

**UNIFIED JUDICIAL SYSTEM
POSITION DESCRIPTION**

LEGAL SECRETARY

CLASS CODE: 99-21-08

POSITION PURPOSE

Provides administrative assistance to the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court, Supreme Court attorneys, Chief of Bar Exam, and Supreme Court law clerks by ensuring their written works are correctly formatted and distributed; that they are notified of required timelines; and records are filed, updated, and available when needed; and by managing daily office procedures to facilitate efficient flow of work.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURE

This position is distinguished by the efficiency with which assigned tasks are accomplished; and by the reliability of the incumbent in maintaining confidentiality and the best interests of the Court.

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. Proofreads legal opinions and special writings submitted by the Chief Justice, Associate Justices, staff attorneys, and law clerks to verify correctness of formatting and citations.
 - a. Checks formatting and citation references and makes suggestions to the authors for corrections.
 - b. Submits corrected writings to the Supreme Court Clerk's office to be filed and included on the private access drive; and distributes copies to other members of the Court, law clerks, staff attorneys, and legal secretaries.
 - c. Prepares cover sheets for published opinions, and proofreads opinions in publishers' advance sheets before publication to hard-bound books.
 - d. Corrects errors noted while proofreading and contacts all publishing entities.
2. Provides administrative support to facilitate the appeals process for the Chief Justice and Associate Justices.
 - b. Alerts the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of due dates on writings and voting.
 - c. Files extensions as requested.
 - d. Prepares disqualification orders when the Chief Justice or Associate Justices disqualify themselves from participation in appeals before the Court.
 - e. Prepares labels and sets up file folders for appeals based upon the individual preferences of the Justices.
 - f. Maintains a filing system for briefs and documents currently on appeal, as well as other documents related to Court work as needed.

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3. Checks the proposed calendar for errors and disqualification statements in preparation for the monthly case draw.
 - a. Checks out records and places them in the law clerks' offices for cases drawn, and mails them to outlying offices.
 - b. Scans and emails legal documents to outlying offices.
 - c. Notifies the Chief Justice and Associate Justices as to which cases were drawn for them.
 - d. Prepares retention letters for the Chief Justice's and Associate Justices' signatures, and submits same to the Secretary of State's office.
4. Provides administrative assistance to the Chief Justice and Associate Justices when Court is held out of town by organizing memorandums and notes to ensure they have documentation needed; and assists the executive assistant with daily work as needed.
5. Manages procedures for bar examinations to ensure applications are properly received and materials are obtained so that applicants may take the bar exam.
 - a. Receives applications for the bar examination, prepares receipts for application fees, prepares files for applicants, and mails or emails follow-up correspondence to applicants.
 - b.
 - c. Orders supplies for bar examinations.
 - d. Assigns and distributes bar examination identification numbers to applicants and makes a seating chart for the examination.
 - e. Acts as a proctor for the bar examination.
 - f. Compiles exam scores in various reports for distribution.
 - g. Sets up conference calls, completes travel vouchers, types memorandums, etc., for the Board of Bar Examiners.
 - h. Prepares hearing files.
 - i. Maintains historical records of all applicants for bar examinations, examination scores, and bar examination question assignments.
 - j. Answers telephone calls, email, and written requests regarding the bar examination requirements and sends applications and rules and regulations as requested.
6. Manages procedures for bar applications without examination by ensuring applications are properly received and processed, answers telephone calls, emails, and written requests regarding application without examination requirements.
7. Manages procedures for operation and maintenance of the Law Library to ensure books, pocket parts, and materials are properly ordered, received, inventoried, returned, filed, billed, and tracked in the Law Library.
 - a. Maintains the catalog, directs library patrons to references, and assists with research requests.
 - b. Opens and closes the library.
8. Performs highly responsible secretarial work involving sensitive and complex work methods to support the procedures of the Court.
 - a. Updates the legal secretarial handbook routinely.
 - b. Assists legal staff in updates of the South Dakota Supreme Court Citation System Manual.

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- c. Updates the South Dakota Supreme Court law clerk handbook on a regular basis as directed.
 - d. Synthesizes the court calendar into one page for convenience in access.
 - e. Proofreads abuse and neglect memorandums, and submits originals to the Clerk's office.
9. Performs other work as assigned.

SUPERVISORY FUNCTIONS

This position manages administrative duties to support the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court, Supreme Court staff attorneys, Chief of Bar Exam, and Supreme Court law clerks.

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 50 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 remaining current on updated computer systems and administrative procedures. This is difficult because computer systems are updated often, and changes must be evaluated to determine their effect on the work at hand; and changes in procedures often have unseen impacts so awareness and communication are important. Incumbents are further challenged to proofread the written work of several individuals. This is difficult due to personal writing styles and preferences in handling written materials. Incumbents must ensure sure that work has been proofread and prepared for distribution and is an error-free product.

Problems encountered include prioritizing reviews of large submissions of written work daily; ensuring paperwork is distributed to the right people; and organizing and prioritizing daily administrative tasks.

DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY

Decisions include determining whether format of written work is correct, whether references to citations should be questioned, whether corrections should be made prior to publication of written works, and determining priority of assigned daily work.

Decisions referred include all decisions regarding legal matters and alterations to written work and work assignments.

CONTACT WITH OTHERS and PURPOSE

Daily contact with the Chief Justice, Associate Justices, staff attorneys, Chief of Bar Exam, and law clerks to provide administrative assistance; and with the Supreme Court Clerk's office

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regarding appeals, distribution of opinions, mail received for the Chief Justice and Associate Justices, monthly court draws, disqualification orders, etc.; routine contact with the HELP desk staff and other I/T staff to resolve computer issues; with fiscal staff regarding vouchers; with central services for printing and mail services; and with USD School of Law Serials Librarian to send completed cases.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The incumbent works in a typical office environment.

COMPETENCIES/QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- legal terminology;
- procedures and practices of the Court;
- English, grammar, and punctuation;
- alphabetical and numerical sequences as they relate to sorting and filing.

Skill in:

- typing or keyboarding at a highly proficient level;
- proofreading;
- time management;
- prioritizing and organizing tasks.

Ability to:

- learn and proficiently use office machines;
- prioritize time and make sure assigned work is accomplished in the order that is most effective for the Court;
- adjust to ever-changing processes of computer and communication systems;
- maintain confidentiality;
- communicate effectively both orally and in writing with a wide variety of people.

Education:

Graduation from high school or possession of a GED certificate.

Experience:

Three (3) years of legal secretarial work experience; or an equivalent combination of related education and experience.