

Paralegal Studies: Program Outline

Program Goal

To prepare students for entry-level positions as paralegals or legal assistants or to provide a foundation for further training.

Program Outcomes	Courses	Evidence of Learning
Demonstrate effective written and interpersonal communication skills	ENG100: English Composition	Multiple-choice lesson exams, essay assignments, journal
	ENG121: Business and Technical Writing	Multiple-choice lesson exams, essay exam
Demonstrate a high level of inquiry, analytical, and problem-solving skills	ILS103: Information Literacy	Multiple-choice exams, discussion board posts
	MAT115: Intermediate Algebra	Multiple-choice lesson exams, final exam
Demonstrate effective quantitative skills	MAT115: Intermediate Algebra	Multiple-choice lesson exams, final exam
Demonstrate computer and information literacy	ILS103: Information Literacy	Multiple-choice exams, discussion board posts
	CSC104: Computer Applications	Multiple-choice lesson exams, graded projects
	PLS202: Legal Writing and Research	Multiple-choice lesson exams, graded projects, final exam
Demonstrate an understanding of the liberal arts, natural sciences, and social sciences	HUM102: Art Appreciation	Multiple-choice lesson exams, discussion board posts, final exam
	ENG100: English Composition	Multiple-choice lesson exams, essay assignments, journal
	HUM104: Music Appreciation	Lesson exams, discussion boards, graded project, and final exam
	SSC130: Essentials of Psychology	Multiple-choice lesson exam, graded project
	SSC125: Introduction to Sociology	Multiple-choice lesson exam, essay assignment
	SSC105: World Civilizations	Multiple-choice lesson exams, discussion boards, essay exams, and final exam

Program Outcomes	Courses	Evidence of Learning
	SCI120: Introduction to Biology	Multiple-choice lesson exam, essay exam, proctored exam
	SCI110: Earth Science	Multiple-choice lesson exam, graded project, final exam
	SCI140: Nutrition	Multiple-choice lesson exams, graded project, proctored exam
Discuss the legal system in the United States, including the origins and history of the law and the development of common law, statutory law, and constitutional law	PLS113: Law and the Legal System	Multiple-choice lesson exam, final exam
	PLS205: Civil Litigation	Multiple-choice lesson exams, graded project
	PLS211: Criminal Litigation	Multiple-choice lesson exams, proctored exam, discussion board posts, graded project
Understand when communications with clients and others are privileged and how to avoid conflicts of interest	PLS101: Introduction to Paralegal Studies	Multiple-choice lesson exam, final exam
	PLS110: Ethics	Multiple-choice lesson exam, graded project, final exam
Recognize and use legal terminology appropriately	PLS105: Legal Terminology	Multiple-choice lesson exam, final exam
	PLS202: Legal Writing and Research	Multiple-choice lesson exams, graded projects, final exam
Recognize ethical violations and understand ethical rules that regulate conduct of lawyers and paralegals	PLS110: Ethics	Multiple-choice lesson exam, graded project, final exam
Identify the paralegal's role in the interview process and discuss proper investigation techniques, including interviewing clients and witnesses and understanding types of testamentary evidence	PLS114: Investigations and Interviews	Multiple-choice lesson exam, graded project, final exam
Discuss torts and defenses to tort actions and understand negligence, liability, and workers' compensation	PLS121: Torts	Multiple-choice lesson exam, graded projects, final exam
Describe different forms of business organization, the elements of contracts and rules pertaining to contracts, ownership of property, creditors and bankruptcy, and the law	BUS315: Legal Environment of Business	Multiple-choice lesson exam, proctored exam, graded projects, final exam

