

# 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. The program emphasizes the rules of proper professional practice including the rules of ethics.

## 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

1. Student has Grade 12 or equivalent or meets criteria for Mature Student Status.
2. Mature students must be 19 years of age, provide a Letter of Intent, provide most recent educational transcript, and pass a qualifying test.
3. The approved qualifying test for this program is the Wonderlic test. A passing score for this program is 15.
4. Student must provide a clear Criminal Record Check.

## 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

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Field Placement requirements, as well as meeting the attendance requirements.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

| Course   | Hours     |
|--|-----------|
| Student Success Strategies                       | 20        |
| Digital Literacy for Professionals               | 40        |
| Software Lab - Word Processing                   | 40        |
| Software Lab - Spreadsheets                      | 40        |
| Software Lab - Presentations                     | 40        |
| Software Lab - Database Management               | 40        |
| Business English                                 | 40        |
| Business Math                                    | 40        |
| Communication for Professionals                  | 80        |
| Document Formatting                              | 80        |
| Office Skills                                    | 80        |
| Bookkeeping Fundamentals                         | 40        |
| Business Law                                     | 80        |
| Law Office Procedures, Management and Accounting | 80        |
| Legal Ethics                                     | 20        |
| Interviewing, Researching and Writing            | 80        |
| IT in the Law Office                             | 20        |
| Civil Litigation                                 | 100       |
| Family Law                                       | 100       |
| Corporate & Commercial Law                       | 40        |
| Image Development                                | 20        |
| Wills and Estates                                | 80        |
| Real Estate Law                                  | 100       |
| Criminal Law and Summary Conviction Procedure    | 40        |
| Career Planning & Preparation - Level I          | 20        |
| Career Planning & Preparation - Level II         | 20        |
| Field Placement - Paralegal                      | 8 weeks   |
| <b>TOTAL WEEKS</b>                               | <b>77</b> |

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### Student Success Strategies

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In this orientation module, you will focus on achieving success from day one. You will develop non-technical skills to enhance your personal, academic, and career success. You will explore learning styles, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning. You will also enhance your 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. You will also explore techniques for managing change, stress, and conflict.

### Digital Literacy for Professionals

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This course has four units that introduce you to the fundamental concepts and principles of learning and working in a digital environment. The first unit introduces you to using devices and handling information with topics on operating systems (Windows, MAC, and Linux), computer organization (folder management and naming conventions), cloud storage (including Microsoft OneDrive), types of web browsers (including Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and Apple Safari), and fundamental troubleshooting. In the second unit, you will become familiar with creating and editing information through learning about file formats (pdf, mp4, docx), productivity (including iWork and Microsoft Office Suite) and creativity (Adobe, Canva, iMovie) platforms, and basic introduction to Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. The third unit on communicating and collaborating will introduce you to web conferencing applications (Slack, Zoom, Microsoft Teams), mail applications (including Microsoft Outlook and Gmail), project management tools (Trello, Asana), and time management tools (including Todoist, Outlook Calendar, and iCal). You will learn to build rapport virtually. In the final unit, you will gain an understanding on netiquette, cybersecurity, and digital wellness. After completing this course, you will have enhanced digital literacy skills as a professional in the working and learning environment.

### Software Lab: Word Processing

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This software lab module will use a simulation-based program called MindTap that consists of online trainings and assessments in Microsoft Word. It builds on the skills introduced in Digital Literacy for Professionals course. You will learn a comprehensive set of skills, with coverage including creating and editing a document (this includes saving a document, using AutoComplete and AutoCorrect, undo and redo actions, paragraph spacing, and more), formatting a document (covering topics like addressing comments in documents, using drag and drop, as well as cut, copy and paste). This course will also introduce you to how to create tables and a multipage report (including options found in the Navigation pane, formatting a table, merging cells and adding a formula, using SmartArt graphic, and more). You will acquire skills in editing text or content for layout and appearance (wrap text, WordArt, cropping a picture, and so on). Additionally, you will work with templates, themes, and styles (creating a new document from a template, using thesaurus, saving a custom theme, customizing a style, and so on). This course concludes with the mail merge feature (such as inserting mail merge fields into a document, complete a mail merge, and more).

