

# Legal Office Assisting

## Study Guide

**Assessment:**  
**0101 Legal Office Assistant**

Aligned to the NALS...  
the Association for Legal  
Professionals



*career*tech ✓  
**Testing**  
*The Provider of Online Testing Solutions*



## Overview

This study guide is designed to help students prepare for the Legal Office Assistant assessment. It not only includes information about the assessment, but also the skills standards upon which the assessment is based and test taking strategies.

Each of the four sections in this guide provides useful information for students preparing for the Legal Office Assistant assessment.

- CareerTech and Competency-Based Education: A Winning Combination
- Legal Office Assistant assessment
  - ▶ Assessment Information
  - ▶ Standards and Test Content
  - ▶ Sample Questions
  - ▶ Abbreviations, Symbols, and Acronyms
- Strategies for Test Taking Success
- Notes

This assessment is aligned with NALS...the Association for Legal Professionals. NALS remains a leader in the legal services industry offering professional development by providing continuing legal education, certifications, information, and training to those choosing the legal services industry as their career. NALS members represent every area of this industry from paralegals and legal assistants to legal administrators and office managers. This assessment measures a student's ability to apply knowledge of the skills necessary for success as a legal assistant.

NALS...the Association for Legal Professionals: [www.nals.org](http://www.nals.org)

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## CareerTech and Competency-Based Education: A Winning Combination

Competency-based education uses learning outcomes that emphasize both the application and creation of knowledge and the mastery of skills critical for success. In a competency-based education system, students advance upon mastery of competencies, which are measurable, transferable outcomes that empower students.

Career and technology education uses industry professionals and certification standards to identify the knowledge and skills needed to master an occupation. This input provides the foundation for development of curriculum, assessments and other instructional materials needed to prepare students for wealth-generating occupations and produce comprehensively trained, highly skilled employees demanded by the work force.

### Tools for Success

CareerTech education relies on three basic instructional components to deliver competency-based instruction: skills standards, curriculum materials, and competency assessments.

**Skills standards** provide the foundation for competency-based instruction and outline the knowledge and skills that must be mastered in order to perform related jobs within an industry. Skills standards are aligned with national skills standards and/or industry certification requirements; therefore, a student trained to the skills standards is equally employable in local, state and national job markets.

**Curriculum materials and textbooks** contain information and activities that teach students the knowledge and skills outlined in the skills standards. In addition to complementing classroom instruction, curriculum resources include supplemental activities that enhance learning by providing opportunities to apply knowledge and demonstrate skills.

**Certification Assessments** test the student over material outlined in the skills standards and taught using the curriculum materials and textbooks. When used with classroom performance evaluations, certification assessments provide a means of measuring occupational readiness.

Each of these components satisfies a unique purpose in competency-based education and reinforces the knowledge and skills students need to gain employment and succeed on the job.

### Measuring Success

Evaluation is an important component of competency-based education. Pre-training assessments measure the student's existing knowledge prior to receiving instruction and ensure the student's training builds upon this knowledge base. Formative assessments administered throughout the training process provide a means of continuously monitoring the student's progress towards mastery.

Certification assessments provide a means of evaluating the student's mastery of knowledge and skills. Coaching reports communicate assessment scores to students and provide a breakdown of assessment results by standard area. The coaching report also shows how well the student has mastered skills needed to perform major job functions and identifies areas of job responsibility that may require additional instruction and/or training.

# Legal Office Assistant Assessment Information

## What is the Legal Office Assistant assessment?

The Legal Office Assistant assessment is an end-of-program assessment for students in the Legal Office Assistant program. The assessment provides an indication of student mastery of knowledge and concepts necessary for success in this area.

## How was the assessment developed?

The assessment was developed by the CareerTech Testing Center. The assessment and standards align with NALS...the Association for Legal Professionals. Items were developed and reviewed by a committee of subject matter experts.

