

Legal Administrative Specialist

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

This intensive program covers many aspects of the legal profession. Students will learn the proper procedures and terminology used in the legal system. Subject areas will include wills and estates, real estate, corporate and commercial law, civil litigation, and family law. Students will also enhance their keyboarding and transcription skills, and receive extensive hands-on training in word processing.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

As a legal administrative assistant, the graduate can be the vital link between the lawyer and the client. This program, in conjunction with strong interpersonal and communication skills and a professional and self-confident attitude prepares the graduate for a career in either a large legal organization or a small legal practice. Every office needs well-trained support staff – the challenges and opportunities are therefore endless.

PREREQUISITES

- Grade 12 or equivalent
- If a student does not have Grade 12 or equivalent, he/she must achieve a score of 14 on the Wonderlic Test
- Clear Conduct Certificate

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

A student must obtain an overall grade, in each module of at least 70% in order to graduate and receive a diploma. A student must complete all requirements of the Student Success Strategies, Career Planning and Preparation modules, the Field Placement requirements, as well as meeting the attendance requirements as outlined by the Department of Labour and Advanced Education throughout the duration of his/her program.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Course	Hours
Student Success Strategies	20
Software Lab - Computer Fundamentals	40
Software Lab - Word Processing	40
Software Lab - Spreadsheets	40
Software Lab - Presentations	40
Software Lab - Database Management	40
General Law Office Procedures	40
Civil Litigation - Level 1	60
Corporate & Commercial Law	40
Family Law - Level 1	40
Wills and Estates - Level 1	20
Real Estate Law - Level 1	60
Writing for Comprehension	40
Business Math	40
Image Development	20
Business Communication	80
Document Formatting	80
Office Skills	80
Bookkeeping Fundamentals	40
Career Planning and Preparation - Level I	20
Career Planning and Preparation - Level II	20
Field Placement	8 Weeks

TOTAL WEEKS (without breaks) 53

TOTAL WEEKS (with maximum* scheduled breaks) 59

*Number of breaks will depend on student start date

**Work terms/internships are scheduled for a minimum of 20 hours per week, but the total number of hours worked and the timing of hours scheduled are at the discretion of the employer/host to a maximum of 40 hours per week.

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COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Student Success Strategies

Instructor Led

In this orientation module, emphasis is placed on thinking about achieving success from Day One. This module stresses the importance of developing non-technical skills to enhance personal, academic, and career success. This includes understanding learning styles and honing practical study skills, such as memory, reading, note-and test-taking techniques. Personal exercises will focus on teamwork, decision making and problem solving skills, setting SMART goals and maintaining a positive attitude; techniques for managing change, stress and conflict will also be explored.

Software Lab - Computer Fundamentals

Instructor Facilitated

Through a combination of theory and hands-on-practice, this module examines the role and use of the computer in today's workplace. Emphasis is placed on those computers outfitted with the Microsoft Windows operating system. Students will review basic computer concepts, Windows OS usage, and complete hands-on training exercises in business-standard software applications, including Microsoft Outlook and Microsoft Word. Keyboarding skills are also honed via daily keyboarding exercises and drills.

Software Lab - Word Processing

Instructor Facilitated

This software lab module consists of online training and assessment in Microsoft Word, and builds on the skills introduced in Computer Fundamentals. Students learn a comprehensive set of skills, with coverage including formatting text for layout and appearance, formatting document sections, using styles, working with header/footer content, inserting and formatting tables, graphics and pictures, working with templates and themes, using advanced editing features, and working with mailing tools.

Software Lab - Spreadsheets

Instructor Facilitated

This software lab module consists of online training and assessment in Microsoft Excel. Students learn a comprehensive set of skills, with coverage including creating, formatting and printing worksheets, creating simple and advanced formulas, using mathematical, logical, statistical and financial functions, creating and modifying charts and pivot tables, and using data tools.

Software Lab - Presentations

Instructor Facilitated

This software lab module consists of online training and assessment in Microsoft PowerPoint. Students learn a comprehensive set of skills centered on the creation of attractive, professional-looking presentations. Students learn how to effectively use and format animations, transitions, pictures, audio, video, charts and tables, as well incorporate speaker notes and annotations into their presentations.