### Software Lab: Spreadsheets

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This software lab module will use a simulation-based program called MindTap that consists of online trainings and assessments in Microsoft Excel. You will learn the fundamentals of excel, such as opening and closing a workbook, entering formulas, modifying worksheet views, and so on. You will acquire skill in formatting workbook text and data (change fonts, font style, and font colour, format dates and times, merge, use the AVERAGE function, and more). This course will also introduce you to the skill of performing calculations with formula and functions, including sub-topics such as extend data and formulas with

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AutoFill, calculate statistics, and so forth. You will also be able to analyze and chart financial data using available excel charts, such as pie chart, line char, chart legends, data bar, and so on. This course will conclude with you learning how to generate reports from multiple worksheets and workbooks (such as copy worksheets between workbooks, organize worksheets in a worksheet group, hyperlink to a document, create a workbook template, and more).

### **Software Lab: Presentations**

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This software lab module will use a simulation-based program called MindTap that consists of online trainings and assessments in Microsoft PowerPoint. You will learn a comprehensive set of skills centered on creating a presentation (create title slide, slide with lists, format text, duplicate, rearrange, and delete slides, change a theme, and so on). You will learn how to effectively add media and special effects (apply theme used in another presentation, insert shapes and pictures, rotate objects, create a table, and more). You will apply advanced formatting and animation to objects (including inserting SmartArt graphic, audio clips, and WordArt style). You will be able to distribute presentations and integration PowerPoint with other Microsoft Office programs, such as Word and Excel. You will learn how to customize presentations and become familiar with the PowerPoint environment, (how to work in a Slide Master View, work with comments, save a custom theme, and so on).

### **Software Lab: Database Management**

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This software lab module will use a simulation-based program called MindTap that consists of online trainings and assessments in Microsoft Access. You will learn how to create and build a database (including basic database concepts and terms, using Backstage view, starting and exiting Access, Datasheet view and Design view, copy and paste records from another Access database, and so forth). You will gain an understanding on how to build a database and define table relationships, covering sub-topics such as setting fields properties, importing data from Excel and an existing table structure, and more. You will acquire the skill of maintaining and querying a database (such as find, modify, and delete records in a table, work in the Query window in Design view, run queries, sort data with Filter data, and so on). You will discover how to create forms and reports (using Form Wizard, apply themes to a form, add pictures to a form, change color of text on a form, and more). You will understand how to create advanced queries and enhance table design (using naming standards, AutoFilter, parameter query, lookup fields, input masks, and so forth).

### **Business English**

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In this course, you will develop professional communication skills in a business setting using MS Office including Word and Outlook. You will apply proper grammar to create and review appropriate business documents such as emails, memos, letters, reports, text messages, and social media posts for company websites, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook. You will practice grammar, spelling, and error correction while developing clear and concise writing skills. You will rewrite and edit professional documents while demonstrating spelling accuracy, proper capitalization, and punctuation. You will recognize and correct commonly misspelled words. Furthermore, you will explore sentence elements such as modifiers, connectors, and sequencers to write brief and jargon-free business messages. You will distinguish active and passive voice to write effective sentences. You will also review and incorporate inclusive language to avoid biases and discrimination. Using a range of grammatical structures, you will adopt and follow modern business communication standards.

### **Business Math**

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This course reviews and introduces basic and intermediate math concepts including the relationships between the following operations: addition and subtraction, multiplication and division, and decimals,

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percentages, and fractions. You will complete a variety of textbook readings, LinkedIn Learning and Khan Academy videos, worksheets, word problems, as well as two in-class assignments and two tests to ensure you are able to apply these math concepts to complete a variety of common business math operations. The first week focuses on a brief review of basic operations, fractions, and decimals while learning to decipher and complete word problems. The second week then looks at percentages, ratios, equations, and graphs to provide a robust review of key operations, word problems, and common business math requirements. This includes calculating costs, interest, budgets, and measurements, with a focus on transportation, nutrition, and costing. Throughout the course, you will complete work with and without a calculator to ensure you have mastered concepts and can complete operations efficiently and accurately in a work environment.

