

Winona State University

Legal Studies Program Handbook

Legal Studies, B.S.

Mitchell Hamline 3+3 Program

Paralegal Certificate

This Handbook is a formal notice of the rights and responsibilities offered to you as a member of the Legal Studies Program of Winona State University. Compliance with these guidelines is mandatory for all students enrolled in the Legal Studies Program. Consent to comply with these policies is conferred upon declaration of the major or enrollment in the certificate program. Students are responsible for reviewing the Handbook and remaining current with all changes.

Contents

Contents.....	2
Introduction to Legal Studies	3
Programs within the Legal Studies Program.....	3
Related Programs and Pre-Law Advising	3
Legal Studies Programs and Learning Objectives	4
Legal Studies, B.S.	4
Mitchell Hamline School of Law 3+3 Program	4
Paralegal Certificate	5
Program Requirements	5
Transfer of Legal Specialty Coursework.....	6
Eligibility to Enroll in Legal Specialty Courses.....	6
Synchronous Instruction Requirement	6
Course Requirements, Expectations of Academic Progress, and Graduation Requirements	6
Portfolio and Internship Guidelines	7
The Portfolio.....	7
Submission Requirements	7
LGLS 380: Legal Studies Internship.....	7
The Internship.....	7
Prerequisites	7
Credit Hours	8
Academic Advising	8
Student Conduct	8
Legal Service	9
Academic Integrity	9
Academic Integrity Violations	9
Academic Integrity and the Use of Artificial Intelligence	10
Consequences for Academic Violations.....	10
Respect for Legal Ethics and Student Conduct	10
Core Ethical Principles.....	10
Reporting Ethical Violations.....	11
Associated Clubs and Student Organizations.....	11

Introduction to Legal Studies

Legal Studies is an interdisciplinary academic field that explores the principles, practices, and structures of law, the legal system, and the role of law in society. Throughout this program, students engage in coursework that explores topics such as constitutional law, criminal law, civil procedure, ethics, legal research, and writing. By the end of the program, students are equipped to enter law school, pursue careers in legal support roles such as paralegals or legal assistants, or engage in policy-related fields.

The goal of the Legal Studies B.S. program is to prepare students for careers in law, public policy, or related fields by providing them with a comprehensive understanding of the legal system, critical thinking skills, and the practical knowledge needed for professional success. Students gain knowledge of and experience with legal systems and institutions. This includes careers working for law firms, government agencies, insurance companies, banking institutions, and nonprofit agencies. It also serves as excellent preparation for law school.

The WSU Legal Studies Program is a four-year paralegal program approved by the American Bar Association.

Note: Graduates of the program may not provide legal services directly to the public except under the supervision of a practicing attorney or as provided by law.

Programs within the Legal Studies Program

WSU offers the following ABA-approved Legal Studies program options:

Legal Studies Major: This program prepares students for careers in law firms, government agencies, corporate institutions, or as paralegals. It emphasizes skills in legal research, writing, and advocacy. The Legal Studies B.S. is an ABA-approved paralegal education program. Students who complete the major earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Legal Studies. Students can learn more by exploring the Legal Studies B.S. in the WSU Catalog.

Mitchell Hamline 3+3 Program: This accelerated pathway allows students to earn a Bachelor of Science from WSU and a Juris Doctor from Mitchell Hamline School of Law in six years instead of seven. After completing the required coursework at WSU, students apply to Mitchell Hamline School of Law and use qualifying first-year law courses to complete the final year of their bachelor's degree. Interested students should consult the Director of Legal Studies early in their academic careers. Students can learn more by exploring the 3+3 Program with Mitchell Hamline School of Law in the WSU Catalog.

Paralegal Certificate: The 24-credit Paralegal Certificate is an ABA-approved certificate program. It equips students with practical skills for paralegal roles, including legal research, writing, civil and criminal procedure, law-office technology, and professional ethics. Completion of the program results in an academic certificate from Winona State University; it does not constitute professional certification by the American Bar Association or another certifying organization. Students can learn more by exploring the Paralegal Certificate in the WSU Catalog.