**Frequency:** represents how often the task is performed on the job. Frequency rating scales vary for different occupations. The rating scale used in this publication is presented below:

1 = less than once a week      2 = at least once a week      3 = once or more a day

**Criticality:** denotes the level of consequence associated with performing a task incorrectly. The rating scale used in this publication is presented below:

1 = slight                                      2 = moderate                                      3 = extreme

## What does the assessment cover?

Specifically, the tests include multiple-choice test items over the following areas:

### Legal Office Assistant (70 questions)

Demonstrate Proper Use of Basic Legal Concepts and Terminology	9%
Demonstrate Grammar Usage Skills	27%
Demonstrate Appropriate Communication Skills	10%
Create Legal Correspondence	7%
Create and Format Court and Legal Documents	4%
Demonstrate Appropriate Mail Handling Procedures	4%
Demonstrate Appropriate Filing Procedures	6%
Demonstrate Knowledge of Basic Accounting Terms and Procedures	2%
Demonstrate Familiarity with Computer Information Systems	4%
Demonstrate General Legal Knowledge	7%
Demonstrate Knowledge of Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility	10%
Demonstrate Time Management Skills	10%

## What is the benefit of using the assessment?

Students receive a certificate for each assessment that he/she passes. This certificate may be included in his/her portfolio and used to communicate the student's mastery of the subject matter to potential employers.

## When should the assessment be taken?

The CareerTech Testing Center recommends that students take these assessments as soon as possible after receiving all standards-related instruction, rather than waiting until the end of the school year.

## Is the assessment timed?


No. Although students may take as long as they need, most students finish an assessment within one hour.

## What resources can students use on these assessments?

Students are allowed to use calculators and scratch paper on CTTC assessments; however, these items must be provided by the testing proctor and returned to the proctor before the student's exam is submitted for scoring. Calculator apps on cell phones and other devices may not be used on these assessments.

## What accommodations can be made for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)?

Accommodations are allowed for students with an Individualized Education Plan. Examples of allowable accommodations include:

- Extended time — This assessment is not timed; therefore, students may take as much time as needed to finish. The assessment must be completed in one testing session.
- Readers — A reader may be used to read the assessment to a student who has been identified as needing this accommodation.
- Enlarged text — Students needing this accommodation can activate this feature by clicking the  icon in the upper right corner of the screen.

## What can students expect on Test Day?

All CTTC assessments are web-based and delivered exclusively by a proctor in the school's assessment center. The proctor **cannot** be an instructor or anyone who was involved with the student during instruction.

Assessments are delivered in a question-by-question format. When a question is presented, the student can select a response or leave the question unanswered and advance to the next question. Students may also flag questions to revisit before the test is scored. All questions must be answered before the test can be submitted for scoring.

After the assessment is scored, the student will receive a score report that not only shows the student's score on the assessment, but also how the student performed in each standard area.

## Can students retake the test?

Students may retake the test unless their school or state testing policies prohibit retesting. Students who can retest must wait at least three days between test attempts.

# Standards and Test Content

## Legal Office Assistant

### Demonstrate Proper Use of Basic Legal Concepts and Terminology (5 questions)

1. Recognize sources of the law **(3/3)**
  - Define common law/case law
    - Explain precedent
    - Define stare decisis
  - Understand statutes as sources of law
  - Understand ordinances as sources of law
  - Understand constitutions (federal and state) as sources of law
  - Understand administrative regulations as sources of law
2. Identify ways to categorize law **(3/3)**
  - Define civil law
  - Define criminal law
  - Define substantive law
  - Define procedural law
3. Define basic legal terminology **(3/3)**
  - Create a working knowledge of the parties to a lawsuit
    - Plaintiff (petitioner in a domestic case)
    - Defendant (respondent in a domestic case)
    - Litigant
    - Legal capacity
  - Identify pleadings in civil and criminal cases
    - Define pleading
    - Define petition
    - Define complaint
    - Define information
    - Define indictment
  - Create a working knowledge of damages in a civil case
    - Actual/compensatory damages
    - Punitive/exemplary damages
    - Nominal damages
4. Understand standards and burdens of proof **(3/3)**
  - Define burden of proof
    - Criminal cases
    - Civil cases
  - Define standard of proof
    - Criminal cases
    - Civil cases



