

Paralegal

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Upon completion, graduates will have a broad understanding of legal concepts, values and principles of the Canadian legal system, combined with specific knowledge about several major areas of law. Paralegals prepare legal documents, maintain records and files and conduct research to assist lawyers or other professionals, so students will learn the proper procedures and terminology used in the legal system and develop their research, problem solving and communication skills. Throughout the program the rules of proper professional practice including the rules of ethics are emphasized.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Paralegals enjoy one of the highest employment rates and one of the highest average earnings in Canada for those pursuing paraprofessional occupations. 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.

PREREQUISITES

- Grade 12 or equivalent or mature student status
- 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 Student Success Strategies as well as the Field Placement requirements.

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
Writing for Comprehension	40
Business Math	40
Business Communication	80
Office Skills	80
Document Formatting	80
Bookkeeping Fundamentals	40
General Law Office Procedures	20
Civil Litigation	60
Family Law - Level I	40
Wills and Estates Level I	20
Real Estate Law - Level I	60
Corporate & Commercial Law	40
Principles of Canadian Law & Legal Terminology	20
Image Development	20
Business Law	80
Interviewing, Researching and Writing	80
Property Law	40
Family Law - Level II	60
Wills and Estates - Level II	40
Real Estate Law - Level II	80
Employment, Insurance and Tenancy Law	20
Legal Accounting and Practice Management	40
Criminal Law and Summary Conviction Procedure	40
Career Planning & Preparation - Level I	20
Career Planning & Preparation - Level II	20
Field Placement - Paralegal	8 weeks
TOTAL WEEKS	77

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COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Student Success Strategies

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

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

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

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

This software lab module consists of online training and assessment in Microsoft PowerPoint. Students learn a comprehensive set of skills centered around 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

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, and creating and running macros.

General Law Office Procedures

This module introduces the student to the law-office environment and the day-to-day procedures affecting all support staff. The effective operation of a transcription system is also covered and students gain an awareness 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

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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.

Civil Litigation

In this module students are introduced to the court system within the province. Subjects include the basic rules of the court, the processing of a civil action from the originating process to The Bill of Costs, the procedural steps of applications as well as the procedural steps of motion proceedings. Details of procedures and documents used in actions, applications, introductory proceedings and procedures (issuing, service, filing, and entry) are examined.

Corporate and Commercial Law

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 I

This module offers an overview of the legal principles governing the drafting, preparation, and execution of domestic contracts and the processing of all types of divorce proceedings, as well as familiarization with family law proceedings. Specific topics include court jurisdictions, defended and undefended divorces, the Family Relations Act and domestic contracts.

Wills and Estates Level I

This module provides an overview of the legal principles and practices governing the making of a will. Students will learn the terminology used in wills, the steps in preparation and execution of the will along with the process of obtaining letters and administering the estate. Other topics include estate planning, intestacy, codicils, holograph wills, grant of letters probate and grant of letters of administration, transmission of assets, the roles of the Wills Act, Wills Variation Act, and the Estate Administration Act as well as understanding of the role of the law firm and personal representatives.

Real Estate Law Level I

This module focuses on the acquisition, sale, and mortgaging of residential property and all related documentation. Students will understand the role of the legal administrative assistant when representing a purchaser or vendor. Topics include the land registry system, the contract of purchase and sale, transfer of an estate in fee simple, statement as to citizenship, purchase and sale transactions, purchase tax return, statement of adjustments, mortgage transactions, related affidavits, declarations and certificates, as well as typical types of correspondence.

Principles of Canadian Law and Legal Terminology

This is the final Legal Specialization Level I module of the program and represents a comprehensive review of all previous legal modules. This review illustrates the intertwining nature and degree of overlap between the various areas of law and helps students prepare for the comprehensive final examination. For Paralegal students, this module also serves as preparation for the Legal Specialization Level II modules.

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Document Formatting

Students practice identifying and applying standard formatting to a variety of typical business documents, while continuing to develop their keyboarding speed and accuracy along with their proofreading skills. Formatting of business documents includes practice with block-style and modified block-style letters, memoranda, reports bound and unbound, reports with lists and displayed text, memo style reports, formal reports (including title page, table of contents, bibliography, etc.), purchase orders, press releases, agendas, minutes of meetings, itineraries and various types of envelopes. Keyboarding drills and timings, as well as practice with language arts, are also included.

Business Math

This module provides the students with an understanding of arithmetic, mathematics, and measurements used in common business and industry environments. At the end of the module the student will be able to define whole numbers, fractions, decimals and percentages; become familiar with equations and formulae; and learn the use of graphs.

Writing for Comprehension

Through lectures, textbook exercises, and classroom labs, this module teaches students the skills and knowledge necessary to apply basic business writing skills when creating various memos; routine letters; good news letters; persuasive and bad news letters; presentations; and meeting agendas.

