the numerous avenues available to legal assistants. See next page for additional employment listings.*

Bachelor of Science

Specialties in:

Legal Administration

Criminal Law

Personal Injury

Labor Law

**Legislative/
Constitutional Law**

Career Choices*:

Litigation Legal Assistant

Corporate Legal Assistant

Criminal Law Legal Assistant

Governmental Legal Assistant

Real Estate Legal Assistant

Student Profile:

Do you have...

- an interest in the law?
- a desire and commitment to help others?
- a good work ethic?
- good verbal and written communication skills?
- detail orientation and good organization skills?
- a well-established set of ethics?
- self-motivation, initiative and a positive outlook?
- good human relations skills?
- an ability to think logically?
- a willingness to learn new skills and to be challenged?

Legal Assistant Studies

Legal Assistant Studies Bachelor of Science

For this degree, students must complete the required courses in the majors that are listed below, the general education requirements, plus electives to total 124-128 credits. Students must elect a specialty area (see next page) or a minor as approved by the legal assistant studies coordinator.

Required Major Courses (58-60 credits)

BA254	Business Law I	3
BA255	Business Law II	3
CJ319	Substantive Criminal Law	3
CJ409	Procedural Criminal Law	3
LA102	Legal Research and Case Analysis	3
LA125	Civil Litigation and Procedure	4
LA140	Personal Injury Litigation and Investigative Techniques	3
LA150	Legal Assistant Profession and Ethical Considerations	3
LA202	Legal Writing and Analysis	3
LA250	Law Office Management, Systems and Technology	3
LA299	Legal Assistant Internship and Professional Development Seminar	6-8
LA320	Real Estate Law	3
LA321	Family Law	2
LA322	Probate Law & Procedure	3
LA401	Evidence & Trial Practice	3
LA450	Advanced Legal Writing & Interviewing Seminar	3
LA	Elective**	3
PS467	Constitutional Law and Civil Liberties	4

General Education (36-39 credits)*

EN110	First-Year Composition I	3
EN111	First-Year Composition II	3
SD101	Fund. of Speech Communication	3
HU251	Humanities I	4
HU	Elective	3
	Social Science	6-8
	Social Science Diversity	3-4
	Natural Science	8

MA110 (or higher)	Explorations in Math	3
PL205	Logic	3

Cognates - Required (6-7 credits)

OA119	Accounting Procedures****	4
CS101	Intro. to Microcomputer Appl.	3
DP160	Personal Computers Workstation Operating Systems	2-3
DP225	Word Processing Techniques	3
DP250	Desktop Publishing & Presentation Design	3

Legal Specialty or Minor (20+ credits)

See next page.

Electives (8 credits or less)

Electives are to be chosen in consultation with advisor.

FALL		SPRING			
First Year					
EN110	First-Year Composition I	3	LA125	Civil Litigation & Procedure	4
LA102	Legal Research & Case Analysis	3	LA140	Personal Injury Litigation and Investigative Techniques	3
LA150	Legal Assistant Profession and Ethical Considerations	3	EN111	First-Year Composition II	3
SD101	Fund. of Speech Communication	3		Social Science (Gen. Ed.)	3-4
OA119	Accounting Procedures	4		Computer Cognate	2-3
UN101	University Seminar	1			15-17
		17			
Second Year					
	Soc. Sci. Diversity	3	LA322	Probate Law and Procedure	3
LA202	Legal Writing & Analysis	3	BA255	Business Law II	3
LA320	Real Estate Law	3	LA250	Law Office Management, Systems & Technology	3
LA321	Family Law	2		Natural Science (Gen. Ed.)	4
BA254	Business Law I	3		General Education Math	3-4
	Social Science (Gen. Ed.)	3-4			16-17
		17-18			
Third Year					
LA401	Evidence & Trial Practice	3	CJ409	Procedural Criminal Law	3
CJ319	Substantive Criminal Law	4		Natural Science (Gen. Ed.)	4
HU251	Humanities I	4		Specialty/Minor	6
	Specialty/Minor	4		Humanities Elective	3-4
LA	Elective	3			16-17
		18			
Fourth Year					
PS467	Constitutional Law and Civil Liberties	4	LA450	Advanced Legal Writing and Interviewing Seminar	3
	Specialty/Minor	7	LA299	Legal Assistant Internship	6-8
	Elective or add'l. BS requirement	4		Specialty/Minor	3
		15		Elective or add'l. BS requirement	4
					16-18

Employment:

Legal assistants are employed with ...

