

## LSP – Legal Support Professional Program Assessment Story

The Program:

ABS – Associates in Business Studies – Legal Support Professional – 2 Year Degree

LSP Pathways:

Fall First Year:

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- [LSP 110W - Legal Ethics and Responsibilities of the Legal Assistant](#) **Credits: 3**
  - [LSP 115 - Principles of Substantive Law](#) **Credits: 3**
  - [LW 221W - Fitness and Wellness](#) **Credits: 2**
  - Any 2 credit LW course, 1 credit LW and LWA 1 credit course can be taken in place of [LW 221W](#)
  - [OAT 151 - Business Communication I](#) **Credits: 3**
  - [OAT 171 - Document Processing: Beginning](#) **Credits: 3**
- Total Semester Credits: 14

Winter First Year:

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- [LSP 120 - Legal Research](#) **Credits: 2**
  - [LSP 230 - Civil Litigation](#) **Credits: 3**
  - [LSP 280W - Legal Writing](#) **Credits: 2**
  - [MGT 251W - Business Law I](#) **Credits: 3**
  - [OAT 152 - Business Communication II](#) **Credits: 3**
  - [ENG 111](#) and ([ENG 112](#) or [ENG 113](#)) can be taken in place of [OAT 152](#)
  - [OAT 172 - Document Processing: Intermediate](#) **Credits: 3**
- Total Semester Credits: 16

Fall Second Year:

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- *ELE — Elective Course* **Credits: 6**  
[CST 151](#), [HSC 105](#), [HSC 205W](#), [LSP 150](#), [LSP 210W](#), [LSP 220](#), [LSP 235](#), [LSP 240](#), [LSP 250](#), [LSP 253](#), [LSP 290](#), [MGT 257W](#), [OAT 273](#), [PHL 205W](#), or [PHL 210W](#)
- [MGT 252 - Business Law II](#) **Credits: 3**
- [MGT 256 - Human Resources Management I](#) **Credits: 3**
- [POL 103W - American Politics](#) **Credits: 3**

- POL 105W, POL 212W, POL 215W, POL 220W, POL 221W, POL 223W, POL 225W, POL 228W, HIS 221W, HIS 222W, or HIS 237W can be taken in place of POL 103W

Total Semester Credits: 15

Winter Second Year:

- COM 112W - Public Speaking **Credits: 3**
- ELE – Elective Course **Credits: 10**  
CST 151, HSC 105, HSC 205W, LSP 150, LSP 210W, LSP 220, LSP 235, LSP 240, LSP 250, LSP 253, LSP 290, MGT 257W, OAT 273, PHL 205W, or PHL 210W
- LSP 260 - Legal Support Internship I **Credits: 1**
- PSY 101W - Psychology of Adjustment **Credits: 3**

Total Semester Credits: 17

Total Credits: 62

### LSP Program Outcomes:

<b>Program:</b>	Legal Support Professional Program
<b>Program Learning Outcomes:</b>	
1	Compose effective communication clearly and concisely substantiated by appropriate research.
2	Justify legal decisions based on substantive or procedural knowledge of the law.
3	Construct applicable documents or pleadings using appropriate terminology.
4	Assess the legal or ethical implications of statutory or case law as it pertains to a variety of people.
5	Demonstrate appropriate use of technology.
6	Demonstrate competency in professional skills that meet or exceed current industry recognized standards.

