

PROFESSIONAL LEGAL STUDIES, BACHELOR OF ARTS (6000)

Program Coordinator

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The Professional Legal Studies Program prepares paralegals, also called legal assistants, to work with lawyers in a wide range of professional settings and perform tasks that include legal research, legal writing and document preparation, information gathering, litigation support, legal technology support, and office management. Paralegals are an integral part of the legal process enhancing the delivery of legal services and access to justice.

Paralegals shall not engage in the unauthorized practice of law as proscribed by Kentucky law and the Supreme Court Rules (SCR 3.130 [5.5]) and must be appropriately supervised by a lawyer to ensure the paralegal's conduct is compatible with the professional and ethical standards of the practice (SCR 3.130 [5.3]).

The objectives of the Professional Legal Studies Program are:

1. To create, implement, and maintain a strong, flexible program directed to the quality education of occupationally-competent paralegals;
2. To provide a paralegal education program that leads to employment of its graduates by a wide range of employers;
3. To provide paralegals with a well-rounded, balanced education founded on a beneficial mix of general education, theory, and practical courses stressing understanding and reasoning rather than rote learning of facts;
4. To support federal, Kentucky and local Rules of Procedure and general principles of ethical legal practice, professional responsibility, the prohibitions against the unauthorized practice of law by non-lawyers, and the use and supervision of paralegals by lawyers;
5. To provide an educational program that is responsive to the varied needs of the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the region and contributes to the overall advancement of the legal profession and access to justice;
6. To provide a program which instills respect for the legal profession and its foundations, institutions, and quest for justice; and
7. To maintain equality of opportunity in the educational program without discrimination or segregation on the grounds of race, color, religion, natural origin, gender, age, disability or economic need.

Credits from other accredited institutions of higher education may be transferred and applied toward the degree. An official transcript from each such college or university attended is required as a part of the admission process. Postsecondary credit will be evaluated on a course-by-course basis for acceptance and applicability to the Program.

General law and legal-specialty course credits will be accepted only from paralegal programs approved by the American Bar Association or programs in substantial compliance with the ABA guidelines.

The Professional Legal Studies Program (PLS) is designed to provide students with an interdisciplinary educational experience integrating knowledge and skills from multiple subjects including law, history,

sociology, political science, technology and business. The PLS Program requires 42 credit hours and leads to a Bachelor of Arts degree. Degrees will be awarded to those students who complete all requirements with an overall grade point average of 2.0 (out of 4.0) and receive a grade of "C" or better in all PLS courses.

Program Requirements (42 hours)

A baccalaureate degree requires a minimum of 120 unduplicated semester hours. More information can be found at www.wku.edu/registrar/degree_certification.php. (https://www.wku.edu/registrar/degree_certification.php)

Students who began WKU in the Fall 2014 and thereafter should review the Colonnade requirements located at: <https://www.wku.edu/colonnade/colonnaderequirements.php>. (<https://www.wku.edu/colonnade/colonnaderequirements.php>)

The Professional Legal Studies major is designed to provide students with an interdisciplinary educational experience integrating knowledge and skills from multiple subjects including law, history, sociology, political science, technology and business. The PLS degree requires 120 credit hours and leads to a Bachelor of Arts degree. A second major or minor is required. Degrees will be awarded to those students who complete all requirements with an overall grade point average of 2.0 (out of 4.0) and receive a grade of "C" or better in all PLS courses. Students must complete nine hours of legal specialty courses in synchronous format.

Code	Title	Hours
Core Courses		
PLS 225	Introduction to Law	3
PLS 200	Legal Ethics	3
PLS 250	Legal Research and Writing I	3
PLS 283	Property Law	3
PLS 291	Criminal Law and Procedure	3
PLS 296	Family Law	3
PS 326	Constitutional Law	3
or PLS 324	Women and the Law	
or PLS 375	Comparative Legal Systems	
PLS 393	Civil Procedure	3
PLS 450	Legal Research and Writing II	3
PLS 499	Internship in Paralegal Studies	3
Electives (12 hours)		
Select 12 hours from the following:		12
PLS 280	Contract Law	
PLS 282	Tort Law	
PLS 294	Administrative Practice and Procedures	
PLS 324	Women and the Law	
PLS 350	EVIDENCE	
PLS 360	Debtor Creditor Relations	
PLS 375	Comparative Legal Systems	
PLS 381	Alternative Dispute Resolution Methods and Practices	
PLS 392	Corporate Law	
PLS 395	Estate Planning and Administration	
CRIM 330	Criminology	
CRIM 332	Juvenile Delinquency	

CRIM 380	Punishment and Society
CRIM 432	Sociology of Criminal Law
PS 220	Judicial Process
PS 304	State Government
PS 311	Public Policy
PS 316	The Legislative Process
PS 326	Constitutional Law
PS 355	International Organization and Law
PS 412	Kentucky Government and Politics
HIST 445	American Legal History to 1865
HIST 446	American Legal History Since 1865

Or an advisor approved course

Total Hours 42

Finish in Four Plan

First Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
ENG 100		3 ENG 200	3
MATH 109 or MATH 183		3 HIST 101 or HIST 102	3
PLS 225		3 COMM 145	3
World Language Requirement I		3 World Language Requirement II	3
PLS 200		3 PLS 283	3
	15		15

Second Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
Colonnade: Arts & Humanities		3 Colonnade: Natural & Physical Sciences	3
PS 110 (recommended for Colonnade: Social and Behavioral Sciences)		3 PLS 296	3
PLS 291		3 PLS 450	3
PLS 250		3 2nd Major/Minor Course	3
2nd Major/Minor Course		3 2nd Major/Minor Course	3
	15		15

Third Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
Colonnade: Natural & Physical Sciences with lab		3-4 Colonnade: Connections (Social & Cultural)	3
PLS Elective (1 of 4)		3 PLS 393	3
PLS 324, PLS 375, or PS 326		3 PLS Elective (2 of 4)	3
ENG 300		3 2nd Major/Minor Course	3
2nd Major/Minor Course		3 2nd Major/Minor Course	3
	15-16		15

Fourth Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
Colonnade: Connections (Local to Global)		3 PLS Elective (4 of 4)	3
Colonnade: Connections (Systems)		3 2nd Major/Minor Course	3
PLS Elective (3 of 4)		3 2nd Major/Minor Course	3

2nd Major/Minor Course	3 2nd Major/Minor Course	3
2nd Major/Minor Course	3 PLS 499	3
	15	15

Total Hours 120-121