

**MIAMI-DADE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
LEGAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

**COMPETENCY STATEMENT**

**PLA2763 – Law Office Management**

**Course Description**

This course examines the application of computer technology in a law office. It covers equipment used in basic office functions, general office computer programs, and specialized legal software. It examines technological applications for calendaring, docketing, timekeeping and billing, database management, investigation, litigation support, rules of procedure and court procedures. Students learn how to use the Internet for general research and legal research.

**Credits:** 3

**Prerequisites and co-requisites:** PLA 2003, Fundamentals of Law; PLA 2104, Legal Research; ENC 1101, English Composition; PLA 2114, Legal Writing; and PLA 2203, Trial Preparation.

**Course Competencies:**

*Competency 1: The student will understand the basic computer applications in a law office.*

The student will be able to:

- A. Describe PC components and functions.
- B. Explain the function of Windows.
- C. Prepare legal documents using a word processing program.
- D. Compose and send an e-mail message.
- E. Discuss ethical considerations regarding e-mail in the work place.
- F. Discuss the importance of maintaining copies of e-mail messages in client files.
- G. Identify ethical concerns within the context of law office management systems.
- H. Use a fax machine to send and retrieve information.
- I. Utilize a scan machine to transfer hard copies of documents into a computer readable format.

*Competency 2: The student will understand how to use more advanced computer applications and specialized legal software.*

The student will be able to:

- A. Calendar work deadlines, filing dates, meetings and other events using Abacus.
- B. Maintain different databases, including an expert witness database.
- C. Use Summation throughout the litigation process.
- D. Maintain time and billing records through the use of Timeslips.
- E. Create a presentation using PowerPoint.
- F. Chart information using spreadsheet software.
- G. Evaluate a lawsuit involving extensive documentation to determine which computerized database management system is appropriate.
- H. Explain how to calculate billable hours.

*Competency 3: The student will understand how to navigate the Internet for legal research.*

The student will be able to:

- A. Describe the various search engines available for Internet research.
- B. Access various state websites in order to conduct legal research.
- C. Perform computer assisted legal research relating to issues in a particular lawsuit.

*Competency 4: The student will understand how to navigate the Internet for general research.*

The student will be able to:

- A. Navigate the Internet in order to find a law firm or lawyer.
- B. Access various newspapers via the Internet and conduct a search within the newspaper.
- D. Conduct various corporate searches, including: SEC searches; Secretary of State searches; and Finance searches.
- E. Locate the Broward County Circuit Court and other court websites and conduct a search therein, including a search of the court's docket and property records.
- F. Locate experts via the Internet.
- G. Determine the weather on a particular day via the Internet.

*Competency 5: The student will demonstrate an understanding of various CD-ROM legal databases.*

The student will be able to:

- A. Identify several companies that provide legal products on CD-ROM.
- B. Discuss the pros and cons of CD-ROM use.
- C. Use a CD-R and a CD-RW on a computer.

*Competency 6: The student will understand how to use online sources to access Federal District Court Rules.*

The student will be able to:

- A. Examine the Federal Rules in order to determine what steps to take throughout the court process.
- B. Identify a Docket Entry Number.
- C. Determine various time requirements found within the Federal Rules.
- D. Locate a specific case on a court docket.

*Competency 7: The student will understand how to use various technologies to market a law office and prepare presentations.*

The student will be able to:

- A. Prepare a web page.
- B. Prepare a marketing brochure.
- C. Prepare slides using graphics to aid expert testimony.
- D. Prepare charts to aid in the presentation of expert testimony.