## LSP Program Curriculum Map:

PROGRAM CURRICULUM MAP		Program: Legal Support Professional Program																			
I = Introduced																					
P = Practiced with Feedback		Courses:																			
M = Demonstrated at the Mastery Level Appropriate for Graduation		LSP	LSP	LSP	LSP	LSP	LSP	LSP	LSP	LSP	LSP	LSP	LSP	LSP	LSP	LSP	LSP	LSP	MGT	MGT	MGT
		110	115	120	150	210	220	230	235	240	245	250	253	260	261	262	280	251	252	256	
Program Learning Outcomes:																					
1	Compose effective communication clearly and concisely substantiated by appropriate research.	I, P	P	M	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	M	M	M	M			
2	Justify legal decisions based on substantive or procedural knowledge of the law.	I, P	P	M	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	M	M	M	M	I	I	I	
3	Construct applicable documents or pleadings using appropriate terminology.	I, P	P	M	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	M	M	M	M				
4	Assess the legal or ethical implications of statutory or case law as it pertains to a variety of people.	I, P	P	M	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	M	M	M	M	P	P	P	
5	Demonstrate appropriate use of technology.	I, P	P	M	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	M	M	M	M	P	P	P	
6	Demonstrate competency in professional skills that meet or exceed current industry recognized standards.	External/Indirect Measures																			

## LSP Program Assessment Plan, going forward:

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PLAN		Program:	Legal Support Professional Program			
Program Learning Outcomes:		When to Assess	What Direct and Indirect Evidence to Collect	Who Will Collect the Evidence	How Evidence will be Assessed	How Decisions will be Made
1	Compose effective communication clearly and concisely substantiated by appropriate research.	Ongoing	Direct in Case Studies and Projects in LSP Courses	Coordinator	Coordinator	Coordinator and Instructors
2	Justify legal decisions based on substantive or procedural knowledge of the law.	Ongoing	Direct in Case Studies and Projects in LSP Courses	Coordinator	Coordinator	Coordinator and Instructors
3	Construct applicable documents or pleadings using appropriate terminology.	Ongoing	Direct in Case Studies and Projects in LSP Courses	Coordinator	Coordinator	Coordinator and Instructors
4	Assess the legal or ethical implications of statutory or case law as it pertains to a variety of people.	Ongoing	Direct in Case Studies and Projects in LSP Courses	Coordinator	Coordinator	Coordinator and Instructors
5	Demonstrate appropriate use of technology.	Ongoing	Direct in Case Studies and Projects in LSP Courses	Coordinator	Coordinator	Coordinator and Instructors
6	Demonstrate competency in professional skills that meet or exceed current industry recognized standards.	Ongoing	Direct in Case Studies and Projects in LSP Courses	Faculty, Adv. Board, Institutional Research	Coordinator	Coordinator and Instructors

## History of the LSP Program and it's Assessment:

In the Fall of 2004 a new coordinator was hired to coordinate the Legal Support Professional Program. In the years prior, the LSP program was titled LAS – Legal Assistant Studies and had program outcomes which addressed the needs of a traditional paralegal. Upon the hiring of a new coordinator, the reorganization of the advisory board, and the hiring of new adjunct instructors, the LAS program was redesigned to meet the needs of area employers. Significant changes took place incorporating OAT (office administrative) and CST (computer science) courses so that the new program created a hybrid between traditional paralegal and legal secretary skills. Area employers indicated that they wanted graduates who had strong communication and office professional skills, which were skills they could not teach themselves.

The LAS/LSP program consisted of a ladder approach, offering students the option between two certificates and an associate's degree. The first certificate was called the "Law Office Foundation" certificate and it required core courses designed to give students an introductory knowledge of a law office setting. After completing the Foundation certificate, students could move to the "Law Office Specialist" certificate. The specialist certificate consisted of the foundation certificate courses, as well as

the additional CST and OAT courses. Ultimately if a student completed both certificates and the Delta College required General Education courses (Communication, Lifelong Wellness, Political Science and Psychology) they could obtain an Associate's Degree.

From the onset, the LAS/LSP program has presented challenges with regard to assessment because students do not follow a standard pathway. Approximately 50% of the students enrolled are only taking courses to enhance a specific skill set, and have no intention on completing the certificates or the degree. The other 50% consisted of a combination of students seeking only one or both certificates, with only a handful of students seeking all 3 (both certificates and the associate's degree).

