

LEGAL STUDIES

The Legal Studies Program at Mount Wachusett Community College provides students with three distinct opportunities: to earn a Paralegal Certificate (LAWC), an Associate of Science in Legal Studies (LAW) for immediate career entry, or to graduate and transfer to a baccalaureate program through the Liberal Arts and Sciences Pre-Law Track (LAWT). During the course of study, students will develop competencies in substantive and procedural law, excellent communication skills, and the ability to think analytically and logically.

LEGAL STUDIES DEGREE (LAW)

This degree prepares students for a paralegal position in a legal setting, such as a law office, courthouse, administrative agency, corporate in-house counsel office, or insurance company. Students will learn to gather and analyze facts relevant to legal disputes, perform legal research, draft legal documents, and prepare witnesses and evidence for presentation at legal proceedings. An effective paralegal must have a firm grasp of both substantive and procedural law, excellent communication skills, and the ability to think analytically and logically. This program provides the student with the skills necessary to perform specifically delegated, substantive legal work under the supervision of a lawyer.

		Credits
Year 1		
Fall		
LAW 101	Introduction To Law (Formerly PLS 101)	3
LAW 104	Introduction To Family Law (Formerly PLS 104)	3
ENG 101	College Writing I	3
HIS 121	History Of The Constitution	3
BUS 211	Business Law I	3
Spring		
ENG 102	College Writing II	3
MAT 143	Statistics	3
LAW 110	Litigation (Formerly PLS 110)	3
LAW 250	Legal Research and Writing I (Formerly PLS 250)	4
General Elective ¹		3
Year 2		
Fall		
LAW 262	Estate Planning (Formerly PLS 262) (or General Elective) ¹	3
POL 211	Introduction to American Government and Politics	3
Health Elective ²		2-4
Restrictive Electives (see list below)		3
General Elective ¹		3
Spring		
LAW 106	Introduction To Real Estate Law (Formerly PLS 106)	3
LAW 270	Legal Studies Seminar (Formerly PLS 270)	3
SPC 113	Speech (formerly THE113)	3
Science Elective ³		3-4
Restrictive Elective (see list below)		3
Total Credits:		60-63

¹ General Electives: See General Electives (<http://catalog.mwcc.edu/electivecoursesbyabbreviation/>) exceptions.

² Health Electives: See Elective Courses by Abbreviation (<http://catalog.mwcc.edu/electivecoursesbyabbreviation/>).

³ Science Electives: See Elective Courses by Abbreviation (<http://catalog.mwcc.edu/electivecoursesbyabbreviation/>). A four-credit lab science is strongly recommended for transfer.

Restrictive Electives

		Credits
LAW (any course)		
ACC 101	Principles Of Accounting I	3
ACC 102	Principles Of Accounting II	3

ACC 224	Taxation	3
BUS 212	Business Law II	3
CIS 121	Spreadsheet Applications	3
CIS 123	Microcomputer Database Management	3
CJU 133	Criminal Law	3
CJU 134	Criminal Procedure	3
ECO 101	Macroeconomics	3
ECO 102	Microeconomics	3
ENG 106	Technical Writing	3
ENG 239	Creative Writing I	3
ENG 240	Creative Writing II	3
HIS 121	History Of The Constitution	3
MKT 142	Marketing	3
POL 250	Political Thought In America	3
PSY 246	Psychology And The Law	3

See Legal Studies program student learning outcomes and technical standards.

Student Success Tips

Students enrolling in the Paralegal Practicum must contact the program coordinator for approval and available options by calling 978-630-9359.

Transfer Options

For transfer options, please click here (<http://catalog.mwcc.edu/academicresources/#transferinformationtext>). It is recommended that you also consult with your academic advisor.

Special Requirements

Technical standards must be met with or without accommodations.

Career Options/Earning Potential

For career options, please click here (<https://mwcc.lightcastcc.com/programs/legal-studies-including-paralegal-associate-degree/166957/?region=North%20Central%20MA/Southwest%20NH&radius=>).

PRE-LAW TRACK (LAWT)**A DEGREE IN LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES**

LAWT is designed for those students seeking to transfer to a four-year institution in a pre-law curriculum. This track of study is most appropriate for a student desiring to enter law school after earning a bachelor's degree. Strong research, writing and analytical skills, along with substantive legal knowledge, are essential outcomes for students completing this field of study.