## Demonstrate Grammar Usage Skills (19 questions)

1. Demonstrate appropriate grammar and word usage when drafting legal documents **(3/3)**
  - Understand basic grammar rules for:
    - Adjectives
    - Adverbs
    - Conjunctions
    - Nouns
    - Plurals
    - Possessives
    - Prepositions
    - Pronouns
    - Subject and verb agreement
    - Verbs
2. Understand basic rules for word usage, including: **(3/3)**
  - Comparisons
  - Words that sound alike or look alike
  - Words written as solid words or separate words
3. Demonstrate appropriate punctuation when drafting legal documents **(3/3)**
  - Understand the basic punctuation rules for:
    - Apostrophes
    - Asterisks
    - Brackets
    - Colons
    - Commas
    - Dashes
    - Diagonals
    - Ellipsis marks
    - Exclamation points
    - Hyphens
    - Parentheses
    - Periods
    - Question marks
    - Quotation marks
    - Semicolons
    - Underscores
  - Understand the rules for keyboarding punctuation marks
4. Demonstrate appropriate number usage when drafting legal documents **(3/3)**
  - Understand basic number usage rules
  - Understand rules for expressing numbers in both words and figures
  - Understand special number usage rules for:
    - UnderscoresAddresses
    - Adjacent numbers
    - Ages and anniversaries
    - Beginning of sentences
    - Clock time
    - Dates
    - Decimals
    - Fractions
    - Indefinite numbers and amounts
    - Measurements
    - Money
    - Ordinal numbers
    - Percentages
    - Periods of time
    - Ratios and proportions
    - Roman numerals
5. Demonstrate appropriate capitalization when drafting legal documents **(3/3)**
  - Understand basic capitalization rules for:
    - Common nouns
    - First words
    - Proper nouns

- Understand special capitalization rules for:
    - Abbreviations
    - Course titles, subjects, and academic degrees
    - Family titles
    - Government bodies
    - Holidays, seasons, events, and periods
    - Hyphenated words
    - Titles of literary and artistic works
    - Money
    - Nouns with numbers or letters
    - Organizations
    - Personal, professional, and civic titles
    - Places, areas, and directions
    - Races, peoples, and languages
6. Demonstrate appropriate spelling when drafting legal documents **(3/3)**
    - Understand basic spelling rules
    - Understand basic spelling rules for compound words
    - Understand basic spelling rules for prefixes and suffixes
    - Demonstrate familiarity with the correct spelling of troublesome words
  7. Demonstrate good composition and expression when drafting legal documents **(3/3)**
    - Demonstrate clarity of writing when drafting legal documents
    - Demonstrate conciseness of writing when drafting legal documents
    - Avoid outmoded or overused expressions when drafting legal documents
    - Demonstrate appropriate sentence structure when drafting legal documents, including:
      - Dangling construction
      - Misplaced modifiers
      - Parallel structure
    - Demonstrate positive, tactful tone when drafting legal documents
    - Demonstrate unity and coherence when drafting legal documents
  8. Draft appropriately formatted interoffice memorandums **(3/3)**
  9. Draft appropriately formatted court and legal documents **(3/3)**

## **Demonstrate Appropriate Communication Skills (7 questions)**

1. Demonstrate knowledge of verbal skills **(3/3)**
2. Demonstrate knowledge of listening skills **(3/3)**
3. Demonstrate knowledge of writing skills **(3/3)**
4. Demonstrate ability to accept and/or give constructive criticism **(3/3)**
5. Exhibit appropriate human relations and customer service skills **(3/3)**
  - Assuming authority
  - Professionalism
  - Conflict management
  - Dealing with difficult people
  - Office protocol
  - Taking responsibility
  - Working with peers effectively
6. Understand Appropriate Telephone Etiquette **(3/3)**
  - Demonstrate courtesy
  - Understand the importance of first impressions over the telephone
  - Understand appropriate telephone use in the legal office setting
7. Understand the Procedures for Making Travel Arrangements **(3/3)**