Assessment done by the prior coordinator and encouraged by the advisory board continued from prior to 2004 to approximately 2010 with most assessment work being done in the LSP 280 Legal Research and Writing Course. LSP 280 was the "Capstone" of the foundation certificate which was required of all graduates. LSP 280 was designed with extensive case studies which could be utilized to assess all of the LAS/LSP program outcomes that used internal assessment methods. While the language used in the different program outcomes has changed over the years, to reflect changes in the profession, or to utilize best practices in assessment, they have contained common themes. The LAS/LSP program strives to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate effective communication, assess legal and ethical implications, demonstrate their understanding of substantive/procedural law by preparing pleadings, as well as utilizing appropriate technology as it becomes available.

In October 2008 the advisory committee satisfied with the results of the prior years assessments, asked that an external survey and a student survey be done. The previous student survey was done in 05/06, but only 4 responses were received. The Office of Institutional Research was contacted to do a survey in academic year 2009/2010. The student survey was completed in the Winter of 2010. The results of the survey showed that the students were still split. About 50% were at Delta in the LSP program to learn a particular skill set taking only a couple of classes, where the other 50% were planning to graduate from the program. The results also showed that the students were split in the number of credits they take each semester with 50% only taking 1 course each semester. Those students obviously take much longer than the established 2-year pathway to complete the degree.

Academic Year 2010/2011 - The survey results while small supported the anecdotal evidence that the coordinator had been receiving when talking with students, area employers, law firms and area courthouses. In addition to the survey results, the coordinator had been hearing that the reading requirements were making the courses "difficult".

## State of Michigan – Perkins/Program of Study Project

2011/2012 – the LSP program was one of the programs selected by the State of Michigan to participate in their "Program of Study" work. This work enabled the coordinator and an adjunct instructor to participate in regular meetings with Perkins individuals, staff from the State of Michigan, and other community college programs across the state to work on program development and assessment. Significant work was done by the legal research adjunct instructor reviewing the reading levels of our textbooks in response to student comments from the prior year that the reading requirements in classes was "difficult". This resulted in the change of some of the resources used in the LSP courses, however, the nature of law dictates difficult reading. LSP textbooks are rated generally at grades 13/14 with some reaching higher levels of 15 or 16. These reading levels, while difficult, are in line with other institutions.

2012/2013 – the LSP program was selected to continue the Program of Study work by receiving assistance for a “Year 2”. This year consisted of continued work evaluating course textbooks and resources, a new brochure was developed and used for advertising and the program outcomes were reviewed and updated. Based on the student feedback, work in the Program of Study and advisory board input, we split up “Legal Research and Writing”. LSP 280 consisted of both legal research and legal writing. The decision was made to move legal research to LSP 120, and keep legal writing at LSP 280 giving students the space to fully work on each focus.

### State Approval:

2013/2014 – We applied for state approval of the LSP program based on the work during the last two years doing a Program of Study. That Program of Study work showed that the LSP program was “high skill”, “high demand” and “high wages” putting it in a good position to be approved as a Perkins funded state program. This year the English division reevaluated the reading/writing levels which were then modified in the LSP coursework.

2014/2015 – the coordinator created the LSP program maps and assessment plans under the direction of the committees at Delta College responsible for student learning and assessment.

**\*Of Note:** We did not receive state approval. Honestly, I cannot tell you why. It is my understanding that receiving state approval results in increased Perkins funding, but not necessarily for my program directly – so I stopped asking to get my program approved.

### Legal Research and Writing:

Over the last 20 years several modifications were made to the “Capstone” LSP 280 Legal Research and Writing course. In 2004 there were two classes – LSP 120 Legal Research and LSP 280 Legal Writing. Those classes were merged into one – LSP 280 Legal Research and Writing because of concerns that the students were not seeing the connections between the research they needed to master, and required writings they would be preparing for a legal environment. The combined class LSP 280 Legal Research and Writing lasted for several years but it became apparent that the workload was too demanding in one course. In 2012/2013 the classes were split back up. Each class consisted of 1.5 credits. Over the years it started to become clear that 1.5 credits were not enough. Students were completing work and dedicating time of at least 2 credits worth. In 2021 curriculum changes were made to make LSP 120 a 2-credit course, and LSP 280 became a 2-credit course as well. While students would successfully meet the assessment standards, they would indicate to the instructors that they were investing much more time than they expected with a 1.5 credit course, and that was substantiated by the instructors and coordinator.