Related Programs and Pre-Law Advising

The Law and Society major and the Pre-Law Pathway are housed within the Department of History and Legal Studies but are not part of the ABA-approved Legal Studies paralegal program. Students who wish to learn more about Law and Society may contact Dr. Matthew Lungerhausen, Chair of the Department of

History and Legal Studies. Students interested in the Pre-Law Pathway or preparation for law school may contact WSU's Pre-Law Advisors, Dr. Gregory Richard and Dr. Matthew Bosworth.

Legal Studies Programs and Learning Objectives

Legal Studies, B.S.

The Bachelor of Science in Legal Studies program provides students with the practical legal training, professional competencies, and ethical foundation necessary to work effectively as paralegals and legal professionals in law-related settings. Consistent with the expectations of American Bar Association-approved paralegal education programs, the program emphasizes substantive legal knowledge, legal research and writing, analytical reasoning, professional communication, legal technology, case management, and ethical practice under attorney supervision.

Students develop hands-on skills in legal research, document drafting, legal procedure, and law-office practice while preparing for careers as paralegals, legal assistants, compliance specialists, court and administrative personnel, victim advocates, and related legal professionals. The program also provides strong preparation for students interested in law school or other graduate and professional study.

- 1. U.S. Legal System Knowledge**

Students will explain and apply substantive knowledge of the U.S. legal and constitutional system, including sources of law, court structures, and legal procedures.

- 2. Legal Research and Analysis**

The student shall demonstrate the ability to research, analyze and organize complex legal issues..

- 3. Communication Skills**

Students will synthesize complex facts and relevant law to draft accurate, well-organized legal documents and communicate legal facts and arguments effectively in oral and written formats.

- 4. Legal Content, Procedure, and Substance**

The student shall demonstrate the ability to synthesize complex facts into ordered legal documents

- 5. Paralegal Professionalism and Ethical Conduct**

The student will be able to demonstrate knowledge of and be able to organize and manage a law office and interact effectively with colleagues and clients while demonstrating knowledge of and compliance with the ethical obligations that guide paralegal conduct.

Mitchell Hamline School of Law 3+3 Program

The 3+3 program combines undergraduate legal studies education with the first year of law school to provide students with practical paralegal training, advanced legal reasoning skills, and accelerated preparation for the legal profession. Consistent with the expectations of American Bar Association-approved paralegal education programs, students develop competencies in legal research and writing, legal analysis, professional communication, legal technology, case management, and ethical practice under attorney supervision.

Students graduate with substantial preparation for careers as paralegals and legal professionals while also completing the foundational coursework associated with the first year of law school. The program is especially designed for students intending to continue toward the Juris Doctor degree and careers as attorneys.

- 1. U.S. Legal System Knowledge**

Students will explain and apply substantive knowledge of the U.S. legal and constitutional system, including sources of law, court structures, and legal procedures.

2. **Legal Research and Analysis**

The student shall demonstrate the ability to research, analyze and organize complex legal issues..

3. **Communication Skills**

Students will synthesize complex facts and relevant law to draft accurate, well-organized legal documents and communicate legal facts and arguments effectively in oral and written formats.

4. **Legal Content, Procedure, and Substance**

The student shall demonstrate the ability to synthesize complex facts into ordered legal documents

5. **Paralegal Professionalism and Ethical Conduct**

The student will be able to demonstrate knowledge of and be able to organize and manage a law office and interact effectively with colleagues and clients while demonstrating knowledge of and compliance with the ethical obligations that guide paralegal conduct.

6. **Advanced Legal Reasoning and Professional Preparation**

Students will evaluate complex legal problems through advanced legal reasoning, doctrinal analysis, and professional communication consistent with the expectations of first-year law study.

Paralegal Certificate

The 24-credit Paralegal Certificate provides focused preparation for paralegal and legal-support work. Students build foundational knowledge and practical skills in legal research, document preparation, legal procedure, law-office technology, and professional ethics under attorney supervision.

1. **Law in America**

Students will explain fundamental features of the U.S. legal and constitutional system, including basic legal procedures, sources of law and court structures.

2. **Legal Research and Analysis**

The student shall demonstrate the ability to research, analyze and organize complex legal issues..

3. **Communication Skills**

Students will synthesize complex facts and relevant law to draft accurate, well-organized legal documents and communicate legal facts and arguments effectively in oral and written formats.