## Create Legal Correspondence (5 questions)

1. Create appropriately formatted letters **(3/3)**
  - Understand correct address placement in letters
  - Use appropriate delivery and copy notations in letters
  - Demonstrate familiarity with various letter styles
  - Identify the parts of a letter
  - Understand the correct usage of postscripts in letters
  - Demonstrate familiarity with different punctuation styles used in letters
  - Use appropriate salutations in letters
2. Create appropriately formatted envelopes **(3/3)**
  - Understand correct address placement on envelopes
  - Use appropriate mailing notations on envelopes
  - Understand on-receipt notations
3. Draft appropriately formatted interoffice memorandums **(3/3)**



## Create and Format Court and Legal Documents (3 questions)

1. Draft appropriately formatted court and legal documents **(3/3)**
  - Answers
  - Complaints and petitions
  - Discovery
  - Judgments and decrees
  - Motions and orders
  - Notices
  - Summonses and citations
  - Basic citations knowledge

## Demonstrate Appropriate Mail Handling Procedures (3 questions)

1. Understand how to process mail in the legal office **(3/3)**
  - Identify procedures for sorting and opening mail
  - Understand the registering, dating, and time-stamping of mail
  - Practice reading, underlining, and annotating mail
2. Understand the importance of proofreading and mailability **(3/3)**
3. Demonstrate familiarity with delivery and mailing services **(3/3)**
  - Differentiate between different delivery services
    - Freight services
    - International shipments
    - Parcel delivery services
    - Private mail services
  - Understand correct mailing procedures for all classes of domestic mail
  - Demonstrate familiarity with special mail services
    - Certificate of mailing
    - Certified mail
    - Forwarding, returning, and remailing
    - Insured mail
    - Registered mail
    - Restricted delivery
    - Return receipt
    - Special delivery
    - Special handling

## **Demonstrate Appropriate Filing Procedures (4 questions)**

1. Understand the general principles of records management **(3/3)**
2. Explore different filing systems **(3/3)**
  - Identify various methods for filing
    - Alphabetic
    - Chronologic
    - Geographical
    - Numeric
    - Subject
  - Compare the advantage and disadvantages of various filing methods
3. Explore different types of file management **(3/3)**
  - Identify alphabetic indexes
  - Identify cross-references
  - Explain indexing and coding
4. Understand basic filing procedures **(3/3)**
  - Explore file organization
  - Prepare materials for filing
  - Explain charge-out methods
  - Discuss the retention of files
5. Understand basic filing rules **(3/3)**
  - Identify basic filing principles
    - Business names
    - Governmental names
    - Organizational names
    - Personal names

## **Demonstrate Knowledge of Basic Accounting Terms and Procedures (2 question)**

1. Understand accounting terminology and procedures **(3/3)**
  - Identify computations for legal documents
  - Understand procedures for depositing funds
    - Completing deposit slips
    - Endorsements
  - Differentiate between firm bank accounts and trust bank accounts
  - Explain how to keep activity registers, time sheets, diaries, etc.
  - Write checks
  - Understand the process for stopping payment on checks
  - Understand the use of special checks
    - Bank drafts
    - Certified checks
    - Cashier's checks

## **Demonstrate Familiarity with Computer Information Systems (3 questions)**

1. Identify computer systems **(3/3)**
  - Mainframe
  - Mini
  - Micro

2. Identify computer hardware components **(3/3)**
  - Central processing unit
  - Input devices
  - Output devices
  - Storage devices
3. Explain equipment characteristics **(3/3)**
  - Disk drives
  - Display monitors
  - Keyboards
  - Memory
  - Printers
4. Differentiate among different types of computer software **(3/3)**
  - Applications software
  - Operating systems software
5. Process documents for the legal office **(3/3)**
  - Create documents
  - Edit documents
  - Format documents
  - Input information into documents
  - Prepare special layout design
6. Demonstrate familiarity with electronic mail **(3/3)**
7. Demonstrate familiarity with the Internet **(3/3)**
8. Demonstrate familiarity with conflicts check systems **(3/3)**