Image Development

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 Communications

Excellent communication skills are essential in the smooth operation of a business office. In this module, the emphasis is not on the memorization of the rules governing the English language but on the application of basic conventions to produce grammatically correct communications. With this emphasis on clear expression of thought and intent, topics covered include grammar, spelling, punctuation, proofreading and editing, the communication process, written and oral communication techniques, overcoming communication barriers, written and oral routine orders, inquiries and replies, delivering good and bad news; communication within an organization (upward, lateral, and downward) and using technology as a communication tool (fax, email and messaging).

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Office Skills

The daily routines of a modern business office are examined, and the skills necessary to assist in the smooth operation of the office are presented. A variety of learning methods may be used including lecture, discussion, role-plays, case studies and work simulations. Topics include the role of office support personnel, professional and reception skills, information management, incoming and outgoing mail procedures and office filing systems.

Bookkeeping Fundamentals

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.

Business Law

An introduction to Canadian business law is provided through a blended lecture and a case study approach. Emphasis is on the application of the law to practical business situations. Topics for discussion include the Canadian legal system, torts affecting property, torts affecting a person, unintentional negligence, the formation of contracts, factors affecting the contractual relationship, and factors that end the contractual relationship. Other topics include the sale of goods and consumer protection, statutes concerning securing debt, and bankruptcy, agency, partnership, and incorporation, regulations pertaining to personal and real property, and legislation regarding copyright, patents, trade-marks, and industrial design.

Interviewing, Researching and Writing

Topics include types and sources of research materials, computer assisted research, and preparation of legal memoranda. Instruction is provided on techniques used to locate statutes, regulations and cases, citation of cases and statutory authorities. General rules of style in legal writing are reviewed. Students will be given a legal research topic on which they will produce a memorandum. Additionally, students will practice interviewing and fact gathering, as well as the principles of negotiation.

Property Law

This module introduces students to commercial transactions such as sale of goods, the uses of negotiable instruments, methods of securing transactions, including consideration of the Personal Property Security Act, enforcement of creditor rights and bankruptcy. The law of copyright, trademarks, patents and industrial design is also discussed.

Family Law Level II

A continuation of Family Law Level I, topics include a detailed look at the rights and duties of spouses and parents, steps and documents used in proceedings respecting the Divorce Act, interim proceedings, matrimonial property, custody and access, child support, maintenance, separation agreements and issues of guardianship and adoption.

Wills and Estates Level II

This advanced module focuses on the practical details of will drafting and estate administration including rules relating to contentious and non-contentious proceedings. Students will gain an understanding of the substantive law of wills and will demonstrate a working knowledge of the law and procedures involved

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in drafting wills, as well as in the probate and administration of estates. Trusts and adult guardianship are also discussed.

Real Estate Law Level II

This module will focus on the details of handling real estate transactions from the perspective of the paralegal. Upon completion of this module students will be capable of performing all tasks including conducting all appropriate searches and the drafting of all documentation pertaining to the closing of a real estate transaction. The applicable Land Registration Act will be examined in detail, including the change from a names-based system to a parcel-based system, identification of land by Parcel Identification Number, triggers for conversion and the certification application process. Students will be introduced to online resources for land titles and to the preparation of online forms.

Employment, Insurance and Tenancy Law

This module introduces the laws concerning employment relationships, the purposes and various types of insurance, and provides a basic understanding of the landlord and tenant relationship. Topics include employees and contractors, wrongful dismissal, rights and responsibilities of an agent and a principal, implications of a fiduciary relationship, insurable interest and valuation, duty to disclose, legislation concerning residential premises, landlord and tenant disputes and commercial tenancies.

Legal Accounting and Practice Management

This course introduces students to practice management systems, including time-tracking methods (dockets) both manually and electronically, file organization, appointment-scheduling as well as tickler systems, conflict of interest issues, retainer agreements, new client information forms, opening, managing and closing files and best practices. Students are shown basic legal office accounting procedures including the creation and operation of 'general' and 'trust' accounts. The course offers a basic understanding of such concepts as 'fees', 'bank accounts', 'trust receipts', 'disbursements', 'petty cash', HST, and 'client billing'. They are also introduced to a commonly-used accounting software program, "PC Law", and they are required to complete related assignments using this software.

Criminal Law and Summary Conviction Procedure

This course provides students with a fundamental understanding of Canadian criminal law. Concepts explored include Federal statutes which create offenses, jurisdiction over substantive criminal law, procedure and the administration of the courts. Students also explore the organization of the court system, and the role of the components of our criminal law system; as well as the precepts of the Charter which apply. Other areas examined include the Criminal Code, the interpretation of the offenses, procedure and sentence options. Students are also introduced to Summary Conviction procedures (i.e. summary conviction matters exclusive of hybrid, super summary charges where the possible sentence is greater than 6 months imprisonment).

Career Planning and Preparation Level I

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

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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.

Career Planning and Preparation Level II

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 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.

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