### Communication for Professionals

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In this course, you will acquire professional writing skills for standard business communication in today's office environment. You will review and prepare error-free emails, memos, letters, reports, text messages, and social media posts. You will develop clear and concise message communication across various channels such as email and oral presentations. You will improve your skills using MS Office, including Word, Outlook, and PowerPoint. You will also practice writing business posts for various social media platforms including blogs on company websites, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook. You will recognize and adopt the standard tone for formal business writing: polite, direct, succinct, and simple. In addition, you will adopt an efficient business writing process that includes audience analysis, research, message planning and organization, and draft review and editing. You will differentiate between persuasive writing and negative news sharing and write using both approaches. During the course, you will plan and write a business presentation using PowerPoint or alternative presentation software such as Prezi or Canva. You will incorporate your newly acquired written communication skills to deliver a clear and concise oral presentation. By completing this module, you will develop your written and oral business communication skills and improve your confidence to succeed in any professional setting.

### Document Formatting

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This course will use a simulation-based program called MindTap. You will be presented with a series of projects that use Microsoft Word to create documents similar to those you will encounter in business and academic environments. You will be introduced to the fundamentals of Word with sub-topics such as spelling and grammar check, formatting paragraphs and characters, inserting pictures, and more. You will become familiar with using Word features to create a research paper (MLA and APA documentation styles, headers, page numbers, autocorrect, footnotes, editing a source or citation, and so forth). You will be able to prepare a business letter (including using letterhead, SmartArt graphics, Format Painter button, and so on). You will discover what a multipage document contains, with sub-topics like creating a cover page, modifying page format, formatting lists and tables, creating a watermark, and more). You will gain an understanding on how build a webpage and share documents electronically (exporting Word to a PDF file, saving Word in an earlier Word format, sharing a link, saving a Word document as a Webpage, hyperlink, and so on). You will discover the mail merge feature (Mail Merge Wizard) and learn how create a newsletter (using WordArt, Nameplate, justify a paragraph, hyphenate a document, Pull-Quote, and more). You will use collaboration, integration, and chart tools and features (such as Tracked Changes, Show All Markup, linking an Excel Worksheet to a Word document, charting a Word table, apply Chart styles and elements, and so on). You will be able to create reference document (Caption, Screenshot, working with a Master Document, Outline view, and more). This course will conclude with introducing you to how to create an online form (such as specifying settings in Word, enter content in an online form, Developer Tab, Format Placeholder, and more).

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### **Office Skills**

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In this course, you will learn about the expectations of the workplace and the skills necessary to assist in the smooth operation of an office. You will be introduced to the principles and values of an ethical administrative professional, including diversity, discrimination, harassment and so on. You will gain an understanding of the importance of developing customer focus strategies and service skills, such as problem-solving skills, handling difficult situations and showing respect to customers. You will further develop communication skills, including verbal, nonverbal, writing and listening skills, as well as telecommunication (for example, networks, internet searches, and troubleshooting). You will be able to create and deliver effective presentations using visual aids. You will learn how to sort incoming and outgoing mail effectively, and manage reprographic equipment, such as laminators, binders, and shredders. This course covers how to maintain financial records, including financial statements and employee payroll procedures, as well as, managing physical and electronic records. You will become familiar with organizing face-to-face and virtual meetings, as well as conferences and other events. You will also learn how to coordinate business travel. Furthermore, you will complete indexing and filing exercises.

### **Bookkeeping Fundamentals**

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In this module you will explore fundamental bookkeeping principles and practices for small businesses. You will apply Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) to financial statements and demonstrate how each principle impacts the transactional recording and the business, both directly and indirectly. You will make journal entries and record transactions in the General Ledger. You will manage accounts receivable and accounts payable. You will track the use and dispensation of petty cash in journal entries. You will also calculate the correct amount to pay for taxes and remittance to the CRA. You will practice cross referencing for a bank reconciliation and correct any errors. By completing this module, you will attain the skills necessary to perform basic bookkeeping procedures and use basic bookkeeping terminology.

### **Business Law**

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A comprehensive survey course of Canadian law from a business perspective 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.

### **Law Office Procedures, Management and Accounting**

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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.

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### **Legal Ethics**

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This course explores the Professional Code of Conduct and the Uniform Trust Account Rules required for legal professionals practicing in the field. Students will also study ethics involved in client confidentiality as well as the importance of maintenance of the trust account.