4. **Legal Content, Procedure, and Substance**

The student shall demonstrate the ability to synthesize complex facts into ordered legal documents

5. **Paralegal Professionalism and Ethical Conduct**

The student will be able to demonstrate knowledge of and be able to organize and manage a law office and interact effectively with colleagues and clients while demonstrating knowledge of and compliance with the ethical obligations that guide paralegal conduct.

Program Requirements

Each program has different course requirements. Students should consult the current WSU Catalog and work with their advisors to ensure that they meet WSU graduation requirements, General Education Program requirements, and the requirements specific to their degree or certificate.

- Requirements for a B.S. in Legal Studies
- Requirements for a B.S. through the 3+3 Program with Mitchell Hamline School of Law
- Requirements for the 24-credit Paralegal Certificate

Transfer of Legal Specialty Coursework

The Legal Studies Program may accept up to 9 semester credits of legal specialty coursework completed at another American Bar Association-approved paralegal education program. Transfer requests are reviewed individually by the Director of Legal Studies, in consultation with Admissions when appropriate, and all legal specialty transfer credit must be approved by the Director of Legal Studies. Approval is not automatic.

The following requirements apply:

- The transferred course must be comparable in content, academic rigor, course objectives, and practical skills to the WSU course or program requirement for which credit is requested.
- Except for Legal Research, a 100- or 200-level legal specialty course completed at another institution may not substitute for a comparable 300- or 400-level course at WSU.
- Coursework completed with a grade below C does not count toward completion of the Legal Studies major or Paralegal Certificate.
- No more than 9 semester credits of legal specialty coursework may be accepted in transfer.

Students requesting legal specialty transfer credit should provide official transcripts and, when requested, course descriptions, syllabi, assignments, or other materials needed to evaluate the course. The University's general transfer-credit policies also apply.

Eligibility to Enroll in Legal Specialty Courses

Students must have substantially completed their General Education Program requirements before enrolling in legal specialty courses.

Synchronous Instruction Requirement

All students in an ABA-approved Legal Studies program option must complete at least 9 semester credits of legal specialty coursework through synchronous instruction. Synchronous instruction may be completed in person or through online instruction in which the instructor and students participate at the same time.

Course Requirements, Expectations of Academic Progress, and Graduation Requirements

Students are expected to complete core and elective courses designed to prepare them for a professional career in the legal field. Attendance, participation, and the completion of assignments are crucial for academic success.

To graduate from an ABA-approved Legal Studies program option, students must:

- Complete all required courses and electives.
- Submit and pass portfolio requirements.
- Complete at least 3 credits of LGLS 380: Legal Studies Internship as the capstone course.
- Maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 as specified by the program.
- Comply with standards of academic integrity, ethical standards, and student conduct.

Portfolio and Internship Guidelines

The Portfolio

A portfolio is a curated collection of work that reflects the student's learning, achievements, and professional development throughout their academic career. The portfolio must include the following components:

1. **Cover Letter**
A letter to a prospective internship site applying for a paralegal position.
2. **Personal Essay**
A statement of the student's career goals, professional background, and how the internship fits into future plans.
3. **Resume**
A current resume showcasing educational and professional experience.
4. **Three Writing Samples**
Legal briefs, memos, or other legal assignments that showcase the student's ability to apply legal knowledge.
5. **One Research and Writing Sample**
A longer research paper or writing sample that demonstrates the student's research and writing skills.
6. **Internship Enrollment Agreement**
A signed agreement between the student and the external supervisor.

Submission Requirements

- Convert your portfolio to a single PDF.
- Label the file as LastName.FirstName.SemesterOfInternship (for example, Bates.Juandrea.Spring2025).
- Email it to both the Internship Director and Legal Studies Director.

LGLS 380: Legal Studies Internship

The Legal Studies Internship (LGLS 380) is the capstone experience for students in the program. It provides students with the opportunity to apply classroom knowledge in a real-world legal setting, working under the supervision of legal professionals.

Enrollment in LGLS 380 is by instructor permission only. To be enrolled, students must submit:

- Legal Studies Portfolio
- LGLS 380 Enrollment Agreement

These documents must be submitted to the Internship Director, and students should collaborate with their academic advisor and faculty mentors to ensure preparedness for this requirement.

The Internship

An internship provides practical, hands-on experience in the legal field. It allows students to work in law firms, government agencies, corporate legal departments, and other appropriate settings.

