

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 the Student Success Strategies, Career Planning and Preparation modules, the Field Placement requirements, as well as meeting the attendance 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 Communications	80
Document Formatting	80
Office Skills	80
Bookkeeping Fundamentals	40
General Law Office Procedures	40
Civil Litigation - Level 1	60
Family Law - Level 1	40
Wills and Estates Level 1	20
Real Estate Law - Level 1	60
Corporate & Commercial Law	40
Image Development	20
Business Law	80
Interviewing, Researching and Writing	80
Civil Litigation - Level 2	40
Wills and Estates – Level 2	40
Family Law - Level 2	60
IT in the Law Office	20
Real Estate Law - Level 2	80
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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, presentations, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, presentations, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

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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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to the participation throughout the course.

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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments and exams in addition to the participation throughout the course.

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). Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, presentations, quizzes and exams in addition to the participation throughout the course.

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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to the participation throughout the course.

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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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to the participation throughout the course.

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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to the participation throughout the course.

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 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

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 ADR (Alternate Dispute Resolution mechanisms) such as mediation and arbitration as alternatives to litigation. The module takes a wholistic 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.

Family Law - Level 1

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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

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Wills and Estates - Level 1

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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

Real Estate - Level 1

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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

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.

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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments in addition to the participation throughout the course.

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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

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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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

Civil Litigation - Level 2

This module is intended to build on the knowledge base and skill sets acquired in Civil Litigation 1. Enhanced knowledge and skill sets include: consideration of specific statutory provisions and those rules of court specific and/or unique to the individual student's Province of residence and practice that impact on general concepts covered in Civil Litigation 1. Particular attention will be paid to the role of properly prepared pleadings, as well as the significant impact properly performed pre-trial procedures, including how thorough pre-trial disclosure of documents and well prepared and conducted oral examinations for discovery enhance outcomes for lawyers and litigants, including settlement without trial, methods and practices of scheduling of motions and trials, and pilot project rules and forms such as Rule 81 under the New Brunswick Rules of Court, and particular rules of court unique to students in New Brunswick or Nova Scotia related to actions to enforce Mechanic's or Builder's Liens, Partition and Sale, and Quieting of Titles.

Wills and Estates - Level 2

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 in drafting wills, as well as in the probate and administration of estates. Trusts and adult guardianship are also discussed. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

Family Law - Level 2

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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

IT and the Law Office

Topics include an overview of software programs currently available in the legal marketplace and in common usage in law office environments for practice organization and management generally, and in specific areas of practice such as real estate conveyancing, corporate governance, and estate administration. Particular emphasis will be placed on software tools designed to work with the creation, management, and conversion of portable document format [PDF] files, the emergent defacto document format standard in the law office environment. Additional focus and emphasis will be on cutting-edge voice dictation/transcription software for both converting the spoken word into text and control by voice of the desktop environment of the Personal Computer including many of the most popular software programs used in this environment.

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Real Estate Law - Level 2

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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

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). Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, quizzes and exams in addition to their participation throughout the course.

Career Planning & 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 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.

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Career Planning & 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. Students will be evaluated through a variety of assignments, projects, and quizzes in addition to their participation throughout the course.

Field Placement - Paralegal

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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