

Job Description

Job Title:	Legal Assistant
Department:	Legal and Immigration Services
Reports To:	Legal Counsel
Jobs Reporting:	None
Salary Grade:	USG 8
Effective Date:	May 2022

Primary Purpose

The Legal Assistant represents the Mission and Values of Legal & Immigration Services (LIS). The incumbent is responsible for providing support for administrative tasks, file management, organization, drafting, research support, and a range of administrative tasks that contribute to the smooth and efficient operations of the office by providing support to all LIS Legal Counsel. Reporting jointly to the Legal Executive Officer, this position assists with the overall efficiency by assisting with the day-to-day operations and co-ordination of administrative operations of LIS.

Key Accountabilities

Support and Administration

- Supports the Legal Counsel(s) and the Legal Executive Officer with the coordination and scheduling and management of the Legal Counsel(s) calendar that could include multiple internal and/or external stakeholders.
- Identifies urgent issues that require immediate attention and facilitates a resolution, escalating issues that require the Legal Executive Officer or the Legal Counsel's attention, where necessary.
- Supports the Legal Counsel(s) and the Legal Executive Officer with electronic filing and file tracking systems, ensuring the accuracy and completeness of files and information.
- Proven ability to build strong relationships and work collaboratively with senior administration and with team members from a variety of disciplines.
- Must have broad knowledge of the various matters and responsibilities of the Legal Counsel(s) and the Legal Executive Officer in order to prepare materials required for effective participation in or chairing of meetings.
- Proactively offers advice regarding meetings and events that should be initiated by LIS.
- Acts as a point of contact between the Legal Counsel and senior leaders within the University to ensure the effective flow of information and follow up.
- Serving as a legal resource for informed legal decision-making and creative problem-solving to facilitate the University's pursuit of its mission of teaching, research, and service.
- Providing excellent and timely legal support to university faculty and staff to ensure excellence in fulfilling the University's legal and ethical obligations.
- Collaborates with and provides support to internal LIS colleagues who work inter-dependently.
- Facilitating all aspects of legal matters at the University as necessary or appropriate.
- Serving as a point of contact for interactions with external counsel, who may be retained by the General Counsel to support LIS from time to time, as circumstances warrant.

Strategic Legal Support and Leadership

- Prepares various legal documents, forms and materials for Legal Counsel review and approval (e.g. film releases, non-disclosure agreements, placement and affiliation agreements), and copies,

collates and prepares materials for signature/distribution to internal/external stakeholders.

- Prepare charts, chronologies, and summaries of documentary evidence for use by Legal Counsel.
- Provide background research on special projects, as assigned by Legal Counsel.
- Maintain awareness of current events, laws, and issues that affect the University.
- Assists with handling incoming correspondence, emails, confidential files, and other sensitive legal documents, determining the appropriate response or further action required.
- Assist with preparation of, filing of, and receipt of litigation documents and materials in the context of external administrative tribunal and court proceedings, when directed by Legal Counsel.
- Drafts responses or responds directly where appropriate, and reviews and proofreads Department documents and correspondence.
- Performs research and legal searches using CanLii and Carswell, etc. (i.e. researching case law).
- Provides administrative support with in-depth knowledge and management of a high volume of legal files and various matters and the overall day-to-day operations of LIS.
- Drafting and preparation of internal and external correspondence, various confidential legal documents, and forms to assist in the progression of legal procedures, as required.
- With the assistance of electronic data management systems, manages legal filing for files handled by Legal Counsel, in accordance with LIS processes, legal requirements, and University Policy, ensuring effective management of confidential and sensitive information.
- Tracks the progress, status, and deadlines related to legal matters, ensuring deadlines are not missed and bringing forward items for action, when necessary.
- Monitors LIS processes and provides proactive recommendations to support the ongoing refinement of LIS procedures to ensure quality of service.
- Liaises with external counsel, government agencies, courts, and tribunals for various matters.
- Serves as a point of contact for visitors, staff, faculty members, or students contacting the office regarding sensitive or highly confidential matters, answering or re-directing inquiries, as appropriate.
- Supports the team in preparing for guests.
- Maintains a strong knowledge base of university policies, resources and services, developing and fostering strong and constructive working relationships with senior leadership and administration of the University and often serving as a resource to consult and advise on internal and external stakeholders.

