

Area: Behavioral & Social Sciences
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Degree: A.A. - Legal Assisting
 Certificates: Introduction to the Law and Legal Research
 Law Office Assistant
 Legal Assisting

Legal Assisting Degree

The Legal Assisting degree is a two year A.A. degree. The program includes general education requirements in addition to legal specialty classes. Legal courses cover basic substantive and procedural areas including civil litigation, legal research and legal writing, contracts and torts in preparation for an entry level position as a legal assistant. The associate degree program is in full compliance with California Business and Professions Code section 6450 regarding preparation for work in this field.

Career Opportunities

Career opportunities for Legal Assistants have an excellent outlook. According to the US Department of Labor's Job Outlook, legal assistant jobs are projected to grow faster than average through 2012. This translates to an increase of 21% to 35%.

Legal assistants find employment in both the State and Federal government as well as private practice and corporate settings.

Requirements for Degree		30 Units
LA 300	Introduction to Law and the American Legal System	3
LA 310	Civil Procedures and Litigation	3
LA 312	Torts and Personal Injury	3
LA 314	Contract Law for Legal Assistants	3
LA 320	Legal Research	3
LA 321	Legal Writing	3
<i>And a minimum of 12 units from the following:</i>		12

LA 330	Family Law and Procedure (3)
LA 332	Administrative Law and Procedure (3)
LA 334	Criminal Law and Procedure (3)
LA 340	Techniques of Interview (1)
LA 342	Evidence (3)
LA 350	Law Office Management (3)
LA 360	Corporations Law (3)
LA 362	Estate Planning and Probate Procedure (3)
LA 364	Landlord Tenant Law (3)
LA 366	Basic Bankruptcy Law (3)
LA 368	Workers' Compensation Law (3)
LA 497	Internship in Legal Assisting (1 - 4)

Associate Degree Requirements: The Legal Assisting Associate in Arts (A.A.) Degree may be obtained by completion of the required program, plus general education requirements, plus sufficient electives to meet a 60-unit total. See ARC graduation requirements.

Introduction to Law and Legal Research Certificate

This certificate is designed to meet the minimum educational requirements of the State of California for the position of Legal Assistant within the state employment structure. Completion of the two required courses with a grade of "C" or better will qualify the student for this certificate.

Career Opportunities

This certificate meets the required minimum education for the State of California for those who desire to qualify for Legal Assistant positions.

Requirements for Certificate		6 Units
LA 300	Introduction to Law and the American Legal System	3
LA 320	Legal Research	3

Law Office Assistant Certificate

This certificate provides the skills needed for entry-level clerical positions in law offices. The course work emphasizes workforce skills including an introduction to the use of terms particular to the legal field.

Career Opportunities

Typical career opportunities are entry-level clerical positions in a law office.

Requirements for Certificate		12-16 Units
LA 300	Introduction to Law and the American Legal System	3
LA 350	Law Office Management	3
BUSTEC 100	Keyboarding Skills (1-3)	1 - 3 ¹
or BUSTEC 300	Beginning Keyboarding/Applications (1-3)	
BUSTEC 122	Workplace Behavior and Communication Technologies	3
BUSTEC 305	Introduction to Office Technology	1
BUSTEC 310	Introduction to Word/Information Processing	1 - 3 ²

¹A total of 3 units from these courses must be taken.

²Must be taken for 3 units.

Legal Assisting Certificate

The Legal Assisting Certificate is a one-year course of study consisting of 30 units of legal specialty courses. Legal courses cover basic substantive and procedural areas including civil litigation, legal research and legal writing, contracts and torts in addition to electives within the program. The certificate program is in full compliance with California Business and Professions Code section 6450 regarding preparation for work in this field.

Career Opportunities

Career opportunities for Legal Assistants have an excellent outlook. According to the US Department of Labor's Job Outlook legal assistant jobs are projected to grow faster than average through 2012. This translates to an increase of 21% to 35%.

Legal Assistants find employment in both the State and Federal government as well as private practice and corporate settings.

Enrollment Eligibility

The student must possess an A.A. degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution to be eligible for the certificate.

Requirements for Certificate		30 Units
LA 300	Introduction to Law and the American Legal System	3
LA 310	Civil Procedures and Litigation	3
LA 312	Torts and Personal Injury	3
LA 314	Contract Law for Legal Assistants	3
LA 320	Legal Research	3
LA 321	Legal Writing	3
<i>And a minimum of 12 units from the following:</i>		12
LA 330	Family Law and Procedure (3)	
LA 332	Administrative Law and Procedure (3)	
LA 334	Criminal Law and Procedure (3)	
LA 340	Techniques of Interview (1)	
LA 342	Evidence (3)	
LA 350	Law Office Management (3)	
LA 360	Corporations Law (3)	
LA 362	Estate Planning and Probate Procedure (3)	
LA 364	Landlord Tenant Law (3)	
LA 366	Basic Bankruptcy Law (3)	
LA 368	Workers' Compensation Law (3)	
LA 497	Internship in Legal Assisting (1 - 4)	

LA 300 Introduction to Law and the American Legal System 3 Units

Advisory: ENGWR 102 or 103, and ENGRD 116 with a grade of "C" or better; OR ESLR 320 and ESLW 320 with a grade of "C" or better; OR placement through assessment process.

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 54 hours LEC

This is an introductory course to the American legal system, its history and function. It provides an overview of several important areas of law such as torts and crimes and the legal assistant's role in the system.

