

CERTIFICATION
Can you Meet the Challenge of
ALS[®], PLS[®], CLA[®] or Certified PP[®]?

There is no time like the present to make the commitment to become certified. If you want to become an Accredited Legal Secretary, a certified Professional Legal Secretary, a Certified Legal Assistant or a Certified Paralegal Professional, Legal Support Staff of North Carolina, Inc. ("LSSNC") can point you in the right direction, help you prepare for these exams, and give you the moral support you need to better yourself in the professional world that we live in!

Accredited Legal Secretary:

The ALS[®] Examination will help you demonstrate your ability to perform business communication tasks, gauge your ability to maintain office records and calendars, and prioritize multiple tasks when given real-life situations, will measure your understanding of office equipment and related procedures, denotes your aptitude for understanding legal terminology, legal complexities and supporting documents, will assess your recognition of accounting terms in order to solve accounting problems, and will appraise your knowledge of law office protocol as prescribed by ethical codes.

In order to sit for the examination, you need to have completed (i) an accredited office curriculum course, (ii) the NALS[®] Legal Training Course, or (iii) one year of general office experience. You do not have to be a member of NALS[®] to take the exam.

There are three parts of the ALS[®] Examination:

- Part 1: Written Communications
- Part 2: Office Procedures and Legal Knowledge
- Part 3: Ethics, Human Relations, and Judgment

The fee is \$100 or \$75 if you are a member of NALS[®].

Through our Association, the Examination Dates are:

March: First Saturday
September: Last Saturday

The application deadlines are:

For the March exam – Postmarked by January 1st
For the September exam – Postmarked by August 1st

As the study materials vary, LSSNC can provide you with a list of required reading!

Professional Legal Secretary:

PLS® is the designation for lawyer's assistants who want to be identified as exceptional! Personal motivation is necessary to attain such a goal.

The purpose of the examination is to certify a lawyer's assistant as a person who possesses a mastery of office skills, the ability to interact on a professional level with attorneys, clients, and other support staff, the discipline to assume responsibility and exercise initiative and judgment, and a working knowledge of procedural law, the law library, and how to prepare legal documents.

In order to sit for the examination, you need to have three years' experience in the legal field. A partial waiver of the three year requirement may be granted for post-secondary degrees, the successful completion of the ALS® Examination, or other certifications. The maximum waiver is one year. You do not have to be a member of NALS® to take the exam.

There are four parts of the PLS® Examination:

- Part 1: Written Communications
- Part 2: Office Procedures and Technology
- Part 3: Ethics and Judgment
- Part 4: Legal Knowledge and Skills

The fee is \$200 or \$150 if you are a member of NALS®.

Through our Association, the Examination Dates are:

March:	First Saturday
September:	Last Saturday

The application deadlines are:

For the March exam – Postmarked by January 1 st
For the September exam – Postmarked by August 1 st

Again, as the study materials vary, LSSNC can provide you with a list of required reading!

Certified Paralegal Professional (offered through NALS®):

The inaugural testing for the Certified PP Examination is scheduled for March 11, 2004, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The inaugural testing will only be given to qualifying PLSs. Candidates who have not received PLS® certification may take the exam later in 2004. Qualified PLSs will receive Certified PP certification after successful completion of a three-hour exam on substantive law. Other candidates wishing to take the exam (not available for the inaugural testing period) will receive Certified PP certification after successful completion of a four-part, all-day exam, which will include:

- Part 1: Written Communications
- Part 2: Legal Knowledge and Skills
- Part 3: Ethics and Judgment Skills
- Part 4: Substantive Law

Study materials, exam applications and fees are expected to be announced in August of 2003.

You are qualified to sit for the Certified PP® Examination if you have five years' experience performing paralegal/legal assistant duties (a candidate may receive a partial waiver of one year if he or she has a post-secondary degree, other certification, or a paralegal certificate; a candidate with a paralegal degree may receive a two-year partial waiver).

As with the ALS® and PLS® certifications, the Certified PP® certification is valid for five years. Recertification will require 75 hours of CLE and is mandatory to remain certified. A PLS® who successfully completes the Certified PP® exam and wishes to list both certifications should note the certifications as PLS, Certified PP.

Certified Legal Assistant (offered through NALA®):

The CLA program, established in 1976, serves as (i) a national professional standard for legal assistants, (ii) a means of identifying those who have reached this standard, (iii) a credentialing program responsive to the needs of legal assistants, and (iv) a positive, ongoing, voluntary program to encourage the growth of the legal assistant profession, attesting to and encouraging a high level of achievement.

In order to sit for the examination, a legal assistant must meet one of the following alternate requirements:

- Graduation from a legal assistant program that is:
 - Approved by the American Bar Association; or
 - An associate degree program; or
 - A post-baccalaureate certificate program in legal assistant studies; or
 - A bachelor's degree program in legal assistant studies; or

- A legal assistant program which consists of a minimum of 60 semester hours, of which at least 15 semester hours are substantive legal courses.
- A bachelor's degree in any field plus one year's experience as a legal assistant.
- A high school diploma or equivalent, plus seven year's experience as a legal assistant under the supervision of a member of the Bar, plus evidence of a minimum of twenty hours of continuing legal education credit to have been completed within a two year period prior to the examination date.

The CLA® Examination is a two-day, comprehensive examination, based on federal law and procedure. The major subject areas of examination are:

- Communications (which includes human relations and interviewing techniques)
- Ethics
- Legal Research
- Judgment and Analytical Ability
- Substantive Law (which includes legal terminology) – This section consists of five mini-examinations covering (i) the American Legal System and four of the areas listed below as selected by the examinee:
 - Administrative Law
 - Bankruptcy
 - Business
 - Organizations/Corporations
 - Contracts
 - Family Law
 - Criminal Law and Procedure
 - Litigation
 - Probate and Estate Planning
 - Real Estate

Study materials include the NALA Manual for Legal Assistants, 3 Ed., CLA Study Guide and Mock Examination, Real Estate Law Specialty Review Manual, Business Organizations Specialty Review Manual and the CLA Review Manual, 2 Ed.

The CLA® Examination is offered three times a year: March/April (depends on the holiday schedule), July and December. Filing deadline dates are January 15th for the March/April examination, May 15th for the July examination, and October 1st for the December examination. The fee for the exam is \$225 for NALA® members and \$250 for non-members.

Certification.....can you meet the challenge?

Please contact certification@lssws.org for more information.