Prerequisites

- Completion of required legal studies courses, including Introduction to Legal Studies and Ethics and Legal Research and Writing I and II, before beginning the internship.
- Submission of a portfolio by October 15 for spring internships and March 15 for summer and fall internships.

Credit Hours

Every 40 hours of work performed at an internship is equivalent to 1 credit hour of coursework.

- 3-credit internship: 120 hours
- 6-credit internship: 240 hours
- 12-credit internship: 480 hours

Duration: Internship work should be completed during the semester in which the student is enrolled in LGLS 380. A student may repeat an internship over multiple semesters with the approval of the site supervisor and the Legal Studies Internship Supervisor.

Internship Evaluation: The internship will be evaluated by an external supervisor at the internship site. In addition, students must submit a daily log of activities, undertake professional development assignments and submit a final portfolio.

Academic Advising

Academic advising is a vital component of student success, particularly for those in the Legal Studies programs. Faculty advisors guide students through course selection and play a significant role in mentoring, helping students align their academic goals with their professional aspirations. Faculty advisors are particularly important for class registration.

Students are required to meet with their faculty advisor each semester before they can receive a registration code for enrolling in classes. Students should not attempt to register for Legal Studies courses without meeting with their assigned faculty advisor.

To facilitate a useful meeting with a faculty advisor, students should:

1. Pre-Advising Preparation

Before meeting with their advisor, students are encouraged to review their Degree Audit Report (DARS), identify required courses, and ensure they meet prerequisites. This preparation helps students maximize their advising session by coming prepared with specific questions or concerns.

2. Advising Meeting

Advisors help students review their academic progress, discuss course selection for the upcoming semester, and offer guidance on academic or career-related questions. Advisors also ensure that students are on track to meet graduation requirements and offer advice about internships, graduate school, and other opportunities.

3. Registration Code

After the advising meeting, students receive their registration code. This code is necessary to register for classes and is provided only after the advisor has verified that the student has been properly advised and is ready to register.

By requiring advising before registration, the Legal Studies Program ensures that students stay on track toward graduation and fosters meaningful relationships with faculty advisors. Students should contact their advisors with questions regarding course selection, student success, internships, or plans after graduation.

Student Conduct

Integrity is foundational to both academic and professional success in the legal field. As future legal professionals, students in the Legal Studies Program must adhere to the values of honesty, fairness, and respect for others in all aspects of their academic work and professional conduct. The Legal Studies Program

at Winona State University is committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity, ethics, and professionalism in all academic and extracurricular activities. This Code of Conduct outlines the expectations for ethical behavior, academic integrity, and professionalism required of students enrolled in the program.

Legal Service

Students enrolled in the programs and graduates of the program may not provide legal services directly to the public except under the supervision of a practicing attorney or as provided by law.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is expected from all students in the program and is grounded in the principles of honesty and respect for the intellectual efforts of others. A student's submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student's own. Academic integrity is not limited to formal coursework; it extends to all interactions connected to the educational process, including applications for honor societies, use of university resources, internships, and communications with faculty and peers.

Academic Integrity Violations

Winona State University's policy on academic integrity requires that all work produced by students represent their personal efforts and acknowledge the intellectual contributions of others. Violations of academic integrity are serious and can result in significant consequences. The following actions constitute violations of academic integrity:

1. Cheating

The use or attempted use of unauthorized materials or assistance during any academic exercise. This includes looking at another student's work, using unauthorized materials on tests, obtaining copies of exams before their administration, or submitting homework completed by another student.

2. Deception and Misrepresentation

Lying about or misrepresenting academic work, records, or credentials. This includes forging signatures, falsifying academic transcripts or credentials, or falsely reporting participation in group work.

3. Enabling Academic Dishonesty

Assisting another student in committing academic dishonesty. This includes providing someone with your work to copy or permitting someone to cheat using your exam materials.

4. Fabrication

Inventing or falsifying information, such as data, sources, or research findings. This includes submitting false data or citing sources that were not actually used. Students are responsible for ensuring that their citations are accurate.

5. Multiple Submissions

Submitting the same or substantially similar work to more than one course without obtaining explicit permission from all instructors involved.

6. Plagiarism

Using someone else's words, ideas, or work without proper acknowledgment so that they appear to be your own. Plagiarism includes copying text without citation, minimally altering another person's work, or summarizing another person's work without proper credit. It also includes presenting text generated by artificial intelligence tools without required acknowledgment or permission.