Program Outcomes	Courses	Evidence of Learning
of agency		
Write an effective legal memorandum; state and characterize facts and legal arguments to best advance a legal position	PLS202: Legal Writing and Research	Multiple-choice lesson exams, graded projects, final exam
Research primary and secondary sources to determine relevant case law, find statutes and other information from appropriate sources using Lexis.com and other Internet sources, and correctly cite sources	PLS202: Legal Writing and Research	Multiple-choice lesson exams, graded projects, final exam
Understand jurisdiction, venue, and evidence law; describe some important hearsay exceptions	PLS205: Civil Litigation	Multiple-choice lesson exams, graded project
	PLS211: Criminal Litigation	Multiple-choice lesson exams, proctored exam, discussion board posts, graded project
Understand how to prepare, file, and serve complaints and motions	PLS205: Civil Litigation	Multiple-choice lesson exams, graded project
Explain criminal law and procedure, the elements of crimes, criminal defense, and the role of the Constitution	PLS211: Criminal Litigation	Multiple-choice lesson exams, proctored exam, discussion board posts, graded project
Discuss the fundamental principles of law dealing with marriage, divorce, and parenthood	PLS213: Family Law	Multiple-choice lesson exams, graded project, final exam
Understand the paralegal's role in real estate transactions, including contracts, title abstraction, deeds, mortgages, closing documents, and leases; prepare preliminary drafts of commonly used documents	PLS215: Real Estate Law	Multiple-choice lesson exams, proctored exam, graded project, final exam
Discuss the responsibilities of practicing paralegals in the field of wills, trusts, and estate administration, including preparing preliminary drafts of wills and trusts	PLS217: Wills, Trusts, and Estate Administration	Multiple-choice lesson exams, proctored exam, graded project, discussion board posts, final exam

Program Structure

SEMESTER 1		CREDITS
PLS101	Introduction to Paralegal Studies	1
ILS103	Information Literacy	1
PLS105	Legal Terminology	2
PLS110	Ethics	2
CSC104	Computer Applications	3
ENG100	English Composition	3
CJS123	Courts	3
PLS114	Investigations and Interviews	2
Total		17

SEMESTER 2		
MAT106	Math for Business and Finance	3
PLS121	Torts	3
ENG121	Business and Technical Writing	3
BUS121	Economics 1	3
Science Elective (Choose one)		3
SCI110	Earth Science	
SCI120	Introduction to Biology	
SCI140	Nutrition	
HUM102	Art Appreciation	3
Total		18

SEMESTER 3		
PLS202	Legal Research and Writing	4
Social Science Elective (Choose one)		3
SSC105	World Civilizations	
SSC125	Introduction to Sociology	
SSC130	Essentials of Psychology	
PLS205	Civil Litigation	3
Arts & Humanities Elective (Choose one)		3
ENG115	Introduction to Literature	
HUM104	Music Appreciation	
MAT115	Intermediate Algebra	3

	Total	16
SEMESTER 4		
PLS211	Criminal Litigation	3
BUS315	Legal Environment of Business	3
PLS213	Family Law	3
PLS215	Real Estate Law	3
PLS217	Wills and Estates	3
ENG200	Speech	3
	Total	18

Course Descriptions and Objectives

PLS101: Introduction to Paralegal Studies

Occupation of the paralegal; strategies for completing the paralegal studies program as an independent learner; value of the paralegal in the practice of law as it's conducted in the traditional legal community as well as in government, education, and business.

- Identify skills needed to be a confident and independent online learner
- Identify the various opportunities and challenges of a paralegal professional

ILS103: Information Literacy

This course introduces students to the techniques and strategies necessary to research successfully in a cyber environment. Topics include the need for information literacy and how to formulate a search statement, navigate online search engines, cite sources, and organize and use information honestly and responsibly.

- Identify how to formulate focused and specific research questions and the need for information
- Explain the different types of research tools, how they're used to conduct different searches, and how to evaluate the quality and usefulness of the information found
- Explain how to cite sources properly using various citation styles in consideration of academic integrity, plagiarism, and ethical use of resources

PLS105: Legal Terminology

Basic legal terminology needed to embark on a career as a paralegal; avoiding inaccuracies that can give rise to serious legal consequences; basics of critical thinking in the drafting of good legal arguments.

