

**Assurance of Student Learning
2019-2020**

Potter College of Arts & Letters

Political Science

Paralegal Studies (5002)

Use this page to list learning outcomes, measurements, and summarize results for your program. Detailed information must be completed in the subsequent pages.

Student Learning Outcome 1: Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical restrictions of paralegal practice.

Instrument 1 Direct: Office Simulations (PLS 200, PLS 393)

Instrument 2 Indirect: Internship Supervisor Evaluation (PLS 499)

Instrument 3 Direct: State and/or National Certification Exam (Post-Graduation)

Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.

Met

Not Met

Student Learning Outcome 2: Communicate effectively within the standards of practice.

Instrument 1 Direct: Office Simulations (PLS 190/PLS 225, PLS 250 and PLS 393)

Instrument 2 Direct: Course Writing Projects (PLS 190/PLS 225, PLS 250 and PLS 450)

Instrument 3 Indirect: Internship Supervisor Evaluation (PLS 499)

Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 3.

Met

Not Met

Student Learning Outcome 3: Execute effective legal research strategies and critically construct legal argument.

Instrument 1 Direct: Course Writing Projects (PLS 250, PLS 450)

Instrument 2 Direct: Mock Trial (PLS 393)

Instrument 3 Indirect: Employer/Alumni Surveys (Post-Graduation)

Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 3.

Met

Not Met

Program Summary (Briefly summarize the action and follow up items from your detailed responses on subsequent pages.)

Student learning outcomes 1 and 2 were consistently met. Student learning outcome 3 was not met, but only because external surveys were not disseminated due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Student Learning Outcome 1

Student Learning Outcome	Comply with ethical guidelines for paralegal practice including but not limited to competence in technology and research, diligence in practice, maintenance of client confidentiality and integrity of the practice, recognition of conflicts of interest, and contribution to public service.		
Measurement Instrument 1	In PLS 200 (Legal Ethics) and PLS 393 (Civil Procedure), students will participate in general discussions relating to moral decisions they make in their daily lives. Students will then review the Rules of Professional Responsibility for attorneys as well as suggested guidelines and standards of conduct for paralegals. They will be required to learn the ethical constraints on the practice of law and apply the concepts to practice simulations in order to make decisions as to what course of action should be taken. They will then discuss the ramifications of ethical violations for the public at large and for legal professionals.		
Criteria for Student Success	Student learning is assessed based on the student’s ability to recognize the ethics issue triggered, to identify the relevant rule or guideline, to act in compliance with the rule or guideline and to identify the legal and professional ramifications for violation.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	Seventy-five percent (75%) of the students will perform within the industry standard and receive a “C” or above on the simulation assignments.	Percent of Program Achieving Target	PLS 200: Not offered in 2019-2020 AY PLS 393 (SP20): 75% (16 students)
Methods	Simulation assignments from PLS 200 and PLS 393 will be randomly sampled and assessed according to this rubric: A: Correctly identifies ethics issue, correctly links ethics issue to relevant rule or guideline, correctly identifies all actions required for compliance and correctly identifies all legal and professional ramifications for non-compliance; B: Correctly identifies ethics issue, correctly links ethics issue to relevant rule or guideline, correctly identifies most but not all actions required for compliance and correctly identifies most but not all legal and professional ramifications for non-compliance; C: Recognizes that an ethics issue is triggered but does not link the issue to a specific rule or guideline, correctly identifies some but not all actions required for compliance and correctly identifies some but not all legal and professional ramifications for non-compliance; D: Recognizes that an ethics issue is triggered but does not link the issue to any rule or guideline; fails to correctly identify some actions required for compliance or fails to correctly identify some legal and professional ramifications for non-compliance; F: Fails to recognize that an ethics issue is triggered and does not link the act or omission to any rule or guideline; does not identify any actions required for compliance and does not identify any legal and professional ramification for non-compliance.		
Measurement Instrument 2	In PLS 499 (Internship), students work with practicing attorneys and paralegals to complete one hundred fifty (150) hours of legal service in various employment environments including but not limited to private law firms, corporate legal departments, government offices, courts and non-profit organizations. They submit a work sample portfolio, prepare an experience paper and are evaluated by their internship supervisors. The experience paper must address an ethical issue the student encountered during his/her internship and thirty percent (30%) of the supervisor evaluation is focused on ethical standards of practice.		
Criteria for Student Success	Student learning is assessed based on the student’s ability to recognize the ethics issue triggered, to identify the relevant ethics guideline and to act in compliance with that guideline.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	One hundred percent (100%) of the students will perform within the industry standard and receive a “P” or above after instructor assessment of the portfolio and paper and the external evaluation of performance.	Percent of Program Achieving Target	PLS 499 (FA19): 83% (6 students) PLS 499 (SP20): 100% (4 students)
Methods	Student portfolios, experience papers and external evaluations will be assessed according to this rubric: P: Correctly identifies ethics issue, links ethics issue to relevant ethics guideline and acts in compliance with relevant guideline;		

