



ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT & SECRETARIAL SCIENCE, GENERAL

CIP Code 52.0401

This document is a Program of Study for Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science programs at the secondary level. This program of study is considered a framework, not a curriculum. From this framework educators may use this as a tool to provide structure for developing learning modules, unit plans, or daily lesson plans that meet the tasks or standards within the program of study. This program of study is based on research, experience, and many resources. The goal is to train a workforce that is skilled, knowledgeable, and able to meet the needs of the industry today and well into the future.

As the reliance on technology continues to expand in offices, the role of the office professional has greatly evolved. Office automation and organizational restructuring have led secretaries and administrative assistants to assume responsibilities once reserved for managerial and professional staff. In spite of these changes, however, the core responsibilities for secretaries and administrative assistants have remained much the same: performing and coordinating an office's administrative activities and storing, retrieving, and integrating information for dissemination to staff and clients.

Secretaries and administrative assistants perform a variety of administrative and clerical duties necessary to run an organization efficiently. They serve as information and communication managers for an office; plan and schedule meetings and appointments; organize and maintain paper and electronic files; manage projects; conduct research; and disseminate information by using the telephone, mail services, Web sites, and e-mail. They also may handle travel and guest arrangements.

Secretaries and administrative assistants use a variety of office equipment, such as fax machines, photocopiers, scanners, and videoconferencing and telephone systems. In addition, secretaries and administrative assistants often use computers to do tasks previously handled by managers and professionals, such as: create spreadsheets; compose correspondence; manage databases; and create presentations, reports, and documents using desktop publishing software and digital graphics. They also may negotiate with vendors, maintain and examine leased equipment, purchase supplies, manage areas such as stockrooms or corporate libraries, and retrieve data from various sources. At the same time, managers and professionals have assumed many tasks traditionally assigned to secretaries and administrative assistants, such as keyboarding and answering the telephone. Because secretaries and administrative assistants do less dictation and word processing, they now have time to support more members of the executive staff. In a number of organizations, secretaries and administrative assistants work in teams to work flexibly and share their expertise.

Secretaries and administrative assistants usually work in schools, hospitals, corporate settings, government agencies, or legal and medical offices. Their jobs often involve sitting for long periods. If they spend a lot of time keyboarding, particularly at a computer monitor, they may encounter problems of eyestrain, stress, and repetitive motion ailments such as carpal tunnel syndrome. Almost one-fifth of secretaries work part time and many others work in temporary positions. A few participate in job-sharing arrangements, in which two people divide responsibility for a single job. The majority of secretaries and administrative assistants, however, are full-time employees who work a standard 40-hour week.

Word processing, writing, and communication skills are essential for all secretaries and administrative assistants. However, employers increasingly require extensive knowledge of software applications, such as desktop publishing, project management, spreadsheets, and database management.

High school graduates who have basic office skills may qualify for entry-level secretarial positions. They can acquire these skills in various ways. Training ranges from high school career and education programs that teach office skills and typing to 1- and 2-year programs in office administration offered by business and career and technical schools, and community colleges. Many temporary placement agencies also provide formal training in computer and office skills.

Most secretaries and administrative assistants, once hired, tend to acquire more advanced skills through on-the-job instruction by other employees or by equipment and software vendors. Others may attend classes or participate in online education to learn how to operate new office technologies, such as information storage systems, scanners, or new updated software packages. As office automation continues to evolve, retraining and continuing education will remain integral parts of secretarial jobs.

Secretaries and administrative assistants should be proficient in typing and good at spelling, punctuation, grammar, and oral communication. Employers also look for good customer service and interpersonal skills because secretaries and administrative assistants must be tactful in their dealings with people. Discretion, good judgment, organizational or management ability, initiative, and the ability to work independently are especially important for higher-level administrative positions. Changes in the office environment have increased the demand for secretaries and administrative assistants who are adaptable and versatile.

Secretaries and administrative assistants generally advance by being promoted to other administrative positions with more responsibilities. Qualified administrative assistants who broaden their knowledge of a company's operations and enhance their skills may be promoted to senior or executive secretary or administrative assistant, clerical supervisor, or office manager. Secretaries with word processing or data entry experience can advance to jobs as word processing or data entry trainers, supervisors, or managers within their own firms or in a secretarial, word processing, or data entry service bureau. Secretarial and administrative support experience also can lead to jobs such as instructor or sales representative with manufacturers of software or computer equipment. With additional training, many legal secretaries become paralegals.

