

**UNIFIED JUDICIAL SYSTEM
POSITION DESCRIPTION**

LEGAL RESEARCH SECRETARY

CLASS CODE: 99-71-21

POSITION PURPOSE

Provides administrative assistance to the Chief of Legal Research and Staff Attorneys, to the Executive Secretary to the Board of Bar Examiners; and to patrons of the law library by preparing legal documents, proofreading legal writings, preparing and maintaining files on bar applicants, maintaining card catalog file and an inventory of library materials, processing vouchers to pay bills, and performing reception work to facilitate the work of the office.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURE

This position is distinguished by the prioritization and efficiency of accomplished work, and reliability in managing a multi-faceted work load.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Note: The duties listed are typical examples of work performed by positions in this job classification. Not all duties are included, nor is the list exclusive.

1. Performs administrative support functions for legal staff to facilitate the work flow in the office.
 - a. Types and files legal documents and memorandums such as pre-argument memorandums, Circuit Judge opinions, legal memorandums, and proposed rule changes.
 - b. Maintains and distributes a list of all opinions handed down by the Court each week.
 - c. Reviews and verifies facts and cites in per curiam and Circuit Judge opinions and verifies correctness of citation form and proper spacing and margins.
 - d. Sends U.S. Supreme Court opinions to the assistant librarian from Information Institute at Cornell Law School and to the Justices, law clerks, staff attorneys, and Chief of Legal Research.
 - e. Answers and directs telephone calls.
2. Manages procedures for bar examinations.
 - a. Receives applications for the bar examination, prepares receipts for application fees, prepares files for applicants, mails confidential questionnaires to applicants' references, and mails follow-up correspondence to applicants.
 - b. Reserves rooms in which bar examinations will be administered, and makes arrangements for applicants with special needs.
 - c. Orders supplies for bar examinations including test booklets for MPT, MEE, and MBE from the National Conference of Bar Examiners; blue books for test answers; and other necessary supplies.
 - d. Verifies University of South Dakota (USD) students who are applicants and orders Dean's certificates from the USD Law School.

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- e. Assigns and distributes bar examination identification numbers to applicants and makes a seating chart for the examination.
 - f. Acts as a proctor for the bar examination and MPRE (ethics portion).
 - g. Distributes bar examination results to applicants and reports aggregate data to the Dean of the Law School at USD, Justices, and Board of Bar Examiners to be used by the ABA when doing their reports on pass rate in various state bar examinations.
 - h. Sets up conference calls, completes travel vouchers, types memorandums, etc., for the Board of Bar Examiners.
 - i. Prepares documents for hearings and attends hearings.
 - k. Maintains historical records of all applicants for bar examinations, examination scores, and bar examination question assignments.
 - l. Answers telephone calls, email, and written requests regarding the bar examination requirements and sends applications and rules and regulations as requested.
3. Manages procedures for operation and maintenance of the Law Library.
 - a. Orders, receives, returns, records, vouchers, tracks payments, and inventories books and materials in the Law Library.
 - b. Maintains the card catalog and directs library patrons to references.
 - c. Files all pocket parts and new books in the Library after accessioned.
 - d. Opens and closes the Library.
 - e. Tabulates, records, and bills for photocopies made on the Library copy machine quarterly to state government agencies and individuals or law firms.
 - f. Maintains a file for all after-hour Library patrons.
 - g. Maintains death-penalty files and makes and sends copies when proportionality requests are received.
 4. Performs other work as assigned.

SUPERVISORY FUNCTIONS

This position manages administrative procedures for multiple facets of work in the Division of Legal Research.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS REQUIRE

Sitting for extended periods of time; operating office machines such as a computer, telephone, copier, etc.; using hands for repetitive movement including grasping, turning, and typing; lifting as much as 30 pounds; walking up and down stairs; and attendance in accordance with rules and policies. The incumbent is also required to work effectively with coworkers and the public, maintain confidentiality, manage stress, meet deadlines, and understand and communicate (verbally and in writing) procedures and practices.

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

Challenges include ensuring opinions are error-free before they are published. This is challenging because of the volume of work, and individual preferences in writing styles. Further challenged to update Library materials quickly and accurately. Additionally challenged to explain bar examination rules, procedures, and applications.

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Problems encountered include understanding legal terminology; locating files and materials; accuracy of format, punctuation, and grammar; and organizing and prioritizing work load.

DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY

Decisions include answering inquiries about the bar examination; sending appropriate information; location of materials in the Library; appropriate filing systems; format and grammar in draft memorandums or opinions; and preparation of vouchers for Library materials.

Decisions referred include answers to technical questions; sentence structure changes; content of non-routine editions and publications; and budget requests or purchases.

CONTACT WITH OTHERS and PURPOSE

Routine contact with the general public to answer questions; with the finance division to submit prepared vouchers or receive paid vouchers; with vendors regarding purchases; with an inventory/supply coordinator to order supplies; and with members of the Board of Bar Examiners, applicants, law clerks, and Circuit Judges to provide administrative support.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The incumbent works in a typical office environment.

COMPETENCIES/QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- English, grammar, and punctuation;
- legal terminology;
- legal citation;
- use of the Law Library;
- alphabetical and numerical sequences as they apply to sorting or filing;
- computer applications such as Word, Excel, Internet Explorer, and Outlook.

Ability to:

- deal with others courteously and effectively;
- communicate both orally and in writing;
- work with figures;
- copy, compare, and summarize data from a variety of sources;
- follow instructions;
- learn the operation of various office machines.

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Education:

Graduation from high school or possession of a GED certificate.

Experience:

Three (3) years of experience as a legal secretary or paralegal; or an equivalent combination of related education and experience.