LA 310 Civil Procedures and Litigation 3 Units

Corequisite: LA 312 or 314.

Advisory: ENGWR 300 or ESLW 340.

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 54 hours LEC

This course is an introduction to the California legal system with emphasis on understanding the practical aspects of litigation and the proper procedures required by statutes and rules of court. The phases of California court procedure, including State and Federal constitutional limitations, jurisdiction, venue, pleadings, and motions will be covered. The course also includes the forms by which matters are submitted to the court system from pre-litigation through appeals.

LA 312 Torts and Personal Injury 3 Units

Corequisite: LA 300.

Advisory: ENGWR 300 or ESLW 340.

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 54 hours LEC

This course is an overview of substantive tort law as it applies to personal injury (PI) cases. It introduces tort concepts such as negligence, intent, and strict liability, including the elements required to prove liability and defenses available to litigants. This course covers pretrial procedures such as discovery, settlement preparation, and witness and trial preparation.

LA 314 Contract Law for Legal Assistants 3 Units

Corequisite: LA 300. Advisory: ENGWR 300 or ESLW 340.

Advisory: ENGWR 300 or ESLW 340.

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 54 hours LEC

This course provides the legal assistant with knowledge of basic contract principles, including formation, validity, defenses, rights of third parties, performance, breach, remedies and damages.

LA 320 Legal Research 3 Units

Advisory: ENGWR 300 or ESLW 340.

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 54 hours LEC

This course is designed to familiarize the legal assistant with the basic tools of legal research in both federal and California law, with emphasis on California materials. Location and use of primary and secondary sources will be studied. The elements of a court decision and how to brief a case will be studied.

LA 321 Legal Writing 3 Units

Prerequisite: LA 320, and ENGWR 300 or ESLW 340 with a grade of "C" or better.

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 54 hours LEC

This course is a continuation of LA 320. It includes the application of research methods to gather information which may be used in a variety of written products. Information will be synthesized into various documents typically used in the law office. Documents created may include interoffice memoranda, court briefs, and letters to clients.

LA 330 Family Law and Procedure 3 Units

Prerequisite: LA 300 with a grade of "C" or better.

Advisory: LA 320.

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 54 hours LEC

This course is designed to familiarize the legal assistant with California Family Law relating to dissolution procedures, property issues and non-marital relationships. Legal procedures, preparation of necessary forms and their significance will be emphasized.

LA 332 Administrative Law and Procedure 3 Units

Advisory: LA 300.

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 54 hours LEC

This course is designed to familiarize the legal assistant with administrative law and procedure in general with specific emphasis on California law and procedure.

LA 334 Criminal Law and Procedure 3 Units

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 54 hours LEC

This course provides the paralegal with a background in both substantive crimes and criminal procedure. It includes a detailed study of the operation of the criminal justice system, from arrest and filing of charges through trial, conviction and appeal.

LA 340 Techniques of Interview 1 Unit

Prerequisite: LA 300 with a grade of "C" or better.

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 18 hours LEC

This course provides general background information about basic communication and relates this information to the skills used by a legal assistant in interviewing clients and witnesses.

LA 342 Evidence 3 Units

Advisory: LA 310.

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 54 hours LEC

This course is designed to familiarize the legal assistant with the rules for the admission of evidence in federal and state courts.

LA 350 Law Office Management 3 Units

Prerequisite: LA 300 with a grade of "C" or better.

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 54 hours LEC

This course covers the legal assistant's role in law office management. Law office accounting, time and records management and communication skills are examined. Legal ethics, career development and coping with stress are also discussed.

LA 360 Corporations Law 3 Units

Advisory: LA 300; ENGWR 102 or ENGWR 103, and ENGRD 116 or ESLR 320, ESLW 103 or placement through assessment process.

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 54 hours LEC

This course introduces the legal assistant to corporation terminology and legal requirements governing corporations.

LA 362 Estate Planning and Probate Procedure 3 Units

Prerequisite: LA 300 and 320 with a grade of "C" or better.

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 54 hours LEC

This course is an introduction to estate planning and the manner in which property may be held and ways it can be transferred. Testate and intestate probate procedures will also be included.

LA 364 Landlord Tenant Law 3 Units

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 54 hours LEC

This course focuses on the most common types of landlord-tenant disputes. Litigation and non-litigation matters covered.

LA 366 Basic Bankruptcy Law 3 Units

Advisory: Legal Assisting 332; ENGWR 102 or ENGWR 103, and ENGRD 116 or ESLR 320, ESLW 320, or placement through assessment process.

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 54 hours LEC

This course serves as a basic primer related to the practical aspects of representing debtors or creditors within the bankruptcy system.

LA 368 Workers' Compensation Law 3 Units

Advisory: LA 300 and LA 312.

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 54 hours LEC

This course provides an overview of the Workers' Compensation Law in California. The focus will be on the procedural aspects of handling a Workers' Compensation claim from both the applicant's side and the defense side.

LA 497 Internship in Legal Assisting 2-4 Units

Prerequisite: LA 300, 310, and 320 with a grade of "C" or better.

Corequisite: Maintain a minimum of seven (7) units.

Course Transferable to CSU

Hours: 18 hours LEC; 60-225 hours LAB

This is a course of supervised work experience in law firms or public agencies available to legal assisting students. May be taken twice for credit for a maximum of 4 units.