

Program Goals and Objectives

To understand the fundamentals of the personal injury litigation, its processes, alternatives and the role of the support staff in the delivery of legal services;

To acquire practical skills that are the basis of all procedural matters;

To develop an understanding of substantive law and legal principles in civil litigation as it relates to the study of personal injury; and

To be capable of thinking creatively and independently in a legally sophisticated way about the complex and varying legal issues that support staff may encounter.

Admission Requirements

Specialist One

Students must be currently working in or have had at least two year experience working in a personal injury law firm for two years (or at the discretion of the program coordinator).

Specialist Two

This program is offered to those who have acquired and maintained the status as Specialist One (or at the discretion of the program coordinator).

The top 3 reasons why you continue to send your staff to our courses.

1. Instructors' knowledge and expertise in the area.
2. Accessibility of instructors after courses. (*We call Dee all the time with questions and she is very helpful*)
3. Hours and location.

In each case, the course content was detailed and thorough, but not overwhelming for someone with at least basic experience in a law office. The courses were such that they catered to different levels of experience. As well, the pre-course work and exams required a good understanding of principles and specifics, and this resulted in significant learning from the start.

How do you measure if the course has been effective to your staff?

1. To properly complete a course, there is necessary learning of substantive law and also procedures. This is what this job is all about, so there is immediate benefit. The reference manuals are then there to access for particular questions or for guidance on other associated matters not specifically covered by the instructor. There is no doubt that a person should be more productive after taking any course like those that I participated in.

A large portion of legal assistants and paralegals in British Columbia work in personal injury litigation. And many more have been or will be at some point in their careers be involved in this area of practice.

Personal injury claims arise from many types of situations including sports injuries, slip and fall in someone's home or public facility, and of course, from motor vehicle collisions which account for the majority of personal injury claims resulting in litigation in British Columbia. This is a challenging area of practice whether you are involved on the plaintiff or defence side, and those who have exposure to both sides of these claims are in a particularly advantageous position to appreciate the issues and challenges intrinsic to personal injury.

Personal injury litigation arising from motor vehicle collisions has its own set of demands and obligations arising from the *Insurance (Vehicle) Act* and the role of Part 7 rehabilitation benefits in the litigation process, as well as other legislation. ICBC's Part 7 benefits support the acknowledged principle that early rehabilitation is often the most effective in assisting a person recover from injury, and the tort principle that a plaintiff has an obligation to mitigate their damages which is satisfied in part through their involvement in active rehabilitation.



Personal Injury Specialist Programs Level 1 and 2

Structure

Canadian Paralegal Institute (CPI) is now offering a new program focusing on this area of practice for support staff – Personal Injury Studies Program. This program of study has two levels: Specialist One and Two.

Specialist One endeavours to provide those who are new to this area with a foundation of knowledge and the specific skills required to work effectively in a personal injury practice. For those who have successfully acquired the designation Specialist One, they have the option of entering the Specialist Two program of studies. This program endeavours to provide them with a set of knowledge and skills required to perform advanced work in a personal injury practice.

Specialist One

This program incorporates both substantive and procedural topics through 60 hours of classroom study. While the course work must be completed within two years of commencement, the student can take the courses at their own pace.

The curriculum includes the following courses:

- Part 7 Benefits 101
- Medico Legal Studies 101
- Clinical Record Studies 101
- List of Documents 101
- Managing MVA Files 101
- Trial Preparation for Plaintiff Firms
- Trial Preparation for Defence Firms
- Directed Studies 101

Specialist Two

This program incorporates both substantive and procedural topics through 60 hours of classroom study. While the course work must be completed within two years of commencement, the student can take the courses at their own pace.

- Interlocutory Application Procedures 101
- Heads of Damages 101
- Insurance Vehicle Law 101
- MVA Studies 201
- Pleadings 101
- Discovery Procedures 101
- Directed Studies 102

Directed Studies 101 and 102 are 4 hours of applied research projects which are tailored to the student's particular interests and goals.



Maintaining The Specialists Designation

As members of a legal team, support staff owe the same duty to the firm's clients as lawyers do, to provide efficient and effective legal services. This is in keeping with the belief that for them to continue to play a key role, they must keep up with changes in the law, practice and technology.

Holders of either designation are required to maintain their annual standing with CPI. They will be required to attend a minimum of 12 hours of continuing professional development activities every year.

Transfer Credits

For those who have already successfully completed any of these courses through Law Courts Center or Canadian Paralegal Institute may have their work apply toward their studies.

Students of the CPI's Personal Injury Specialist Studies are required to achieve a minimum of 76% to graduate and a minimum of 70% for each course.

For more information

Canadian Paralegal Institute

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