

Legal Studies (BA)

This program is offered by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences/Law, Crime and Social Justice Department. It is available in person at the St. Louis main campus, via Live Virtual (synchronous) and via hybrid online (asynchronous and synchronous via Live Virtual).

Program Description

The bachelor of arts in legal studies is approved by the American Bar Association (ABA) and is the only ABA program in the St. Louis area. The degree is designed to meet the ever-changing needs of the paralegal profession and prepares students to enter the legal profession. We offer a solid, broad-based education including legal specialty courses. Students will learn both the theoretical and practical aspects of the law as they gain paralegal knowledge and an understanding of the ethical framework in which legal professionals function.

BA 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:

- Demonstrate the fundamentals of legal reasoning and analysis.
- Comprehend the Code of Professional Responsibility to be able to address ethical dilemmas faced by lawyers and legal assistants.
- Master the skills and knowledge necessary for understanding legal issues working from both theoretical and practical applications.
- Explain the essential goals of legal researching, legal and logical reasoning and begin to develop legal writing skills.
- Be able to apply the theory of legal research and writing to practical problems encountered in a legal environment.
- Distinguish the significant role that legal assistants/paralegals have in the legal world and the practical skills necessary to function in it.

Degree Requirements

For information on the general requirements for a degree, see Baccalaureate Degree Requirements under the Academic Policies and Information section of this catalog.

- 51 required credit hours
- Students must take at least nine (9) semester hours of required Legal Specialty courses through synchronous instruction.
- Applicable University Global Citizenship Program hours
- Electives

Curriculum

The 51 credit hours required for the legal studies major include the following:

- LEGL 2080 Topics in Law (3 hours)
- LEGL 2400 Introduction to Law (3 hours)
or POLT 2400 Introduction to Law (3 hours)
- LEGL 3000 Legal Ethics (3 hours)
- LEGL 3490 Civil Procedure Law (3 hours)
- LEGL 3500 Criminal Litigation (3 hours)

- LEGL 4460 Methods of Legal Research and Writing I (3 hours)
- LEGL 4470 Methods of Legal Research and Writing II (3 hours)
- LEGL 4480 Computerized Legal Research (3 hours)
- LEGL 4490 Advanced Paralegal Procedures (3 hours)
- LEGL 4810 Tort Law Practice (3 hours)
- LEGL 4820 Contract Law Practice (3 hours)
- LEGL 4830 Property Law Practice (3 hours)
- LEGL 4840 Corporations and Business Organizations (3 hours)
- LEGL 4850 Computers and the Law (3 hours)
- LEGL 4910 Senior Overview (3 hours)

6 credit hours from the following:

- LEGL 4600 Legal Studies Seminar (3 hours)
(may be repeated for credit if content differs)
- LEGL 4800 Advanced Topics in Law (3-6 hours)
(may be repeated for credit if content differs)
- LEGL 4900 Paralegal Clinical Studies (3-6 hours)
(may be repeated for credit if content differs)
- INTL 2030 International Law (3 hours)
- POLT 3010 American Constitutional Law (3 hours)
- POLT 3020 Civil Liberties and the Law (3 hours)

Note: A 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 legal studies and paralegal programs have been approved by the American Bar Association.

Special Requirements

Courses completed with a grade below a C- do not count toward fulfilling the specific course requirements of the major.

Transfer Policy: A minimum of 18 of the 51 required credit hours must be taken at Webster University. A student may obtain advanced standing for legal specialty courses through the transfer of credits from other academic institutions if that program is approved by the American Bar Association (ABA) or in substantial compliance, regionally accredited and otherwise meets the standards established by Webster University. If a student has earned credit from an institution that is not ABA approved, the program director reviews student transcripts and a course description from the institution which awarded the credits and makes a determination as to 1) whether the institution which awarded the credits is accredited at a level substantially equivalent to Webster University; 2) whether the credits were awarded as part of a legal studies or paralegal program substantially the equivalent to the Webster University's Legal Studies or Paralegal Studies Programs; 3) whether the specific course appears to cover substantially the same material, including practical assignments; and 4) whether the specific course involves the same number of semester hours as the equivalent course at Webster University. In the event the program director is satisfied, an acceptance/transfer of credits is appropriate under these criteria, the program director generates a course substitution form indicating the source of the credits and the legal specialty course for which it should be accepted as credit and the reason for that recommendation. The award of legal specialty credits through examination or portfolio is **not** accepted.