

Legal Studies

Program Description:

The legal assistant profession is one of the occupations projected to grow the fastest through the year 2014 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 *approved by the American Bar Association* and 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 studies. They are as follows: (1) a four-year baccalaureate degree in legal studies with an emphasis in legal administration, criminal law, personal injury, labor law, legislative/constitutional law, environmental law and policy, legal technology or client advocacy or a selected minor as approved by the legal studies coordinator; (2) a two-year associate's degree in legal studies; (3) a post-baccalaureate (one-year) certificate in legal 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 studies which can complement various majors (and may also be helpful to students who are planning on attending law school).

Career Description*:

Litigation Legal Assistant — Conducts 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.*

Post-Baccalaureate Certificate

(students must already possess a bachelor's degree; see admission requirements on the following page)

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 organizational skills?
- a well-established set of ethics?
- self-motivation, initiative and a positive outlook?
- good human relation skills?
- an ability to think logically?
- a willingness to learn new skills and to be challenged?

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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 and public defender offices
- educational institutions
- financial service organizations
- credit and collection agencies
- service, consulting or publishing companies

Post-Baccalaureate Certificate

Legal Studies Post-Baccalaureate Certificate

Required courses *(39-41 credits)

LAWS102	Legal Research and Case Analysis	3
LAWS125	Civil Litigation and Procedure	4
LAWS140	Personal Injury Litigation and Investigative Techniques	3
LAWS150	Legal Professionals and Ethical Considerations	3
LAWS202	Legal Writing and Analysis	
	<i>or</i>	
LAWS450	Advanced Legal Writing and Interviewing Seminar	3
LAWS250	Law Office Management, Systems and Technology	3
LAWS320	Real Estate Law	3
LAWS321	Family Law	2
LAWS322	Probate Law and Procedure	3
LAWS299	Legal Studies Internship and Professional Development Seminar	6-8
BUSN350	Business Law I	3
CJUS319	Substantive Criminal Law	3

**Note: Other courses may be substituted for one or more of the required courses listed above depending upon the student's undergraduate courses/curriculum, work experience and/or career goals. However, any such course substitution must be done in consultation with the legal studies advisor and must be in writing; also, any such course substitution shall be limited to a maximum of two courses. Such other law courses include but are not limited to the following:*

LAWS300	Seminar in Legal Studies	1-4
LAWS301	Alternative Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management	3
LAWS305	Tribal Law and Government	3
LAWS401	Evidence and Trial Practice	3
LAWS405	No-Fault Automobile Law	3
LAWS406	Worker's Disability Compensation Law	2
BUSN355	Business Law II	3
MGMT451	Labor Law	4
MGMT469	Collective Bargaining	3
CJUS409	Procedural Criminal Law	3
POLI467	Constitutional Law and Civil Liberties	4
EVRN311	Environmental Law	3

Admission Requirements:

Admission to the legal studies post-baccalaureate certificate is based on the following:

- Completion of the legal studies post-baccalaureate certificate program application form (along with submission of appropriate admission fee);
- Completion of a baccalaureate degree, comprising a minimum of 120 semester credits from an accredited college or university;
- Submission of official transcripts of all previous post-secondary work (to be considered official, the transcript(s) must be sent directly from the undergraduate's institution(s) to the LSSU Admissions Office);
- Submission of two letters of recommendation from people familiar with the applicant's academic and/or professional abilities and background; and
- Submission of a writing sample setting forth career goals and reasons seeking the post-baccalaureate certificate in legal studies. The writing sample questionnaire is available from the LSSU Admissions Office. (The writing sample shall be reviewed by the the coordinator for the Legal Studies Program).

The completion of the Legal Studies Program
DOES NOT AUTHORIZE graduates to
practice law as an attorney.