- Analyze the various aspects of litigation, trial procedures, and tort law
- Categorize the various legal terminologies associated with trial procedures, tort, criminal, property, and family law
- Analyze the various elements in developing critical thinking skills

PLS110: Ethics

Professional responsibilities that apply to paralegals as they assist their employers and their clients, including maintaining confidentiality and competence; handling fees and funds carefully; and avoiding unauthorized practice of law, conflicts of interest, and potential malpractice.

- Analyze the legal system structure and the important roles and issues within the system
- Prepare a report on situations involving a breach of ethical rules by paralegals and attorneys

CSC104: Computer Applications

Microsoft® Office allows people to create documents, spreadsheets, presentations, and databases. This course will teach you how to use three popular tools from the Microsoft® Office Suite— Word™, Excel®, and PowerPoint®. In this course, you'll learn how to use Word™ to create and edit text documents, insert figures and tables, and format pages for a variety of uses. You'll then learn how to use Excel® to organize and format data, including charts, formulas, and more complex tables. Next, you'll learn how to use PowerPoint® to create and deliver slide shows. Finally, you'll complete a graded project, which will test the skills acquired in Word™, Excel®, and PowerPoint®.

- Create various Microsoft® Word™ documents
- Produce a thorough Microsoft® Excel® spreadsheet
- Identify the basic skills needed to use Microsoft® PowerPoint®
- Synthesize what you've learned by integrating Word™, Excel®, and PowerPoint®

ENG100: English Composition

This course teaches the skills and techniques of effectively developing, drafting, and revising college-level essays toward a specific purpose and audience: active reading, prewriting strategies, sentence and paragraph structure, thesis statements, varied patterns of development (such as illustration, comparison and contrast, and classification), critical reading toward revision of structure and organization, editing for standard written conventions, and use and documentation of outside sources. Students submit two prewriting assignments and three essays (process analysis, comparison and contrast, and argumentation).

- Use writing skills to construct well-written sentences and active reading skills to understand and analyze text
- Develop paragraphs using topic sentences, adequate detail, supporting evidence, and transitions
- Contrast the revising and editing steps of the writing process
- Distinguish between different patterns of development
- Write a process analysis essay using prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing skills
- Recognize how to determine the reliability of secondary sources and to give proper credit to sources referenced in an essay
- Write a comparison and contrast essay by using persuasive writing techniques to defend a claim
- Create a sound written argument using techniques of drafting and evaluating sources

CJS123: Courts

This course looks at the relationship among the judiciary, defense, and prosecution involved in the United States Courts system. Your studies start with an overview of the basic structures of courts. You'll also look to the successive steps involved in prosecutions and cover topics such as plea bargains, trials, juries, sentencing, and appeals.

- Point out the structure and working process of the legal system in the United States
- Analyze the emergence of law in the different systems of litigation in the United States
- Distinguish between the civil and criminal litigation in state and federal courts in the United States
- Analyze articles relating to the United States court system

PLS114: Investigations and Interviews

Types of questions that can be used in an interview; identification of the objectives of an interview; ethical considerations about interviewing; summarizing the information obtained through an interview.

- Analyze the procedures and considerations that practicing paralegals follow to conduct effective investigations and interviews
- Prepare answers based on the analysis of five different scenarios, corresponding to the given days

MAT106: Math for Business and Finance

This course will provide the student with a foundation in basic mathematical operations. Topics covered include percentages; discounts; interest; present worth; sinking funds; installment buying; pricing; depreciation; investments; insurance; use of symbols and their applications, equations and formulas; and the importance of statistics.

- Analyze functions of whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and percents
- Show calculations involved in simple interest, compound interest, and time value of money
- Prepare various business math applications involving financial reports, installment buying, and depreciation
- Analyze various financial concepts related to taxes, insurance, financial investments, and basic business statistics

PLS121: Torts

Principles of tort law that an attorney applies in a personal injury practice; the importance of the attorney-paralegal team in the practice of personal injury law; basics of the legal system, and the elements of the most common intentional and unintentional torts are discussed.