Assumptions of This Program of Study

High-quality programs should meet the following standards:

- Promote **positive working relationships**
- Implement a **curriculum** that fosters all areas of skill development – cognitive, emotional, language, physical, and social
- Use developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and **effective teaching approaches**
- Provide **ongoing assessments** of student progress
- Employ and support qualified **teaching staff**
- Establish and maintain collaborative relationships **with families**

- Establish and maintain relationships and use resources of the **community**
- Provide a safe and healthy learning **environment**
- Implement strong program organization and supervision policies that result in **high-quality teaching and learning**
- Integrate academic skills and aptitudes necessary for gainful employment and promoting a foundation of **lifelong learning**

Academic Rigor

Research shows that career success requires the same level of college-prep courses as postsecondary success requires. The Department of Education's focus is to ensure that every student graduates prepared for college and a career. In order to be successful in this program of study, students should follow the academic sequence as determined by Pennsylvania's high school reform efforts.

Resources Used for This Program of Study

- MAVCC (Multistate Academic Vocational Curriculum Consortium)
<http://www.mavcc.org/>
- NOCTI (National Occupational Competency Testing Institute <http://www.nocti.org/>)
- O*NET <http://online.onetcenter.org/>
- Pennsylvania Approved Certifications for Industry-Recognized Certifications for Career and Technical Education Programs
http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/instructional_resources/7392/industry-recognized_certifications_for_career_and_technical_education_programs/507887
- Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry High Priority Occupations
http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/high_priority_occupations/12910
- VTECS (A Consortium of Innovative Career and Workforce Development Resources)
<http://www.vtecs.org/>

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Pennsylvania CIP

The administrative assistant/secretarial science program is designed to prepare students to perform the duties of administrative assistants and/or secretaries and related occupations. Students compose, key, format and process documents (correspondence, reports, tabulations and forms); compile, proofread, edit and correct documents; operate dictation/transcription equipment and computers; use word processing, spreadsheet, database, desktop publishing, presentation and communication software; receive, distribute and sort incoming mail; prepare outgoing mail; perform basic mathematical functions; operate office equipment; perform records management duties; communicate with others in person, in writing and by telephone; and perform receptionist duties. Students also receive instruction in business ethics, principles of business law, office procedures, public relations and accounting. Students are provided

experiences and instruction needed to satisfy initial employment requirements for administrative assistants and secretaries.

Those completing the program may be employed as administrative assistants or specialists; corresponding, legal, medical, educational and technical secretaries; or in related areas such as general office clerk, clerk-typist, word processors, information clerks and records management clerks.

Integrate Academic Career Education and Work Standards for Student Success

As students participate in career exploration activities and rigorous studies from elementary grades through graduation, they learn to appreciate the relationship between their classroom learning and the skills needed within the workplace. The academic and workplace skills within the Academic Standards for Career Education and Work are expected to be addressed within classrooms and achieved by all students throughout Pennsylvania. No student should leave secondary education without a solid foundation in these Standards.

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/state_board_of_education/8830/state_academic_standards/529102

CEW Standards Tool Kit for teachers to implement CEW Standards
www.pacareerstandards.com

Pennsylvania Approved Certifications

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/instructional_resources/7392/industry-recognized_certifications_for_career_and_technical_education_programs/507887

The Program of Study Documents

- Crosswalk Template for Task Alignment (excel) – Administrative Assistant & Secretarial Science, General – Instructions: Indicate the number code(s) of your school’s program competency or competencies aligned to each program of study competency.
- Crosswalk Template for Task Alignment (pdf) – Administrative Assistant & Secretarial Science, General – Instructions: Indicate the number code(s) of your school’s program competency or competencies aligned to each program of study competency.
- Scope and Sequence Template (word) – Enter secondary technical Program of Study courses. Postsecondary courses will be determined when the Statewide Articulation Agreement for this Program of Study is complete.
- Scope and Sequence Template (pdf) – Enter secondary technical Program of Study courses. Postsecondary courses will be determined when the Statewide Articulation Agreement for this Program of Study is complete.
- PA Academic Standards/Eligible Content Alignment Task List (excel) – Administrative Assistant & Secretarial Science, General – Crosswalk of PA Academic Standards/Eligible Content for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (RWSL), Math, and Science aligned to Program of Study Secondary Competency List.

- PA Academic Standards/Eligible Content Alignment Task List (pdf) – Administrative Assistant & Secretarial Science, General – Crosswalk of PA Academic Standards/Eligible Content for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (RWSL), Math, and Science aligned to Program of Study Secondary Competency List.

For more information, contact:

Dr. John Brown
Bureau of Career and Technical Education
PA Department of Education
333 Market Street, 11th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333
Phone: 717-783-6991
Fax: 717-783-6672
TTY: 717-783-7445
jobrown@state.pa.us