### New “Capstone”:

With the expansion and redesign of the Internships, LSP 260, LSP 261 and LSP 262 are the new “Capstone” courses. All students in the LSP program are required to take a minimum of the 1 credit LSP 260 class. But are able to take the 2 credit or 3 credit classes (LSP 261 or LSP 262) if they want additional LSP elective credits. While each student’s internship experience is different, they do share common characteristics. Their placement may be at area law firms, courthouses, nonprofit organizations, risk management offices, human resources departments, or even police agencies, etc. The coordinator

works closely with students and area employers to find internship locations that can serve both parties. While the location may be different, the internships have served as an excellent vehicle for assessing the 6 program outcomes.

### Discussions during Covid:

During the pandemic, the coordinator stayed in communication with area employers, prior adjunct instructors and current instructors and students to discuss changes in the program. There were concerns about internship placement, employment opportunities and industry changes due to Covid.

Not surprisingly area employers were very receptive to students completing internships remotely, which has opened up that opportunity for future students that did not exist before. Discussions suggested removing ACC from the LSP program because area employers were not having LSP students do accounting. Law firms in particular hire outside accounting services. Discussions also suggested that we shift some CST classes to electives rather than required courses. Students (especially with the remote work during Covid) have a different background in computers now and they should only take CST courses if they need that particular skill set. Spreadsheets is not a function of a legal support professional and many law firms hire out IT services or have their own in-house IT departments. ACC 211 was removed from the program, CST 151 was moved to an elective and LIB 195 (library research) was removed as it is no longer offered.

### SLAC Meeting October 2021/EDU 379:

The coordinator participated in EDU 379 Spring 2021. EDU 379 is Assessment for Programs and Disciplines. During that course, work was done to update the LSP program outcomes, curriculum map, and discuss best practices for assessment. This work was further discussed in the SLAC (Student Learning Assessment Committee) meeting in October 2021. The program outcomes were slightly modified to what you see above and the curriculum mapping was updated. SLAC recommended that due to the small sample size that I have some years, I could combine years and report on my assessment later. I have 6 program outcomes currently – so I could gather data for 6 years and report out at that point on all 6 program outcomes.

### EDU 298:

Also, in the Spring of 2021, the coordinator attended the EDU 298 Best Practices in Teaching Intensive and Accelerated Courses. Many of the LSP courses run as accelerated courses because they are offered to students during spring or summer semesters. (Fall and Winter consist of 16-week courses, but spring or summer are 8-week classes). Moving forward some work and research will take place regarding offering all of the LSP courses in an accelerated format which might help students graduate closer to the 2-year map. As stated above, some students only take 1 class per semester. If the classes are accelerated, will they take more than 1 thereby moving up their potential graduation date?

### Program Review/PROE:

In Winter 2021 – the LSP program was selected to participate in the pilot program for the new program review process that Delta has established. The PROE process is a holistic view of program effectiveness and progress, and is designed to help the school see where we should focus our energies. The PROE process started with a pilot of several programs. These programs (LSP included) received data and the

coordinators had specific questions to answer to help drive discussions about their programs and identify needs. The program reviews were due February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022, with a Cycle 1 “close-out” meeting held August 2022 with Dean Ed Suniga. Following the program review meetings, coordinators received comments from anonymous reviewers. These reviews provided further guidance and suggestions. The final piece was a Program Improvement Plan which was due March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023. For LSP – I submitted a plan that included working toward research on how to increase the number of graduates. As indicated throughout this assessment story, about 50% of my LSP students do not intend to graduate. For my PROE, I would like to see if other institutions are also finding that, and if not, is it something that should be addressed here at Delta College.