- Point out the important elements of law and liability pertaining to torts
- Analyze the concept, possible violations, and defenses used in intentional torts
- Categorize the purpose, consequences, defenses, and remedies for the liabilities under the negligence tort
- Point out the importance, elements, defenses, and remedies against strict and product liability
- Analyze the essential characteristics and consequences of defamation and invasion of privacy
- Write a legal analysis memo for the mentioned scenario in your project
- Prepare an analysis, legal writing, and interviews from the information and instructions given in your project

ENG121: Business and Technical Writing

This course provides an introduction to the various methods of organizing material for a professional setting. Students will compose business documents using the ABC method. These include: memos, emails, outlines, reports and proposals, descriptions, and organizing materials. Students also work on honing their grammar skills.

- Recognize how to use words correctly and effectively
- Produce a well-constructed interoffice memo, workplace email, and business letter

- Produce a brief business report based on findings obtained using research techniques and methods of documentation
- Produce an informal report that lists findings of an investigation and provides recommendation for issues raised in the findings
- Describe procedures for creating proposals, descriptions, instructions, and manuals for the workplace
- Create a detailed proposal designed to solve an internal human resource issue

BUS121: Economics 1

This course will provide an overview of macroeconomics and the modern market economy. Law of supply and demand, cost of living, monetary systems, international factors, and short run economic fluctuations will be examined and discussed.

- Explain economic systems and the economic perspective
- Identify the key factors in macroeconomics and how economists use them to study the economy as a whole
- Explain the macroeconomic models and fiscal policies
- Explain money, banking, and financial policy
- Explain the extending analysis of aggregate supply, current issues in theory and policy, and international economics
- Analyze foreign exchange and investment and the effects each nation's economy has on another nation's economy

SCI110: Earth Science

Surveys a broad range of topics within the fields of geology, meteorology, oceanography, and astronomy.

- Categorize the matters, minerals, and materials that compose the Earth
- Differentiate between the elements and their ways of sculpting the landscapes
- Distinguish between the various theories and forces behind Earth's history
- Point out the geological features of oceans and the important concepts of geology
- Categorize the causes and effects of various phenomenon affecting Earth's atmosphere
- Analyze the components of the solar system and the universe

SCI120: Introduction to Biology

An introductory course that explains the origin of life and the relationships between all living things. It describes how a significant number of organisms are structured and how they work, in order to enable students to discuss intelligently the various forms of life and their processes.

- Analyze cells and their processes for obtaining energy and reproducing
- Explain how traits are passed on from one generation to the next
- Explain how different species of living things have evolved and are classified

- Write responses to fundamental biology essay prompts
- Identify the characteristics and behavior of plants and animals
- Diagram the anatomy and physiology of the human body
- Describe the ecology of living things

SCI140: Nutrition

Nutrition is the science that investigates how the body takes in, breaks down, and uses foods. The course will provide you with basic information on how these processes take place, including information about nutrients and how they contribute to the way the body functions. This will help you to have a better understanding of your decisions about food and diet. You'll also learn about physical activities that can contribute to a healthier lifestyle. Because a central focus of nutrition studies is on health promotion, suggestions for individual nutrition choice will be discussed, as well as tactics for maintaining a healthy weight and keeping food supplies safe.

- Describe how nutrition supports a body's wellness
- Recognize the body's use of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins
- Identify the body's use of water, minerals, and micronutrients
- Discuss what nutritional needs are for a healthy weight and for an athletic lifestyle
- Define food safety and the nutritional needs of humans over a lifetime
- Prepare a research paper on a nutritional topic

HUM102: Art Appreciation

In this course, the student will gain an understanding of artistic media, historical periods and artistic movements, the roles of the artist and the viewer, and the principles of art criticism.