Academic Integrity and the Use of Artificial Intelligence

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT or other AI-driven platforms, is strictly regulated in the Legal Studies Program. Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor, AI tools may not be used to complete assignments, quizzes, exams, or other coursework. If permission is explicitly granted in a faculty member's syllabus or assignment instructions, that permission extends only to that course or assignment. Students must acknowledge AI use when permission is granted.

- **Unacknowledged AI Use:** AI-generated content submitted without proper acknowledgment is considered plagiarism and a violation of academic integrity. Using AI tools to complete assignments, exams, or projects without instructor consent constitutes a serious breach of academic honesty.
- **Permitted Use:** AI use is acceptable only when a student has explicit permission from the instructor or program. Instructors may define the permitted scope, such as grammar checking but not research. Exceeding those restrictions, particularly without acknowledgment, constitutes an academic integrity violation.
- **Acknowledgment:** When AI use is allowed, students must follow the instructor's requirements for citation and acknowledgment of AI assistance.

Violation of this policy may result in failure of an assignment or course or dismissal from the Legal Studies Program. Students may ask for permission to use AI before submitting work, but that decision is left to the individual instructor. Students are not entitled to redo assignments after unauthorized AI use is detected.

Consequences for Academic Violations

Academic violations are treated seriously. Consequences may include:

- Instructor consequences, including a reduced or failing grade for the assignment, exam, or course and submission of an Academic Integrity Violation Report.
- Departmental consequences, including dismissal from the Legal Studies Program for repeated or severe violations.
- University disciplinary action, including disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Respect for Legal Ethics and Student Conduct

Students in the Legal Studies Program are expected to uphold high standards of respect for instructors, peers, and legal professionals. Respectful behavior is essential in the classroom and during internships. Disrespect, harassment, or misconduct will not be tolerated. All interactions, whether in person, by email, or through other forms of communication, should reflect the professionalism expected of future legal professionals.

Core Ethical Principles

1. Confidentiality

Students must maintain the confidentiality of sensitive or private information encountered during coursework, internships, hypothetical scenarios, or case studies.

2. Integrity and Honesty

Students must provide truthful and accurate information in academic work and avoid plagiarism, misrepresentation, dishonest conduct, and unauthorized AI use.

3. Respect for Diversity and Fairness

Students must treat all individuals fairly and respectfully and without bias. Discrimination or harassment based on race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or any other protected characteristic is prohibited.

4. **Email Etiquette**

Students must use professional language in communications with faculty and peers. Emails should be clear, concise, and polite, with appropriate greetings and signatures.

5. **In-Person Conduct**

Respectful dialogue is encouraged. Students should refrain from disruptive or aggressive behavior in the classroom or during any program-related activity.

6. **Bullying, Hazing, or Harassment**

Bullying, hazing, or harassment between students or between students and faculty will not be tolerated and may result in dismissal from the Legal Studies Program.

7. **Accountability**

Students must accept responsibility for their actions, including mistakes or errors in academic work or professional settings, and take corrective action when necessary.

Reporting Ethical Violations

Ethical violations should be reported to the Legal Studies Program Director, faculty members, or the appropriate university authorities. Violations may include plagiarism or cheating, misrepresentation of academic or professional achievements, breaches of confidentiality, discriminatory or harassing behavior, or failure to meet academic or professional standards. Students are responsible for adhering to these standards and helping maintain the integrity of the legal profession.

Associated Clubs and Student Organizations

LEX National Honor Society for Paralegal Studies: Lambda Epsilon Chi (LEX) is the national honor society dedicated to honoring excellence in paralegal and legal studies. Students who meet LEX's academic criteria are formally inducted and receive a Certificate of Induction and a LEX pin. The Winona State University chapter was chartered in 2014 and holds induction ceremonies each spring. Inducted students may wear their honor sash at graduation and include membership on their professional resumes.

Legal Studies Association: The Legal Studies Association brings together students who share an interest in law by hosting events that highlight law as a subject and career field. Activities may include informational meetings, practice trials, movie nights, and other events.

Mock Trial: The Winona State Undergraduate Mock Trial Association is a student organization that competes in intercollegiate mock trial competitions.