



## Gaston College Office Administration Diploma

The Office Systems Technology-General curriculum is designed for the individual entering, upgrading, or retraining in the office occupations. Special emphasis is on basic office duties and responsibilities for the computerized workplace. Study in areas such as keyboarding, oral and written communication, word processing, and machine transcription will enable the individual to function effectively as a receptionist, general office technician, or computer operator.

### Occupational Outlook Handbook Information ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov))

**Education and training.** Employers of secretaries and administrative assistants are increasingly seeking candidates with a college degree. A degree related to the business or industry in which a person is seeking employment may provide the job seeker with an advantage in the application process. 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 and updated software packages. As office automation continues to evolve, retraining and continuing education will remain integral parts of secretarial jobs.

**Other qualifications.** Secretaries and administrative assistants should be proficient in keyboarding 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.

**Certification and advancement.** Testing and certification for proficiency in office skills are available through organizations such as the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP). As secretaries and administrative assistants gain experience, they can earn several different designations. Prominent designations include the Certified Professional Secretary (CPS) and the Certified Administrative Professional (CAP), which can be earned by meeting certain experience or educational requirements and passing an examination.

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.

### Contact Information

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