	F: Fails to recognize that an ethics issue is triggered and/or fails to act in compliance with relevant guideline.		
Measurement Instrument 3	Post-graduation, students will sit for state certification exam administered by the Kentucky Paralegal Association and/or national certification exam administered by the National Association of Legal Assistants. Both exams focus on ethical standards of practice.		
Criteria for Student Success	Student learning is assessed based on the student's ability to recognize the ethics issue triggered, to identify the relevant rule or guideline, to act in compliance with the rule or guideline and to identify the legal and professional ramifications for violation.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	Seventy-five percent (75%) of the students will receive a "Pass" on a certification exam on the first try.	Percent of Program Achieving Target	100% (only one student has reported sitting for the exam)
Methods	Passing standards are established by the external certification exam administrators and results are self-reported by program graduates and employers via program surveys.		
Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.		Met	Not Met
Actions (Describe the decision-making process and actions planned for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.)			
There were several incompletes that have affected final assessment percentages. In one case, the incomplete was given to a student who failed to submit any work and/or attend class. Efforts were made to reach out to that student, but none were successful. Other incompletes appear to be a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic. In one case, a student was required to take on additional shifts at work due to shortage of labor; and, in two cases, the students were challenged by the remote learning environment -both are continuing to work toward completion.			
Follow-Up (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.)			
Instructor is currently working with 3 students to complete coursework from spring 2020. Graduates are being monitored for certification exam completion.			

Student Learning Outcome 2

Student Learning Outcome	Communicate effectively within the standards of practice.		
Measurement Instrument 1	In three (3) targeted paralegal courses (PLS 190/225, Introduction to Law; PLS 250, Legal Research and Writing I; and PLS 393, Civil Procedure), students are presented with various practice simulations requiring them to develop appropriate lines of communication with various constituencies. Simulations include <i>oral</i> communication with clients, attorneys, judges, witnesses and vendors.		
Criteria for Student Success	Student learning is assessed on student's ability to choose best mode of communication, to deliver appropriate content, to comply with ethics guidelines including client confidentiality and professional decorum, and to deliver content timely.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	Seventy-five percent (75%) of the students will perform within the industry standard and receive a "C" or above on course simulations.	Percent of Program Achieving Target	PLS 190 (FA19, SP 20): 87% (21 students) PLS 250 (FA19): 93% (13 students)
Methods	Simulation assignments from PLS 190/225, PLS 250 and PLS 393 will be randomly sampled and assessed according to this rubric: A: Chooses best mode of communication; delivers all content precisely and succinctly; complies with ethics guidelines; and meets deadlines; B: Chooses a good mode of communication; delivers all content but lack precision and succinctness; complies with ethics guidelines; and meets deadlines; C: Chooses a good mode of communication; delivers most content but lacks precision and succinctness; complies with most ethics guidelines; and meets deadlines; D: Chooses inappropriate mode of communication; delivers minimal content; communication violates some ethics guidelines; and meets deadlines; F: Chooses inappropriate mode of communication; delivers little if any relevant content; communication violates ethics guidelines; and fails to meet deadlines.		
Measurement Instrument 2	In three (3) targeted paralegal courses (PLS 190/225, Introduction to Law; PLS 250, Legal Research and Writing I; and PLS 393, Civil Procedure), students are presented with various practice simulations requiring them to develop appropriate lines of communication with various constituencies. Simulations include <i>written</i> communication with clients, attorneys, judges, witnesses and vendors.		
Criteria for Student Success	Student learning is assessed on student's ability to choose best mode of communication, to deliver appropriate content, to comply with ethics guidelines including client confidentiality and professional decorum, and to deliver content timely.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	Seventy-five percent (75%) of the students will perform within the industry standard and receive a "C" or above on course simulations.	Percent of Program Achieving Target	PLS 225 was not taught in 2019-20 AY PLS 190 (FA19, SP20): 87% (21 students) PLS 250 (FA19): 93% (13 students) PLS 393 (SP20): 75% (16 students)
Methods	Simulation assignments from PLS 190/225, PLS 250 and PLS 393 will be randomly sampled and assessed according to this rubric: A: Chooses best mode of communication; delivers all content precisely and succinctly; complies with ethics guidelines; and meets deadlines; B: Chooses a good mode of communication; delivers all content but lack precision and succinctness; complies with ethics guidelines; and meets deadlines; C: Chooses a good mode of communication; delivers most content but lacks precision and succinctness; complies with most ethics guidelines; and meets deadlines; D: Chooses inappropriate mode of communication; delivers minimal content; communication violates some ethics guidelines; and meets		