## **Demonstrate General Legal Knowledge (5 questions)**

1. Understand the structure and function of state court systems **(3/3)**
  - Understand the structure and function of state civil courts
    - Identify the function of the District Court
    - Identify the function of the Court of Civil Appeals
  - Define discretionary appeal
    - Identify the function of the State Supreme Court
  - Understand the structure and function of state criminal courts
    - Identify the function of the District Court
    - Identify the function of the Court of Criminal Appeals
  - Define discretionary appeal
2. Understand the structure and function of the federal court system **(3/3)**
  - Understand the structure and function of federal civil/criminal courts
    - Identify the function of the United States District Court
    - Identify the function of the Circuit Court of Appeals
  - Define discretionary appeal
    - Identify the function of the United States Supreme Court **(3/3)**
3. Understand concepts of jurisdiction
  - Define jurisdiction
    - Identify the different types of jurisdiction
  - Define venue

4. Identify types of wills **(3/3)**
5. Define real estate terms **(3/3)**
6. Understand concepts of ownership of real estate **(3/3)**
7. Identify different forms of doing business **(3/3)**
8. Explain corporate structure and operations **(3/3)**
9. Understand different types of bankruptcy relief **(3/3)**
10. Identify the four essential elements of a valid contract **(3/3)**
11. Define litigation **(3/3)**
12. Identify types of litigation **(3/3)**
13. Understand the process for filing the complaint or petition **(3/3)**
14. Understand the legal concept of marriage **(3/3)**
15. Understand divorce/dissolution of marriage proceedings **(3/3)**
16. List and define classes of crimes **(3/3)**
17. Understand criminal proceedings **(3/3)**

### **Demonstrate Knowledge of Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility (7 questions)**

1. Understand Ethics as Related to the Legal Profession **(3/3)**
  - Avoid the appearance of impropriety
  - Deal with confidential information
  - Guard privileged communications
  - Preserve the identity of funds and property of clients
  - Promote confidence in the legal profession
  - Support integrity in the legal profession
  - Understand what constitutes the unauthorized practice of law
  - Understand and deal with conflicts of interest
2. Understand the Role of the Notary Public in the Legal Office Setting **(3/3)**
  - Identify the duties and responsibilities of a notary public
  - Explain how to become a notary public in the state

### **Demonstrate Time Management Skills (7 questions)**

1. Apply prioritizing skills in a given situation **(3/3)**
2. Create an appropriate docket calendar for a given scenario **(3/3)**



## Sample Questions

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. A check drawn by a bank on its own funds is called a:
- a. bank draft.
  - b. cashier's check.
  - c. certified check.
  - d. money order.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Upon receipt of funds in which a client or third person has an interest, the attorney shall:
- a. deposit it in the general office account.
  - b. hold the funds for three years after termination of representation.
  - c. promptly notify such client or third person.
  - d. reimburse the firm for bank charges.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. In a block or modified block letter, the subject line is placed on the second line:
- a. above the salutation.
  - b. below the date.
  - c. below the inside address.
  - d. below the salutation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. A statute is:
- a. a law enacted by a legislative body.
  - b. codification of indexes and relevant laws.
  - c. enacted by Congress at the state level.
  - d. enacted by the legislature at the federal level.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Oral contracts must be completed within what time frame?
- a. six months
  - b. one year
  - c. two years
  - d. fifteen years
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. "Eminent domain" is the doctrine under which:
- a. local laws are protected from being contradicted by later state legislation.
  - b. seizure of private property for the public good is allowed.
  - c. the federal law takes precedence over state and local laws that conflict with it.
  - d. the right of the state to supersede federal laws which are not good for the state is enforced.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. What is a deed that conveys any right a seller might have to the subject property?
- bequest
  - grant
  - quit claim
  - warranty
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. "Pay to the Order of" is a/an:
- blank endorsement.
  - qualified endorsement.
  - restrictive endorsement.
  - special endorsement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Jurisdiction is the geographical area over which a court has legal authority to:
- change venue.
  - create legislation.
  - hear and determine causes of action.
  - limit compensatory and punitive damages.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Law can be defines as rules:
- governing relationships among individuals and their co-workers.
  - of human behavior enforced by the state or federal government.
  - regarding individuals and their society.
  - regarding societal relationships.