Year 1

		Credits
Fall		
LAW 101	Introduction To Law	3
BUS 211	Business Law I	3
ENG 101	College Writing I	3
LAW 104	Introduction To Family Law	3
HIS 121	History Of The Constitution	3
Spring		
Lab Science Elective ¹		4
LAW 110	Litigation	3
LAW 250	Legal Research and Writing I	4
MAT 143	Statistics	3
Year 2		
Fall		
CJU 134	Criminal Procedure	3
ENG 102	College Writing II	3
Lab Science Elective ¹		4
Behavioral Social Science Elective ²		3
PHL 250	Moral Philosophy	3
Spring		
PHL 110	Logic	3
Literature Elective ³		3
HIS 105	History Of World Civilization I	3
SPC 113	Speech	3
POL 211	Introduction to American Government and Politics	3
Total Credits:		60

¹ Lab Science Electives (must be a 4-credit course): See Elective Courses by Abbreviation (<http://catalog.mwcc.edu/electivecoursesbyabbreviation/>).

² Behavioral Social Science Electives: See Elective Courses by Abbreviation (<http://catalog.mwcc.edu/electivecoursesbyabbreviation/>).

³ Literature Electives: See Elective Courses by Abbreviation (<http://catalog.mwcc.edu/electivecoursesbyabbreviation/>).

See Legal Studies program student learning outcomes and technical standards.

Transfer Options

For transfer options, please click here (<http://catalog.mwcc.edu/academicresources/#transferinformationtext>). It is recommended that you also consult with your academic advisor.

Special Requirements

Technical standards must be met with or without accommodations.

PARALEGAL CERTIFICATE (LAWC)

Students will learn the fundamental skills necessary for an entry-level position in a legal setting such as a law office, courthouse, administrative agency, corporate in-house counsel office, or insurance company. This certificate introduces students to the paralegal field, to several areas of substantive law, and to the basics of legal analysis and research.

Year 1		Credits
Fall		
ENG 101	College Writing I	3
BUS 211	Business Law I	3
HIS 121	History Of The Constitution	3
LAW 101	Introduction To Law (Formerly PLS 101)	3
LAW 104	Introduction To Family Law (Formerly PLS 104)	3
Spring		
Restrictive Electives (see list below)		6
LAW 110	Litigation (Formerly PLS 110)	3
LAW 250	Legal Research and Writing I (Formerly PLS 250)	4
Total Credits:		28

Restrictive Electives

		Credits
LAW (any course)		
ACC 101	Principles Of Accounting I	3
ACC 102	Principles Of Accounting II	3
ACC 224	Taxation	3
BUS 212	Business Law II	3
CIS 121	Spreadsheet Applications	3
CIS 123	Microcomputer Database Management	3
CJU 133	Criminal Law	3
CJU 134	Criminal Procedure	3
ECO 101	Macroeconomics	3
ECO 102	Microeconomics	3
ENG 106	Technical Writing	3
ENG 239	Creative Writing I	3
ENG 240	Creative Writing II	3
HIS 121	History Of The Constitution	3
MKT 142	Marketing	3
POL 250	Political Thought In America	3
PSY 246	Psychology And The Law	3

See Legal Studies program student learning outcomes and technical standards.

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PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR LAW, LAWT AND LAWC

Upon graduation from this program, students shall have the ability to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of substantive and procedural legal principles.
- Perform legal analysis, research, and writing.
- Develop effective communication skills (oral and written).
- Use computer technology as it applies to law.
- Exhibit administrative and employment skills applicable in a law office setting.
- Perform pre-trial tasks including interviewing, client intake, basic investigation, and drafting of pre-trial discovery.
- Draft basic legal documents such as wills, mortgages, and leases.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS¹ FOR LAWC, LAW AND LAWC

¹ For general information about technical standards and accommodation, see Technical Standards. (<http://catalog.mwcc.edu/academicresources/academicandgradingpolicies/technicalstandards/>)

Students entering into this program must be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Comprehend textbook material at the 11th grade level.
- Communicate and assimilate information verbally and in a printed format.
- Gather, analyze, and draw conclusions from data.
- Complete forms using a typewriter or similar office machine.
- Input data into a computer.
- Comprehend data from a computer screen, transcribe notes (dictation), and conduct library and Internet research for a minimum of a three-hour period of time.

LAW 101. Introduction To Law. 3 Credits.

This course introduces students to basic legal concepts, principles, and procedures. It is designed to provide students with an understanding of the structure of the U.S. legal system, including the role of the judicial, legislative, and executive branches; the history of law in the United States; the role of attorneys, paralegals, law enforcement, and other legal professionals; basic categories of law; litigation principles; and alternative dispute resolution. In addition, students will be introduced to a wide variety of ethical standards that apply in the legal community. Formerly offered as PLS 101. Prerequisites: ENG 098, FYE 101, RDG 098, or placement.