**Outcome 1: Compose effective communication clearly and concisely substantiated by appropriate research.**

LSP 280 Legal Research and Writing – LSP Capstone

2004/2005 – Capstone research project, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2005/2006 – Capstone research project, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2006/2007 - Capstone research project, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

\*It is important to note that the students in the LSP program are for the most part very self-driven and will not accept anything else than an A. About 50% of the students each year are currently employed in area law firms, so they are already expected to be producing at top levels, and seem to put in more time and dedication than is typically shown in an undergraduate course.

2009/2010 – LSP 280 Capstone research project, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2011-2015 – All LSP courses evaluated during the Program of Studies/Year One and Two, the State Approval Process, the English Division reworking of reading and writing levels, and the creation of the Program Mapping and Curriculum Plans. Students consistently perform very high – at the 90% level. The only instances where that does not happen is if a student fails to finish the course.

2016/2017 – LSP 120 Legal Research. Multiple research assignments completed by students. Standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2019/2020 – LSP Internship, standard met. 100% of the students receive 100%. Continue to monitor, interview internship supervisors and students to consider any future changes.

**Outcome 2: Justify legal decisions based on substantive or procedural knowledge of the law.**

LSP 280 Legal Research and Writing – LSP Capstone

2004/2005 – Capstone research project, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2005/2006 – Capstone research project, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2006/2007 - Capstone research project, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

After three years of successful assessment, learning the process, making small adjustments, the coordinator narrowed the assessment for the 2007/2008 academic year. 4 courses were used to obtain a bigger sample size.



2007/2008 - LSP 250 Corporate Law, LSP 253 Bankruptcy Law, LSP 150 Real Estate Law and LSP 240 Domestic Relations – Different case Studies in all 4 elective courses show that 90% of the students are meeting the standard of 90% or better.

2008/2009 – LSP 280 Legal Research and Writing, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2011-2015 – All LSP courses evaluated during the Program of Studies/Year One and Two, the State Approval Process, the English Division reworking of reading and writing levels, and the creation of the Program Mapping and Curriculum Plans. Students consistently perform very high – at the 90% level. The only instances where that does not happen is if a student fails to finish the course.

2016/2017 – LSP 120 Legal Research. Multiple research assignments completed by students. Standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2018/2019 – LSP 150, LSP 210 Estates and Trusts, LSP 240 Domestic Relations and LSP 253. Elective courses combined to compare a larger sample size. Standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2019/2020 – LSP Internship, standard met. 100% of the students receive 100%. Continue to monitor, interview internship supervisors and students to consider any future changes.

**Outcome 3: Construct applicable documents or pleadings using appropriate terminology.**

LSP 280 Legal Research and Writing – LSP Capstone

2004/2005 – Capstone research project, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2005/2006 – Capstone research project, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2006/2007 - Capstone research project, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2011-2015 – All LSP courses evaluated during the Program of Studies/Year One and Two, the State Approval Process, the English Division reworking of reading and writing levels, and the creation of the Program Mapping and Curriculum Plans. Students consistently perform very high – at the 90% level. The only instances where that does not happen is if a student fails to finish the course.

2016/2017 – LSP 120 Legal Research. Multiple research assignments completed by students. Standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2019/2020 – LSP Internship, standard met. 100% of the students receive 100%. Continue to monitor, interview internship supervisors and students to consider any future changes.

**Outcome 4: Assess the legal or ethical implications of statutory or case law as it pertains to a variety of people.**

LSP 280 Legal Research and Writing – LSP Capstone

2004/2005 – Capstone research project, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.  
2005/2006 – Capstone research project, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.  
2006/2007 - Capstone research project, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2007/2008 - LSP 250 Corporate Law, LSP 253 Bankruptcy Law, LSP 150 Real Estate Law and LSP 240 Domestic Relations – Different case Studies in all 4 elective courses show that 90% of the students are meeting the standard of 90% or better.

2008/2009 – LSP 280 Legal Research and Writing, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2011-2015 – All LSP courses evaluated during the Program of Studies/Year One and Two, the State Approval Process, the English Division reworking of reading and writing levels, and the creation of the Program Mapping and Curriculum Plans. Students consistently perform very high – at the 90% level. The only instances where that does not happen is if a student fails to finish the course.