- Define the language, visual elements, and principles of design of art
- Identify two-dimensional media
- Identify three-dimensional media
- Explain the evolution of art from ancient Mediterranean cultures through eighteenth-century Europe
- Identify features and popular examples of art throughout the history of African, Asian, Pacific, and American cultures
- Compare the genres of the Modern and Postmodern eras of art from around the world

PLS202: Legal Research and Writing

Provides training in the kind of research and writing that students will actually be doing as paralegals, including the use of lexis.com, other online resources, and traditional print sources, in order to complete three writing and research projects.

- Analyze the process of legal writing and the areas that require legal writing
- Prepare a letter, a deed, and a memorandum using the skills acquired from the course

- Categorize the disciplines of legal research and the related components
- Identify the aids used to conduct legal researches with the help of computer programs
- Distinguish between the types of internet needs with respect to legal research and practices
- Prepare a report and memorandums on a parental custody case
- Apply the CALR system to complete legal research assignments

SSC105: World Civilizations

This course serves as an introduction to many of the major events of the fifteenth through twenty-first centuries. It also examines the causal relationships between events and trends all across the globe.

- Identify the causes and consequences of global trade and its conflicting worldwide impact
- Describe the impact of social and industrial revolutions, fifteenth century onward, on various nations
- Recognize the conditions that led to the World Wars, decolonization, and the Cold War
- Summarize post-World War II effects on the economic and political structures around the world
- Discuss an event that occurred after the fifteenth century and had an impact on a world civilization
- Explain the effects of World War II on the world population

SSC125: Introduction to Sociology

In this introduction to the field of sociology, you'll learn about social structure, forms of power, and social relationships, as well as deviance, crime, and social control. You'll explore issues of identity and inequality regarding class, race, ethnicity, sex, gender, and sexuality. Social institutions including the family, religion, education, work, and the media are examined, as well as the topics of health, politics, social movements, globalization, and social change.

- Examine foundational concepts and theories of sociology and recognize how they inform research
- Analyze the ways in which culture, social structure, and power influence daily life
- Evaluate the effects of socialization, interaction, deviance, and social control on human behavior
- Develop an essay reflecting on the importance of cultural traditions amid increasing globalization
- Examine the ways in which class, race, gender, and sexuality influence identity and inequality
- Distinguish the various social institutions and issues in the current global system
- Develop an essay examining the ways in which social inequality informs social change and movements

SSC130: Essentials of Psychology

This course covers biology and behavior, consciousness, memory, thought and language, intelligence, personality and gender, stress, and community influences.

- Explain various states of consciousness, learning theories, and thought processes and development
- Summarize the nature of human motivation and development, the human development cycle, and approaches to understanding and assessing personality

- Prepare an essay on the topic of conditioning, memory, or motivation and emotion
- Recognize psychological disorders and available treatments
- Explain social psychology as it relates to attitudes, influences, behaviors, and stress
- Use critical thinking skills to determine the likely causes of behaviors of individuals and groups discussed in case studies

PLS205: Civil Litigation

Use of the court system to resolve disputes; involvement of paralegals in litigation support, including discovery; alternative dispute resolution methods; how paralegals can develop their skills as arbitrators and/or mediators in these methods.

- Explain the purpose of litigation and the differences between civil and criminal litigation
- Know the role of court system personnel in litigation
- Prepare and file a complaint
- Define evidence law and the requirements to make evidence admissible
- Describe hearsay and some important hearsay exceptions

ENG115: Introduction to Literature

This course will allow you to develop your critical thinking skills and broaden your knowledge of the main genres of literature—fiction, poetry, and drama.

- Explain how to effectively read fiction for both knowledge and enjoyment
- Identify different styles and forms of poetry
- Use what you've learned in this course to discuss, write about, and understand literature
- Prepare a critical interpretation of fiction or poetry based on what you've learned in this course
- Discuss how literary dramas differ from fiction and poetry
- Identify different strategies of critical literary analysis

HUM104: Music Appreciation

In this course, you'll practice the skill of active listening. Learning to listen differently will allow you to experience all kinds of music in a new way. Most listeners are familiar with how music makes them feel, and we often say we like a particular piece of music because it has a "good beat" or a beautiful melody. This course will allow you to go deeper. You'll identify what the composer might have been trying to convey and listen for the way elements of musical composition and performance make each piece unique.

