ALL ABOUT THE M.A. IN APPLIED LEGAL STUDIES

The Applied Legal Studies Program

This professional degree program is primarily for students intending to practice as Notaries Public in the Province of British Columbia. It may also be of interest to existing Notaries who wish to obtain a graduate degree focused upon their area of professional practice. At this time, the program is of limited value to those who do not want, or do not already have, a career as a Notary.

The degree - a Master of Arts (M.A.) - is granted upon the successful completion of the required number of courses and a final examination. In the case of aspiring Notaries, the degree will prepare students for admission to practice, subject to further requirements prescribed by the Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia, and by provincial legislation.

The number of individuals entering practice in British Columbia is ultimately governed by the Society of Notaries Public. Conferral of the degree is no guarantee of a position in the Society’s post degree professional training programs or in professional practice.

If you are interested in becoming a Notary Public the starting point is with the Society of Notaries Public, not with Simon Fraser University. The Society has a website (www.notaries.bc.ca) that sets out everything you would ever want to know about becoming a Notary, as well as being a Notary, and includes the steps to follow if you wish to pursue a career in the profession. Once you have applied to become a Notary, and you have completed the rigorous screening process, you will be invited to apply for admission to the Applied Legal Studies program.

Program Admission Requirements

Applicants should regard their satisfaction of the entrance requirements as meaning only that they are eligible for selection to the program. Since there is competition for admission (usually only 30 seats are available each year), a regular applicant should have an undergraduate grade point average substantially higher than the minimum in order to have a reasonable chance of admission.

To be eligible for selection, an applicant must have

a) obtained an undergraduate degree in an approved course of study from a degree granting institution with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher (a B, or good, overall grade) or

b) obtained an undergraduate degree from a degree granting institution with a cumulative grade point average of less than 3.0 (B, or good, overall grade) and have subsequently completed an approved course of study at a degree granting institution resulting in, (i) the award of either a certificate, diploma or other approved qualification with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (a B, or good, overall grade) or higher, or (ii) a recognized professional qualification relevant to practice as a notary, such as an accounting designation, or
c) successful completion of 90 or more units of an approved course of study leading to an undergraduate degree at a degree granting institution with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher (a B or good, overall grade), and possess sufficient and appropriate work experience relevant to practice as a notary that, in the view of the admissions committee, compensates for the lack of a completed degree, or

d) practiced as a Notary Public for a period of at least 10 years, be in good standing with the Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia, and have completed an approved course of study at a degree granting institution resulting in the award of a certificate, diploma or other approved qualification with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher (a B, or good, overall grade)

Applicants are responsible for providing full documentation. Incomplete applications will not be evaluated.

Please note that, following a review of an application, the Admissions Committee may decide that an applicant’s academic background needs strengthening in a particular area. If this is the case, an application may be accepted on the condition that extra work (e.g., in the area of law or legal studies) is completed prior to admission.

Application Procedure

Potential applicants other than those who are already practicing as Notaries in British Columbia must contact the Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia before submitting an application to ensure they are likely to be eligible for admission to practice in the province.

The following must be submitted by March 1st each year, for admission to the program in the Fall of that year:

- completed application form which can be obtained from the Dean of Graduate Studies website;
- all post-secondary transcripts;
- application fee of $90;
- other documentation as required
Degree Requirements

The following ten graduate courses are required. Courses are normally offered in the following sequence.

**Fall Term**

ALS 601-3 Canadian Law and Legal System  
ALS 602-3 Legal Research and Communication  
ALS 610-3 Contract Law

**Spring Term**

ALS 603-3 Legal Philosophy  
ALS 611-3 Real Property I  
ALS 620-3 Selected Topics in Applied Legal Studies

**Summer Intersession**

ALS 612-3 Real Property II  
ALS 615-3 Personal Planning

**Fall Term**

ALS 630-6 Topics in Legal Practice  
ALS 631-3 MA Final Examination

The courses taught during the first term usually employ a mixed model of delivery. Students attend campus for up to two weeks at the start of the term; weeks 3 through 12 are delivered online with weekly virtual meetings for each course. Spring Term courses are usually delivered in the same way beginning with one week of on-campus classes. Students attend campus for the whole of the Summer Intersession (usually from early May to early June). The final course in the last term may follow the same mixed delivery model. Students also complete a final examination (normally at the end of the last term) that shows mastery of the main elements of the program.

While students are encouraged to complete the degree program within 16 months it is possible to take courses and complete the program on a part-time basis over a longer period. It should be noted, however, that some courses must be taken sequentially, and that all the requirements for the degree must be completed within 5 years. Students wishing to take the program on a part-time basis should contact the Director of the Applied Legal Studies Program for further information.

Those who are practicing as Notaries may be permitted to substitute up to 9 credit hours of courses, with the approval of the Director of the Applied Legal Studies Program. Only one of these courses may be a directed readings course.