Software Lab - Database Management

Instructor Facilitated

This software lab module consists of online training and assessment in Microsoft Access. Students learn a comprehensive set of skills, including creating and modifying database tables, defining table relationships, sorting data, creating simple and advanced queries, creating and formatting forms and reports.

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Legal Administrative Specialist

General Law Office Procedures

Instructor Led

This module introduces the student to the law-office environment and the day-to-day procedures affecting all support staff. Current methods and software tools for document creation, editing, storage, and management in the law office environment are covered, with an emphasis on the development of practical skills necessary to be a competent legal administrative assistant. Topics include the role of the lawyer and the role of legal support staff, the principle of confidentiality, trust versus general accounting, the tickler (reminder) system, file management, time sheets, telephone techniques, managing accounts, legal correspondence, legal letter composition and punctuation, memoranda and legal instruments. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

Civil Litigation – Level 1

Instructor Led

In this module students are introduced to the court system within the province. Topics include an emphasis on the civil courts and litigation as a process for dispute resolution, at both the small claims and senior trial court levels, including the role and interaction of the rules of court and court forms, in such processes. Students are also introduced to the emerging fields of Alternate Dispute Resolution mechanisms such as mediation and arbitration as alternatives to litigation. The module takes a holistic approach to the processing of a civil action from the originating process to the bill of costs, as well as review of pre-trial procedural steps such as motions, discovery of documents, oral examination for discovery, and use of court-based settlement mechanisms such as pre-trial settlement conferences. The module is focused on the perspective of the Legal Administrative Assistant Specialist and the role of such support staff in relation to the division of labour as between lawyers and professional support staff in document production and the management of various stages and steps in the civil litigation process. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

Corporate & Commercial Law

Instructor Led

This module introduces the various forms of business ownership, including proprietorships and partnerships, franchises, licenses, and joint ventures, along with the steps required to incorporate, including incorporation and organization procedures, maintenance of the minute book and post incorporation matters, corporate structure and corporate documentation. Additionally, basic legal procedures and documents associated with buying and selling business assets, commercial transactions and instruments, along with the registration of a security interest in personal property, including the Personal Property Security Act, are discussed.

Family Law - Level 1

Instructor Led

This module offers an overview of statutory provisions, including the Divorce Act, and Provincial legislation governing resolution of family law matters for unmarried persons, as well as an introduction to legislation governing marital property division. Students are introduced to the function and purpose of drafting, preparation, and execution of domestic contracts in the consensual resolution of family law matters. Students are tasked with the preparation of the required documents to commence a divorce proceeding, as well as familiarization documents required to initiate family law proceedings under provincial legislation. Specific topics include court jurisdictions in family law matters, as well as contested and uncontested family law proceedings, including divorce.

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Legal Administrative Specialist

Wills and Estates - Level 1

Instructor Led

This module provides an overview of the legal principles and practices governing a typical solicitor's practice including the making of a will, and enduring powers of attorney for health care and/or asset management. Students will learn the terminology used in wills and powers of attorney, the steps in preparation and execution of wills and powers of attorney. Other aspects of estate planning considered include the law of intestacy, and the role of codicils, and holograph wills. Students are introduced conceptually and legislatively to the process and purpose of a grant of letters probate and administration, as well as the purpose and function legislation governing the legal validity of Wills, dependent relief claims against estates, and the governing legislation dealing with intestacy. The principal perspective of the module is on the role of the solicitor and his/her support staff in relation to estate planning.

Real Estate Law - Level 1

Instructor Led

This module focuses on the purchase, sale, and mortgaging of residential property and the preparation of all documents needed to facilitate such transactions, including typical correspondence. Students will understand and be given practical class-room assignments illustrating the role and functions of the legal administrative assistant when representing a purchaser or vendor. Topics include an explanation of the land registry and land title systems, the interplay between the two, as well as hands-on training in the navigation and use of provincial on-line electronic databases used for the electronic searching and transfer of title to real property. Students will also be sensitized, to the purpose and function of the contract of purchase and sale in relation to the rights and obligations of the parties in real estate transactions, including problem-solving skills in relation to issues raised by the latter.