## Sample Questions — Key

1. A check drawn by a bank on its own funds is called a:
  - a. bank draft. Wrong, but plausible
  - b. cashier's check. Correct
  - c. certified check. Wrong, but plausible
  - d. money order. Wrong, but plausible
  
2. Upon receipt of funds in which a client or third person has an interest, the attorney shall:
  - a. deposit it in the general office account. Wrong, but plausible
  - b. hold the funds for three years after termination of representation. Wrong, but plausible
  - c. promptly notify such client or third person. Correct
  - d. reimburse the firm for bank charges. Wrong, but plausible
  
3. In a block or modified block letter, the subject line is placed on the second line:
  - a. above the salutation. Correct
  - b. below the date. Wrong, but plausible
  - c. below the inside address. Wrong, but plausible
  - d. below the salutation. Wrong, but plausible
  
4. A statute is:
  - a. a law enacted by a legislative body. Correct
  - b. codification of indexes and relevant laws. Wrong, but plausible
  - c. enacted by Congress at the state level. Wrong, but plausible
  - d. enacted by the legislature at the federal level. Wrong, but plausible
  
5. Oral contracts must be completed within what time frame?
  - a. six months Wrong, but plausible
  - b. one year Correct
  - c. two years Wrong, but plausible
  - d. fifteen years Wrong, but plausible
  
6. "Eminent domain" is the doctrine under which:
  - a. local laws are protected from being contradicted by later state legislation. Wrong, but plausible
  - b. seizure of private property for the public good is allowed. Correct
  - c. the federal law takes precedence over state and local laws that conflict with it. Wrong, but plausible
  - d. the right of the state to supersede federal laws which are not good for the state is enforced. Wrong, but plausible

7. What is a deed that conveys any right a seller might have to the subject property?

- a. bequest                      Wrong, but plausible
- b. grant                         Wrong, but plausible
- c. quit claim                  Correct
- d. warranty                     Wrong, but plausible

8. "Pay to the Order of" is a/an:

- a. blank endorsement.        Wrong, but plausible
- b. qualified endorsement.     Wrong, but plausible
- c. restrictive endorsement.    Wrong, but plausible
- d. special endorsement.       Correct

9. Jurisdiction is the geographical area over which a court has legal authority to:

- a. change venue.                      Wrong, but plausible
- b. create legislation.                Wrong, but plausible
- c. hear and determine causes of action.    Correct
- d. limit compensatory and punitive damages.    Wrong, but plausible

10. Law can be defines as rules:

- a. governing relationships among individuals and their co-workers.    Wrong, but plausible
- b. of human behavior enforced by the state or federal government.    Correct
- c. regarding individuals and their society.    Wrong, but plausible
- d. regarding societal relationships.            Wrong, but plausible



## Abbreviations, Symbols and Acronyms

The following is a list of abbreviations, symbols, and acronyms used in the Legal Office Assisting study guide and on the Legal Office Assisting assessment:

“	quote
”	inches
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
NALS	the Association for Legal Professionals

## Test Taking Strategies

This section of the study guide contains valuable information for testing success and provides a common-sense approach for preparing for and performing well on any test.

### General Testing Advice

1. Get a good night's rest the night before the test — eight hours of sleep is recommended.
2. Avoid junk food and “eat right” several days before the test.
3. Do not drink a lot or eat a large meal prior to testing.
4. Be confident in your knowledge and skills!
5. Relax and try to ignore distractions during the test.
6. Focus on the task at hand — taking the test and doing your best!
7. Listen carefully to the instructions provided by the exam proctor. If the instructions are not clear, ask for clarification.

### Testing Tips

1. Read the entire question before attempting to answer it.
2. Try to answer the question before reading the choices. Then, read the choices to determine if one matches, or is similar, to your answer.
3. Do not change your answer unless you misread the question or are certain that your first answer is incorrect.
4. Answer questions you know first, so you can spend additional time on the more difficult questions.
5. Check to make sure you have answered every question before you submit the assessment for scoring — unanswered questions are marked incorrect.