2016/2017 – LSP 120 Legal Research. Multiple research assignments completed by students. Standard met. 80% of the students receive 80% or better. **\*Standard was reduced this year based on feedback that the LSP program received during a SLAC meeting.** The standard of 90% is extremely high compared to other disciplines. This academic year we reduced the standard to 80%, but honestly it did not make a difference and we moved the standard back up the next year.

2017/2018 – LSP 115 Substantive Law, LSP 150 Real Estate Law, LSP 230 Civil Procedure, LSP 235 Criminal Law and LSP 280 Legal Writing. Classes were combined to get a larger sample size, and the coordinator evaluated the class projects which consist mainly of written Memos designed for a particular audience. Standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better. **\*While the standard of 90% was met, it is important to note that 2 students were not successful in meeting the standard. It would appear that life circumstances outside of the class were responsible for the unmet standard.**

2019/2020 – LSP Internship, standard met. 100% of the students receive 100%. Continue to monitor, interview internship supervisors and students to consider any future changes.

#### **Outcome 5: Demonstrate appropriate use of technology.**

LSP 280 Legal Research and Writing – LSP Capstone

2004/2005 – Capstone research project, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.  
2005/2006 – Capstone research project, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.  
2006/2007 - Capstone research project, standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2011/2012 – MGT 251 Business Law Research Project, standard met. 90% of the LSP students receive 90% or better.

2011-2015 – All LSP courses evaluated during the Program of Studies/Year One and Two, the State Approval Process, the English Division reworking of reading and writing levels, and the creation of the

Program Mapping and Curriculum Plans. Students consistently perform very high – at the 90% level. The only instances where that does not happen is if a student fails to finish the course.

2016/2017 – LSP 120 Legal Research. Multiple research assignments completed by students. Standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2019/2020 – LSP Internship, standard met. 100% of the students receive 100%. Continue to monitor, interview internship supervisors and students to consider any future changes.

**Outcome 6: Demonstrate competency in professional skills that meet or exceed current industry recognized standards.**

2004 – 2011 Any internships completed with external sites comes thru the office of the coordinator. This may include a site visit, interviews with the student and site supervisor, along with the review of a submitted project paper. From 2004 – 2011, students successfully met the standards required at their internships. I would even go so far as to say that 100% receive 100%. We are particularly mindful of the relationships and the LSP program has with area employers because they help drive our curriculum. We are also mindful of their input with regard to assessment as they serve our students with internship locations, court watching opportunities, and employment positions.

2010/2011 – The LSP advisory board asked for an external survey by the Office of Institutional Research. That survey was attempted but the response rate was unfortunately low. Individual advisory board members, the coordinator and adjunct instructors worked together during the academic year to rewrite the LSP program description, discuss pre-req reading levels of courses, and discuss changing the laddering of pre-reqs. The coordinator worked with the office for Academic Career Education to create and redesign the Internships available to students. This redesign was also based on student and area employer feedback to the coordinator that there should be coursework that would complement what the students were doing in the workforce. The Internships became – LSP 260 a 1 credit internship, LSP 261 a 2-credit internship and LSP 262 a 2-credit internship.

2011-2015 – All LSP courses evaluated during the Program of Studies/Year One and Two, the State Approval Process, the English Division reworking of reading and writing levels, and the creation of the Program Mapping and Curriculum Plans. Students consistently perform very high – at the 90% level. The only instances where that does not happen is if a student fails to finish the course.

2016/2017 – LSP 120 Legal Research. Multiple research assignments completed by students. Standard met. 90% of the students receive 90% or better.

2019/2020 – LSP Internship, standard met. 100% of the students receive 100%. Continue to monitor, interview internship supervisors and students to consider any future changes.

2020/2021 – LSP 120 & LSP 280. Standard met. 90% of the students receive 90%. \*While students are successful in the courses, there is not enough credit hours and time committed to these classes. LSP 120

& LSP 280 are both moving to 2.0 credits instead of the current 1.5. Students who did not meet the standard, their performance is attributed to the lack of completion of assignments.