### **Interviewing, Researching and Writing**

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The topics covered in this module 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. You will apply your practical knowledge by preparing a Case Brief and by researching a topic on which you will produce a legal memorandum. Additionally, you will learn to analyze a fact situation and use standard legal analysis methods such as IRAC (Issue, Rule, Application, Conclusion). You will also practice interviewing and other methods of fact gathering.

### **IT in the Law Office**

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This module introduces IT considerations of the legal office including voice dictation/transcription software. Additionally, there is a strong focus on privacy issues that have arisen with information technology and the digital age. Topics regarding metadata, privacy, Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), and eDiscovery are covered as they relate to the proper management and use of client documents and materials in the law office and in court settings. Students complete a Case Brief assignment on an issue related to digital privacy.

### **Civil Litigation**

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In this module students are introduced to the court system within the province. Subjects 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. 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 (i.e., 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 role of 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**

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This module offers an overview of statutory provisions, including the Divorce Act, and Provincial legislation governing the 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, and documents required to initiate family law proceedings under provincial legislation. Specific topics include court jurisdictions in family law matters, contested and uncontested family law proceedings.

### **Corporate and Commercial Law**

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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,

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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**

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This course is designed to equip you with the skills necessary to build your professional image in the workplace through a series of principles and strategies, such as implementing effective communication and collaboration, flexibility, resourcefulness, conflict management, as well as maintaining a professional attitude and appearance. You will build a personal brand, as it is intricately tied to your professional image by identifying your values, goals, strengths, weaknesses, personal mission statement, and more. You will discover the positive and negative impact of your social media presence and how it influences your professional image in the workplace. You will also explore self-care strategies and how to implement them into your daily routine to avoid workplace burnout and safeguard your mental health.

### **Wills and Estates**

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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 of 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**

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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 be given practical classroom assignments illustrating the role and functions of the paralegal 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.

### **Criminal Law and Summary Conviction Procedure**

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Students are introduced to the most typical aspects of criminal law as it affects legal administrative specialists and paralegals in their support of lawyers who practice criminal law. Rules and procedures governing criminal prosecutions will be reviewed which are applicable to the students' Province. Essential concepts in criminal law, including the actus reus and mens rea of criminal law offences, for both general and specific intent offences, will be examined. Legal defenses to criminal offences, including diminished capacity, drunkenness, insanity, and non-insane automatism, are discussed. Strict and absolute liability offences such as statutory and regulatory violations are reviewed. Emerging areas of criminal law, including regulation of the sex trade and legalization in Canada of marijuana use will be canvassed.

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### **Career Planning & Preparation - Level I**

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This module will introduce you to and provide practice in using the tools required for a successful job search. The concepts covered in this module will help you maintain a career-focused approach throughout your studies so that you are better prepared to conduct a job search after graduating. Specifically, you will learn how to identify your soft and hard skills and how to articulate your abilities in a clear and concise Elevator Pitch that will appeal to employers and resonate with industry contacts. You will learn about the job search resources available to you including using career websites, creating LinkedIn profiles, accessing the “hidden” job market, and networking. You will examine sample résumés and cover letters and begin the process of creating your own professional résumés and cover letters that align with current conventions for content, organization, and formatting. You will also learn about the role of references, thank you letters, workplace philosophies, and strategies for success including maintaining a professional image and using proper etiquette when communicating with potential employers and industry contacts.

An introduction to Occupational Health and Safety is also provided with specific focus on employees’ rights and responsibilities, workplace health and safety policy and programs, hazard identification and control, and safety training options such as WHIMIS and First Aid.

### **Career Planning & Preparation - Level II**

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This module builds on concepts and skills introduced in the Career Planning and Preparation Level 1 prerequisite module. In this subsequent module, you will update and refine your résumé and LinkedIn Profile. You will continue writing cover letters and learn the value of customizing cover letters to specific job postings. You will have the opportunity to apply this knowledge as you conduct a job search and write a cover letter tailored to an ideal job post. Through research, you will create a list of top employers and target current industry opportunities. You will learn about current methods for applying to job postings using technology. You will also gain an understanding of the job interview process, typical interview questions and possible responses, and expectations of both the interviewer and interviewee. In addition, you will engage in practical application of the interview process through role-plays. Topics such as negotiating salary, self-management, and on-the-job success for placements and post-graduate employment will be also covered.

### **Field Placement - Paralegal**

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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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