

Legal Studies (MA)

This program is offered by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. It is available online, at the St. Louis home campus, the Gateway campus, online (asynchronous) and via Live Virtual (100% synchronous modality).

Program Description

The coursework for the master of arts (MA) in legal studies is designed to provide students with a broad understanding of the legal environment in which individuals, businesses and the judiciary operates. This degree should be attractive to those individuals who need additional legal knowledge to function more effectively (for example, managers, teachers, government employees and legal assistants). The program in legal studies does not prepare students for the practice of law, and its graduates are not eligible for admission to the bar.

MA degree-seeking students with a declared major in legal studies may seek, concurrently with the degree, a certificate in paralegal studies. All of the coursework is applied toward both the degree and the certificate. To gain the certificate, students must pay a second graduation fee.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the program, students will be able to:

- Utilize critical thinking strategies for legal reasoning and analysis.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the Code of Professional Responsibility to guide professional behaviors and decision-making.
- Integrate the skills and knowledge necessary for understanding legal issues working from both theoretical and practical applications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the essential goals of legal researching, problem solving and logic as applied to legal writing.
- Evaluate legal information to be used in effective written communication for practical problems encountered in a legal environment.
- Analyze the significant role that legal assistants have in the legal world.
- Apply advanced legal knowledge and skills in legal practice.

Program Curriculum

The 39 credit hours required for the MA degree in legal studies must include the following courses:

- LEGL 5000 Introduction to Legal Studies (Requisite Course) (3 hours)
- LEGL 5100 Jurisprudence (3 hours)
- LEGL 5300 Ethics for the Legal Professional (3 hours)
- LEGL 5260 Methods of Legal Research and Writing I (3 hours)
- LEGL 5270 Methods of Legal Research and Writing II (3 hours)
- LEGL 5400 Anglo-American Legal History (3 hours)
- LEGL 5450 American Constitutional Law (3 hours)
- LEGL 5470 Civil Actions (3 hours)
- LEGL 5480 Criminal Actions (3 hours)
- LEGL 5490 Advanced Topics in Law (6 hours)
- LEGL 5800 Computerized Legal Research (3 hours)
- LEGL 6000 Research and Writing Project (3 hours)

If a substitution has been approved for a required course, the student must choose either LEGL 5850 Advanced Legal Writing, LEGL 5550 Paralegal Clinical Studies, or an additional LEGL

5490 Advanced Topics in Law course. Courses from the Legal Studies Study Abroad Program may be used as substitution as well.

The required courses and electives listed in this core may be taken as directed studies, subject to the conditions stated in Directed Studies under the Academic Policies section of this catalog.

Note: A legal assistant or paralegal is a person, qualified by education, training, or work experience who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible. Paralegals or legal assistants may not provide legal services directly to the public, except as permitted by law. Webster University's St. Louis area paralegal programs have been approved by the American Bar Association.

Admission

See the Admission section of this catalog for general admission requirements. Students interested in applying must submit their application online at www.webster.edu/apply. Transcripts should be sent from your institution electronically to transcripts@webster.edu. If this service is not available, send transcripts to:

Office of Admission
Webster University
470 E. Lockwood Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63119

Advancement to Candidacy

Students are admitted to their graduate program upon completion of all admission requirements. Students are advanced to candidacy status after successfully completing 12 credit hours with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. In specialized programs, courses required as prerequisites to the program do not count toward the 12 credit hours required for advancement.