

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL SERVICE
PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT MANUAL
General Information Bulletin #24-02

TO: Department and Agency Directors of Human Resources, Personnel and Affirmative Action Officers, Equal Opportunity Specialists, Diversity and Inclusion Specialists

FROM: Jessica Rowe, Deputy Commissioner for Merit System Operations

SUBJECT: Legal Assistant Traineeship Coursework Requirements

DATE: June 24, 2024

This General Information Bulletin provides information about updated requirements for the Legal Assistant Traineeship and replaces guidance previously provided in memorandum dated September 22, 2011, issued by the Directors of the Staffing Services Division and the Division of Classification and Compensation.

Various agency representatives continue to express concerns about the ability of individuals serving in the Legal Assistant Traineeship to complete the specific college coursework or certificate programs required, resulting in individuals being unable to advance to the full performance level. In response to these concerns, the traineeship coursework requirements have been updated allowing trainees to complete 12 courses in the areas of Introduction to Law, and Legal Research and Writing. These courses will now be offered through the Office of the Attorney General via online training or live webinars. College coursework completed under the previous requirements may be counted towards one or more of the 12 courses required.

Mandatory Courses

Agencies are required to develop an Individualized Development Plan to identify the courses to be completed during the traineeship. Six of the following courses must be completed to advance to the Legal Assistant Trainee 2, SG-13 title. All courses must be completed to advance to the Legal Assistant 1, SG-14 title. *Agencies have the discretion to make equivalency determinations for completed college coursework or certificate programs.*

To establish access to the portal for first-time users, the managing attorney or assigned designee must send an email to the LegalAssistant.Training@ag.ny.gov, and include the users name, agency, contact information, hire date, and supervisor name and contact information. The first-time user will then be provided instructions and access to the portal. The email body should include the user's title and the assigned supervisor's contact information. After the original live course is held and recorded, users will be able to access the portal to take the course on demand to complete the requirement.

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TOPIC AREA	COURSE TITLE	LIVE COURSE
Introduction to Law Series	Three Branches of Government	July 2024
	Federal Court System	September 2024
	State Court System	October 2024
	Legal Terminology/Sources of Law	November 2024
	Life Cycle of a Case	December 2024
	Professional Responsibility	January 2025
Legal Research & Writing Series	Online Reference Systems: Lexis+ and Westlaw	January 2025
	Keys to Effective Communication	Rolling Basis
	Professional Writing Course	Rolling Basis
	Legal Writing 1	February 2025
	Legal Writing 2	March 2025
	Legal Writing 3*	Rolling Basis

* Legal Writing 3 will be completed by the Trainee and their managing attorney. This course requires Trainees to produce two to three different writing samples, as determined at the discretion of the agency. Writing samples should be graded by the Managing Attorney on a pass/fail basis and should be indicative of work expected to be produced at the full performance level. It is the supervisors' responsibility to retain writing samples and report satisfactory completion of this course to the Office of the Attorney General at LegalAssistant.Training@ag.ny.gov.

Advanced Placement

All advanced placement decisions are at the agency's discretion.

When appointing from an appropriate eligible list, the standard rules of reachability still apply; however, the level to which a reachable candidate may be appointed depends on their individual qualifications. Completion of six courses is required for advanced placement to Legal Assistant Trainee 2. If the top three acceptors haven't completed the courses or their equivalent, agencies must fill the vacancy at the Trainee 1 level by selecting one of those

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acceptors. Agencies cannot skip three Trainee 1 level acceptors to reach a candidate who meets the qualifications for advanced placement at the Trainee 2 or full performance level.

Advanced placement appointments will be made directly from the Legal Assistant Trainee 1 eligible list to the Legal Assistant Trainee 2 or to the Legal Assistant 1 title. Once a permanent trainee appointment has been made, the agency cannot subsequently submit a new appointment to advance place the appointee. The employee must progress through the entire traineeship. If an employee is appointed as a Trainee 1 but has completed five of the six courses required for appointment to a Trainee 2, the employee may not then be subsequently appointed to a Legal Assistant Trainee 2 upon completion of the sixth course required for appointment to the Trainee 2 level.

Early Advancement

Early Advancement during the traineeship will only be allowed in accordance with SPMM Advisory Memorandum #15-01 and memo [Early-Advancement-Memo-01182024.pdf \(ny.gov\)](#) and is at the discretion of the agency.

The submission of the NYSTEP transaction for the early advancement will be the agency's attestation that the Trainee 2 is performing the full range of duties and responsibilities of the G-14 position and has completed all the required courses.

Transfer to the Legal Assistant Traineeship

To review the requirements necessary for transfer among clerical, keyboarding, and office assistant titles, including the Legal Assistant Trainee 1, Legal Assistant Trainee 2, and Legal Assistant 1 titles, please refer to [Policy Bulletin 19-01](#).

At the discretion of the appointing authority, individuals transferring during the first year of the traineeship may have time served in the prior Legal Assistant Trainee 1 position credited towards service in the new Legal Assistant Trainee 1 position. Individuals transferring during the second year of the traineeship will not have time served in the prior Legal Assistant Trainee 2 position credited toward service in the new Legal Assistant Trainee 2 position. Individuals must complete a full year as a Legal Assistant Trainee 2 unless, at the hiring agency's discretion, the employee is early advanced after 6 months of service as a Legal Assistant Trainee 2. **Courses completed in an employee's prior position must be counted when determining advancement to the Legal Assistant Trainee 2 and Legal Assistant 1.** Individuals transferring to another Legal Assistant 1 position after completing the traineeship will not be required to complete any additional courses.

Reinstatements

Former New York State employees who served permanently as a Legal Assistant 1 may be reinstated under Civil Service Rule 5.4 to Legal Assistant 1 and are not required to complete the courses referenced above.

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New York State employees who have served permanently in a clerical, keyboarding, or office assistant title other than Legal Assistant 1, and who are eligible for reinstatement to the Legal Assistant titles based on service in a transfer eligible title, must show completion of the mandatory courses or show completion of equivalent college coursework or certificate programs referenced above prior to an appointment to a level higher than the Trainee 1 level.

Questions should be directed to your Staffing Services Representative.