

## Course Outcomes Guide

Course/Program Title: PLS 104 Principles of Litigation  
and Spring 2013

Date: Spring 2014

Course/Program Team: Loretta Thornhill and Donald Beachley

Expected Learning Outcomes:

- \* demonstrate knowledge of basic civil litigation terms
- \* demonstrate knowledge of Maryland and Federal Rules of Civil Procedure
- \* apply knowledge to prepare complaints, motions, and other pleadings
- \* identify problems and develop solutions (including case briefs)
- \* demonstrate professional and ethical behavior

Assessment:

1. Students demonstrate achievement of the outcomes through quizzes and exams. In addition, the outcomes are assessed through the production of homework. Student achievement is also assessed through participation in class discussions and projects.

2. The Paralegal Studies program has an active advisory committee which meets at least once annually. One of the topics of discussion is always an assessment of our students, the courses and the program. The following are a constant topic for discussion:

- \*a deficit in writing skills
- \*a deficit in proofreading skills
- \*lack of professionalism

3. In the Fall semester 2012 we launched a pilot assessment tool. Each paralegal professor was asked to select at least one major assignment which would demonstrate skills and knowledge offered in the course. The course outcomes assessments consisted of three parts:

- \*a common grading rubric
- \*a common grading sheet
- \*a common data collection sheet

Based on the data we are able to assess whether students have successfully met desired outcomes. The data also indicates where we need to modify course content to improve achievement of learning outcomes. This tool will be used this spring for the first time in this class.

SPRING 2014 DATA

Spring 2014 (Student Learning Outcome)

Assignment #3 requested the student to prepare a Complaint and Answer based upon a hypothetical scenario. The ability to prepare such documents is an essential skill for a litigation paralegal.

The results were as follows:

38% (6 out of 16) A

50% B

6% C

6% F

#### SPRING 2013 DATA

Results for assignment 1, *Bond v. Messerman*. Brief:

	Element 1	Element 2	Element 3	Element 4	TOTAL
Student 1	3	4	5	4	16
Student 2	3	4	5	4	16
Student 3	5	5	4	5	19
Student 4	5	4	5	4	18
Student 5	4	5	4	4	17
Student 6	4	4	4	5	17
Student 7	4	5	4	4	17
Student 8	4	5	5	4	18
Student 9	5	5	4	4	18

44% A

56% B

Validation: to be determined

Results: SPRING 2014: The students generally did a good job on the assignment. However, they had some difficulty concisely setting forth the applicable facts in a logical manner. Perhaps more importantly, the students had difficulty alleging separate causes of action for separate torts (e.g. negligence, strict liability, etc.). A few students need work on basic grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Spring 2013: Students need more practice with writing and analytical skills. They also need to develop professional attitudes and behaviors. They did well in analyzing the content and the basic points of law in the case to be briefed.

Follow up: SPRING 2014: There could be more focus placed on these elements in the assignment as well as additional review. Students need to be reminded that basic writing skills are essential and they might be referred to the Learning Success Center for additional review of these elements.

SPRING 2013: More practice writing assignments will be given. Also, all instructors in all Paralegal courses should incorporate discussions and exercises to focus on the need to dress professionally, demonstrate good manners, and demonstrate self-motivation and initiative