LAW 104. Introduction To Family Law. 3 Credits.

This course reviews the substantive and procedural law relative to divorce, adoption, guardianship, custody, and other family law matters within the jurisdiction of the Probate Court. Topics include the legal status of children, legal rights of women, and illegitimacy and paternity proceedings, as well as divorce procedures and child custody and support issues. Students will be introduced to contract law as its principles are specifically applied to ante nuptial agreements, separation agreements, and surrogacy agreements. Related areas of law such as juvenile, criminal, and tort law are also discussed, as are relevant administrative agency regulations. Legal concepts will be applied to particular factual situations, thus developing and enhancing critical skills such as analysis. Formerly offered as PLS 104. Prerequisites: ENG 098, FYE 101, RDG 098, or placement.

LAW 106. Introduction To Real Estate Law. 3 Credits.

This course familiarizes students with the substantive area of real estate and property law. Fundamental legal principles are discussed in the context of business practices in the real estate industry. Topics include purchase and sales agreements, mortgages, leases, recording, easements, and deeds. The traditional law of property rights is discussed as well as recent developments in statutory and case law. Formerly offered as PLS 106. Prerequisites: ENG 098, FYE 101, RDG 098, or placement.

LAW 110. Litigation. 3 Credits.

This course introduces students to the law office and the steps and tasks involved in civil litigation, the process in which one person sues another person in a court of law to enforce a right or seek a remedy such as financial compensation. Students will learn the role of the litigation paralegal throughout an entire case. This includes investigation and gathering of facts, discovery, trial support, and judgment enforcement. Study will be made of the procedural rules that facilitate the fair resolution of conflicts and the substantive law that forms the basis of the rights and remedies protected by the civil litigation system. Formerly offered as PLS 110. Prerequisites: ENG 098, FYE 101, RDG 098, or placement.

LAW 230. The Law Of Torts. 3 Credits.

This course introduces students to the fundamentals of torts law and civil wrongs that have caused harm to person or property. Specific causes of action, elements of torts, and prima facie cases are discussed in the context of the three categories of torts: routine personal injury; high-stakes personal injury; and mass latent-injury. An emphasis will be placed on the development of analytical skills and the application of legal concepts to particular factual situations. Formerly offered as PLS 230. Prerequisites: ENG 098, FYE 101, RDG 098, or placement.

LAW 250. Legal Research and Writing I. 4 Credits.

This course introduces students to the basics of legal research and writing. Students will learn how to analyze a problem, develop a research strategy, access information using primary and secondary sources, and draft legal documents. A functional approach to research is stressed and emphasis is placed on development of the skills necessary to find and understand case law, statutes, administrative regulations, and constitutional law. Students will be introduced to both the computer-aided research, including the Internet and CD systems, and book-based research. Formerly offered as PLS 250. Prerequisite: ENG 101.

LAW 262. Estate Planning. 3 Credits.

This course is an introduction to wills, trusts, and estates. Topics include intestacy, estate administration, estate taxes, and the use of wills and trusts to plan disposition of one's estate. The probate process including the probating of a will, contested proceedings, and administration of an estate is studied. Students will draft associated legal documents such as wills and specialized trusts. Formerly offered as PLS 262. Prerequisites: ENG 098, FYE 101, RDG 098, or placement.

LAW 265. Paralegal Practicum. 3 Credits.

Students will be placed in paralegal work environments such as private law firms, courthouses, state and local government agencies, or state and municipal government offices depending on their area of interest. In exchange for credit, students will complete a 120-hour practicum. Students will participate in a variety of activities normally associated with paralegal employment in the specific field chosen by the student. This typically includes obtaining client intake information, performing litigation support, conducting legal research, and preparing legal documents such as mortgages and deeds. Formerly offered as PLS 265. Prerequisites: ENG 101, LAW 250 or permission of division dean.

LAW 270. Legal Studies Seminar. 3 Credits.

This course is structured to help students integrate knowledge from across the legal studies curriculum in preparation for the transition to working as paralegals or continuing their legal education. Students will integrate and apply knowledge related to substantive and procedural legal topics from an interdisciplinary perspective. Students will integrate and apply knowledge, theory, and understanding developed from their previous coursework in the legal studies program. Students will complete at least one major research and writing project that will require at least one oral class presentation. Formerly offered as PLS 270. Prerequisites: BUS 211, ENG 102, LAW 101, LAW 104, LAW 110, LAW 250.