Document Formatting

Instructor Led

During this course students will learn the proper formatting of various standard business documents for the office setting. They will learn correct formatting, spacing and design to ensure what they create is an effective business tool. Students will also work on improving their keyboarding speed and accuracy on a daily basis and take 3 timings daily to track progress.

Business Math

Instructor Led

Through lectures, demonstrations, textbook exercises, and MathXL, classroom labs, this course teaches students the skills and knowledge necessary to apply basic business math (whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and percentages) when working with percentage formulas, graphs and statistics that are present in everyday business transactions.

Writing for Comprehension

Instructor Led

In this course, students will be learning how to professionally write business communication within a standard office setting. This will include writing letters, memos, emails, and social media posts. The goal of this course is to demonstrate how it is necessary to be clear, concise and complete in our writing to ensure to get our messages across. Gone are the days of long-winded verbiage and excessively professional, legal-like tones. It is important that we focus on the details needed and the words we use to be simple but still remaining business based. There will be a section involving social media and its usage within the business environment.

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Legal Administrative Specialist

Image Development

Instructor Led

This module teaches the student how to develop and manage a professional image. Topics include: appearance-visual and verbal, interpersonal interaction, business etiquette, and networking skills. At the end of the module, students will have an appreciation and understanding of the importance of a professional image in the business environment.

Business Communication

Instructor Led

In this course, students will be continuing to learn how to communicate professionally within a business environment. The two major goals for this course are (1) to learn proper, grammatically correct writing and (2) preparing and giving professional presentations, whether prepared prior or given impromptu. As well, attention to editing documents will be given through practical textbook and homework assignments. A portion of the course will also focus on spelling accuracy.

Office Skills

Instructor Led

During this course, students will be engaging in activities and scenarios to provide them with the real-life tools needed on a daily basis within the office environment. Focus on the daily tasks, managing work load, and handling conflict allows students to gain a working knowledge of what the norms are for most settings. The course will end with a final project whereby they will participate in a simulated day in the office over a 2 day period.

Bookkeeping Fundamentals

Instructor Led

This module introduces fundamental bookkeeping principles and practices for small businesses. Students will study the accounting equation, account categories, the debit and credit system of bookkeeping, and correcting entries. Regular business transactions and adjusting journal entries are recorded, and the trial balance and basic financial statements are prepared.

Career Planning and Preparation - Level I

Instructor Led

This module introduces tools for planning and preparing for a successful job search, so that students can maintain a career-focused approach throughout their education program. Students will learn about the "Hidden" Job Market and ways to access it in their upcoming job search, how to research opportunities and network for industry contacts, and use appropriate etiquette when communicating with prospective employers. Students will identify their personal skills, values and preferences for the workplace, begin preparation of a professional resume and references, and organize proof documents for their career portfolio. Class discussions on various self-management topics introduced in Student Success Strategies will round out this module, which is a pre-requisite for Career Planning and Preparation - Level II.

An introduction to Occupational Health and Safety will also be discussed, specifically the definition of occupational health and safety; an individual's safety rights; responsibilities under Nova Scotia law; hazard identification and control; WHMIS, First Aid and fire safety requirements.

Career Planning and Preparation - Level II

Instructor Led

This module continues to build on the concepts and skills introduced in Career Planning and Preparation - Level I. Students will learn how to conduct an effective job search and identify various methods of applying for work with today's technology. Students will create a personal list of "Top Employers" and target current industry opportunities, while finalizing their professional resume, portfolio and career correspondence. Students will learn to identify the different types and forms of interviews, practice

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Legal Administrative Specialist

responding to typical questions, and practice follow-up, evaluation and negotiation techniques they can use to ensure success. Self-management topics from Career Planning and Preparation - Level I will be reviewed, with a focus towards on-the-job success in both learner placements and post-graduate employment.

Field Placement

On successful completion of the classroom hours of this program, students will be placed on field placement at an outside organization. Students will have the opportunity to apply their newly developed knowledge and skills in a real-world environment.

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