- private law firms
- corporations
- financial institutions
- government (federal, tribal, state or local)
- courts and mediation systems
- real estate offices and title companies
- insurance companies
- special interest groups
- prosecutor or public defender offices
- educational institutions
- financial service organizations
- credit and collection agencies
- service, consulting or publishing companies

*The legal assistant B.S. degree requires eight credits in social science, natural science or mathematics beyond those for general education. These requirements may be fulfilled in part or in total through the specialty areas section or the minor. Students should consult their advisors.

**See LA300, seminar in legal assistant studies; also consult with legal assistant advisor.

****ACI32 may be substituted for OA119.

Legal Assistant Studies

Legal Assistant Studies Specialties

A student shall obtain a minimum of 20 credits in any one of the specialty areas listed below. Specialty area courses should be selected in consultation with your legal assistant studies advisor. As an alternative to selecting a specialty area within this program, a student may choose a minor that must be approved by the legal assistant studies advisor or dean.

Note: At least nine credit hours shall be at the 300-400 level.

Criminal Law Specialty

CJ101	Intro. to Criminal Justice	3
CJ243	Investigation	3
CJ250	Correctional Law	3
CJ355	Juvenile Justice	3
CJ444	Criminalistics	3
LA301	Alternative Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management	3
PY101	Introduction to Psychology	4
PY259	Abnormal Psychology	3
SO101	Introduction to Sociology	3
SO103	Cultural Diversity	3
SO214	Criminology	3
SO338	Deviance	3

Labor Law Specialty

EC201	Principles of Macroeconomics <i>or</i>	3
EC202	Principles of Microeconomics	
LA301	Alternative Dispute Resolution and Conflict	3
LA406	Worker's Disability Compensation Law	2
MN360	Principles of Management	3
MN365	Human Resource Management	3
MN451	Labor Law	4
MN464	Organizational Behavior	3
MN469	Collective Bargaining	3
PY228	Organizational Behavior	3
PY383	Industrial Psychology	3
SO313	Work and Organization	3

Legal Administration Specialty

AC132	Principles of Accounting I	4
AC133	Principles of Accounting II	4
AC232	Intermediate Accounting I	4
AC233	Intermediate Accounting II	4
AC332	Cost Accounting I	4
AC334	Accounting Information Systems	3
AC421	Federal Taxation Accounting I	3
AC422	Federal Taxation Accounting II	3
BA226	Records Management	3
EC302	Managerial Economics	4
FN341	Managerial Finance	4
FN443	Insurance	4
LA301	Alternative Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management	3
MK281	Marketing Principles and Strategy	3
MK387	Advertising Theory and Practice	3
MN360	Principles of Management	3
MN365	Human Resource Management	3
MN461	Management Simulation	3
MN464	Organizational Behavior	3
PY228	Organizational Behavior	3
SD320	Public Relations	4

Legislative/Constitutional Law Specialty

EC201	Principles of Macroeconomics <i>or</i>	3
EC202	Principles of Microeconomics	
EC305	Public Finance	3
HS131	United States History I	4
HS132	United States History II	4
LA301	Alternative Dispute Resolution and Conflict and Management	3
LA305	Tribal Law and Government	3
PS130	Introduction to State and Local Government	4
PS201	Intro. to Public Administration	3
PS301	Policy Analysis and Evaluation	4
PS364	Political Parties, Interest Groups & Public Opinion	3
PS367	Congress & the Presidency	4
PS401	Prin. of Public Administration	3

Personal Injury Specialty

BL105	Function of the Human Body	4
BL121	Human Anatomy & Physiology I	4
BL122	Human Anatomy & Physiology II	4
CH104	Life Chemistry I	3
CH105	Life Chemistry II	4
FN443	Insurance	4
HE209	Pharmacology**	3
LA301	Alternative Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management	3
LA405	No-Fault Automobile Law	3
LA406	Worker's Disability Compensation Law	2
PY101	Introduction to Psychology	4
PY217	Social Psychology	3
PY357	Personality Theory	3
PY385	Health Psychology	3
TC101	Construction I	3
TC102	Construction II	3

*LA300 seminar in legal assistant studies may apply to certain specialties and can be taken with approval of legal assistant coordinator. In the alternative, these special topics may be used as the required legal assistant elective.

**Prerequisites: BL122 or BL105 and CH105.