	deadlines; F: Chooses inappropriate mode of communication; delivers little if any relevant content; communication violates ethics guidelines; and fails to meet deadlines.		
Measurement Instrument 3	In PLS 499 (Internship), students work with practicing attorneys and paralegals to complete one hundred fifty (150) hours of legal service in various employment environments including but not limited to private law firms, corporate legal departments, government offices, courts and non-profit organizations. They submit a work sample portfolio, prepare an experience paper and are evaluated by their internship supervisors. Ten percent (10%) of the supervisor evaluation will be focused on the ability of the intern to communicate within industry standard. Students are also required to prepare a resume and participate in a mock job interview.		
Criteria for Student Success	Intern success is assessed on intern's ability to choose best mode of communication, to deliver appropriate content, to comply with ethics guidelines including client confidentiality and professional decorum, and to deliver content timely.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	One hundred percent (100%) of the students will perform within the industry standard and receive a "P" or above after instructor review of external evaluation of performance, resume and mock interview.	Percent of Program Achieving Target	PLS 499 (FA19): 83% (6 students) PLS 499 (SP20): 100% (4 students)
Methods	Intern external evaluations, resumes and mock interviews will be assessed according to this rubric: P: Chooses a good mode of communication; delivers most content with precision and succinctness; complies with ethics guidelines; and meets deadlines; F: Chooses inappropriate mode of communication; delivers little if any relevant content; communication violates ethics guidelines; and fails to meet deadlines.		
Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.		Met	Not Met
Actions (Describe the decision-making process and actions planned for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.) Even though the target was achieved in PLS 393, the course is being restructured to include additional student performance measures relating to communication – oral and written.			
Follow-Up (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.) The restructured PLS 393 will be offered in SP21.			

Student Learning Outcome 3			
Student Learning Outcome	Execute effective legal research strategies and critically construct legal argument.		
Measurement Instrument 1	In PLS 250 (Legal Research and Writing I) and PLS 450 (Legal Research and Writing II), students will complete legal research projects utilizing resources in the WKU Law Library and online databases such as Westlaw. Students will utilize the results of the legal research projects to construct and articulate persuasive legal argument both in the form of oral argument and legal pleadings and briefs.		
Criteria for Student Success	Student learning will be assessed on the student's ability to conduct efficient and accurate legal research, to incorporate the results of legal research into persuasive legal argument and to articulate that argument effectively in oral and written format.		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	Seventy-five percent (75%) of the students will perform within the industry standard and receive a "C" or above on the research and writing projects.	Percent of Program Achieving Target	PLS 250 (FA19): 93% (13 students) PLS 450 (SP20): 75% (12 students)