General Office

- Assists with booking travel for work related purposes.
- Maintaining best practices for file management utilizing the electronic data management system.
- Preparing team meeting agendas and meeting notes.
- Assists members of LIS with submitting Concur claims or other expense claims, ensuring all required documentation is provided.
- Promotes a culture of continuous improvement in terms of efficiency and leveraging systems capacities and technologies.
- Supports Legal Counsel in drafting the LIS communications, including but not limited to newsletters, as required.
- Ships packages using Agile shipping application; ensures confidential material is secure and prepares confidential shredding or recycling materials.
- Performs administrative tasks and assists with projects in support of the operations of the department.

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- High degree of accuracy and accountability is required given the reputational component of LIS.

Departmental Operations

- Collaborates with the LIS team to lead the preparation of regular university reporting updates by requesting information, coordinating meetings, drafting reports, and following-up on actionable and priority items.
- Provides relationship management and administrative co-ordination for LIS including preparation of reports, organizing meetings and developing agendas.
- A resource for informed decision-making and creative problem-solving.
- Prepares records for destruction or transfer to storage facilities, in accordance with retention and disposal policies.
- Performs other duties as assigned by the General Counsel, Legal Counsel, the Legal Executive Officer, or other members of LIS.

**All employees of the University are expected to follow University and departmental health and safety policy, procedures and work practices at all times. Employees are also responsible for the completion of all health and safety training, as assigned. Employees with staff supervision and/or management responsibilities will ensure that assigned staff abide by the above, and actively identify, assess and correct health and safety hazards, as required.*

Required Qualifications

Education

- Undergraduate Degree or equivalent education and experience required.
- College Diploma in a law-related discipline (e.g. Legal Assistant, Law Clerk, Paralegal), or equivalent extensive administrative experience.

Experience

- 5 plus years of experience providing administrative coordination and paralegal support in a complex office environment.
- Previous experience working as a paralegal providing administrative support preferred.
- Experience working as a legal assistant providing administrative support required.

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Demonstrated experience working in a highly confidential environment at the executive level.
- Provides courteous, timely, and efficient service while reflecting a positive attitude.
- Proven ability to manage a large volume of legal files, conflicting priorities and competing deadlines.
- Excellent Oral and written communication skills to clearly express ideas in an objective manner, and adapt communication style to suit the situation and audience.
- Have the ability to understand and appreciate diverse points of view about complex and often inter-related issues.
- Demonstrated ability to multi-task, take initiative, to work independently, maintain an organized work environment, and be part of a team in a fast-paced environment.
- Organizational and planning skills, with the ability to think logically and anticipate outcomes.
- High ethical standards with a strong commitment to maintain confidentiality and treat sensitive information with discretion.
- Resourceful, creative, and a thorough researcher, and problem-solver.
- Sound judgment and personal and professional integrity.
- Demonstrated ability to understand and resolve external and internal partner issues.
- Ability to maintain a positive, professional attitude with genuine customer service orientation with

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an ability to apply tact and diplomacy when dealing with sensitive client issues.

- Ability to follow formal business practices with high attention to detail.
- Adapts readily and effectively to changing priorities and demands.
- High ethical standards with a strong commitment to maintain confidentiality and treat sensitive information with discretion.
- Ability to interact professionally with senior administration, students, staff, faculty, and other members of the University community.
- This position works independently and collaboratively and requires outstanding client service, sound judgment, personal and professional integrity, a strong work ethic and an ability to work under challenging time constraints with competing priorities.
- Intermediate proficiency required in Microsoft Office in order to prepare formal correspondence, documents, emails, memos, and input departmental data into spreadsheets and databases.
- Knowledge and demonstrated experience with electronic data management filing systems, Adobe applications, and SharePoint, a preferred asset.
- Familiarity with the University of Waterloo's policies and guidelines preferred.

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Regular contact with the General Counsel and entire LIS team, Office of the Vice-President Academic & Provost and various other senior leadership positions, Deans, students, external counsel, and colleagues across the community.
- **Level of Responsibility:** This position is a member of the LIS department within the University and as such represents and speaks on behalf of LIS on various LIS related matters. The Legal Assistant performs no direct supervision of others. The Legal Assistant exercises discretionary authority and sound judgment to make decisions in the role of Legal Assistant on all matters relating to this Legal Assistant role at the University. The Legal Assistant will use their judgment to make decisions in a highly confidential environment at the executive level. They will be involved in developing recommendations to resolve highly sensitive, confidential matters that are critical to the University. The incumbent is expected to seek opportunities to raise legal compliance awareness within the University.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** This position is expected to be self-directed in responding to and providing coordination around legal requests received by LIS.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** Minimal demands typical of a position operating within an office environment. The incumbent must be able to manage concurrent assignments and prioritize workload in order to meet deadlines.
- **Working Environment:** Office based.