Methods	<p>Student projects from PLS 250 and PLS 450 will be randomly sampled and assessed according to this rubric:</p> <p>A: Correctly identified relevant primary law; effectively utilized primary law to construct persuasive legal argument; and articulated legal argument into oral or written format as required by assignment instructions and rules of procedure;</p> <p>B: Correctly identified relevant primary law; utilized primary law to construct legal argument somewhat persuasive argument; and articulated legal argument into oral or written format as required by assignment instructions and rules of procedure;</p> <p>C. Correctly identified relevant primary law; utilized primary law to construct legal argument that lacked persuasion; and articulated argument into oral or written format that complied with some but not all of the assignment instructions and rules of procedure;</p> <p>D. Identified primary law that lacked relevance; failed to construction persuasive legal argument; and articulated argument into oral or written format that complied with few but not all of the assignment instructions and rules of procedure;</p> <p>F: Failed to identify relevant primary law; failed to construct persuasive legal argument; and failed to articulate argument in compliance with assignment instructions and rules of procedure.</p>		
Measurement Instrument 2	<p>In PLS 393 (Civil Procedure), students prepare a civil case for mock trial proceedings. As part of this process, students must conduct legal research and use the results of their research to construct legal argument for delivery in pre-trial motions, jury instructions, pre-trial memorandum and closing argument.</p>		
Criteria for Student Success	<p>Student learning will be assessed on the student's ability to conduct efficient and accurate legal research, to incorporate the results of legal research into persuasive legal argument and to articulate that argument effectively in written format.</p>		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	<p>Seventy-five percent (75%) of the students will perform within the industry standard and receive a "C" or above on the research and writing projects.</p>	<p>Percent of Program Achieving Target</p>	<p>PLS 393 (SP20): 75% (16 students)</p>
Methods	<p>Student projects from PLS 393 will be randomly sampled and assessed according to this rubric:</p> <p>A: Correctly identified relevant primary law; effectively utilized primary law to construct persuasive legal argument; and articulated legal argument into written format as required by assignment instructions and rules of procedure;</p> <p>B: Correctly identified relevant primary law; utilized primary law to construct legal argument somewhat persuasive argument; and articulated legal argument into written format as required by assignment instructions and rules of procedure;</p> <p>C. Correctly identified relevant primary law; utilized primary law to construct legal argument that lacked persuasion; and articulated argument into written format that complied with some but not all of the assignment instructions and rules of procedure;</p> <p>D. Identified primary law that lacked relevance; failed to construction persuasive legal argument; and articulated argument into written format that complied with few but not all of the assignment instructions and rules of procedure;</p> <p>F: Failed to identify relevant primary law; failed to construct persuasive legal argument; and failed to articulate argument in compliance with assignment instructions and rules of procedure.</p>		
Measurement Instrument 3	<p>Employers of program graduates are surveyed bi-annually to determine employee's legal research and writing skills. Twenty percent (20%) of the survey questions are focused on the library and online legal research. Twenty percent (20%) of the survey questions are focused on the employee's ability to articulate persuasive legal argument in written format. Surveys will be disseminated in fall 2020.</p>		
Criteria for Student Success	<p>Graduate preparedness for employment will be assessed on the graduates' ability to conduct efficient and accurate legal research, to incorporate the results of legal research into persuasive legal argument and to articulate that argument effectively in written format.</p>		
Program Success Target for this Measurement	<p>Seventy-five percent (75%) of the survey respondents will indicate that program graduates met expectations regarding the ability to conduct legal research and articulate persuasive legal argument in written format.</p>	<p>Percent of Program Achieving Target</p>	<p>Unknown. No survey was disseminated for the 2019-20 AY. The survey is normally conducted in May; however, due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the survey was postponed.</p>
Methods	<p>Employer surveys will require employers to rank program graduate performance as follows:</p> <p>Exceeds expectations: Employee exceeds employer expectations regarding knowledge and application of substantive law and procedure in</p>		

	<p>practice; Meets expectations: Employee meets employer expectations regarding knowledge and application of substantive law and procedure in practice; Does not meet expectations: Employee does not meet employer expectations regarding knowledge and application of substantive law and procedure in practice due to reasons beyond control of program; Requires remediation by program: Employee does not meet employer expectations regarding knowledge and application of substantive law and procedure in practice due to deficiencies within program curriculum, methodology or assessment.</p>	
Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 3.	Met	Not Met
Actions (Describe the decision-making process and actions planned for program improvement. The actions should include a timeline.)		
The employer survey was not conducted and therefore, there is not data to report.		
Follow-Up (Provide your timeline for follow-up. If follow-up has occurred, describe how the actions above have resulted in program improvement.)		
The employer survey will be conducted in January, 2021.		