- Identify the building blocks of music a composer can use to create a piece, such as rhythm, melody, harmony, texture, form, and timbre
- Differentiate between the music of the baroque era and the musical styles of previous time periods
- List the major characteristics of classical music, including form, melody, and instrumentation

- Describe the musical trends and innovations that occurred during the romantic era
- Relate musical styles of the early twentieth century to comparable movements in art and literature
- Explain the evolution of American popular music in the twentieth century
- Describe the influence of world music on modern western composition
- Synthesize research comparing composers' influence in their respective genres

MAT115: Intermediate Algebra

Algebra is the mathematical language used to interpret and represent patterns in numbers by using variables, expressions, and equations. Algebra is an essential tool used in business, science, and computer technology. Throughout this course, you'll be introduced to algebraic concepts, along with real-world application problems from a variety of fields. In addition to providing a springboard to the discovery of underlying mathematical properties, these applications illustrate the importance of mathematics in your world.

- Demonstrate effective quantitative skills
- Solve algebraic equations, linear equations, inequalities, and absolute value equations
- Solve and graph linear equations and inequalities
- Solve polynomials
- Apply algebraic operations to rational expressions and rational equations
- Solve problems involving radicals and complex numbers
- Solve quadratic equations, rational inequalities, nonlinear equations, and nonlinear inequalities
- Calculate exponential and logarithmic functions
- Solve binomial expansions, sequences, and arithmetic and geometric series
- Prepare for the final exam

PLS211: Criminal Litigation

Introduction to the practice and theory of criminal law; substantive criminal law; criminal procedure; criminal responsibility; major felonies recognized in most, if not all, jurisdictions; constitutional dimensions of criminal procedure; practical aspects of the criminal justice process.

- Point out the various sources of criminal law and elements of a crime
- Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge related to crimes against the person
- Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge related to non-personal crimes
- Identify defenses and rights prior to arrest
- Identify rights after arrest, during trial, and at postconviction
- Apply knowledge of criminal law to details about a criminal case

BUS315: Legal Environment of Business

The nature and sources of law, the U.S. court systems, litigation and alternative methods of dispute resolution, constitutional and administrative law; tort law and product liability; contract law; agency law; business organizations; business ethics and social responsibility; and property rights for both personal and real property.

- Analyze the sources and structure of the U.S. legal system, and the business laws and organizations
- Point out the purpose, requirements, and criteria needed for contracts
- Distinguish between real and personal property and the relationship between principal and agent
- Analyze the principles of sales, goods, and services and laws by UCC that governs them
- Distinguish between the role of insurance, transactions, and bankruptcy in business law
- Create a case brief by following the instructions and procedure
- Prepare a written memorandum by applying your knowledge and following the instructions

PLS213: Family Law

Description of the current state of family law and the role of the attorney-paralegal team within it; changes in the practice of family law.

- Explain the elements of family law practice and of marriage
- Define the fundamental principles of law with annulment and the divorce process
- Identify the role of a paralegal with cases involving parenthood, child custody, child support, and adoption
- Identify the proper forum and procedural requirements for spousal support, property division, separation agreements, and family violence
- Construct legal documents in order to apply learning of the paralegal practice in the field of family law

PLS215: Real Estate Law

Introductory course in real property law; basics of real property law; areas of a modern real estate practice; preparation for assisting transactional real estate attorneys; legal forms used in real estate law.

- Understand the types, content, and preparation of deeds
- Understand how real estate is described in deeds
- Define and give examples of encumbrances, easements, and licenses
- Describe some of the ways government regulates the use of real estate
- Describe the components of a real estate purchase contract and the real estate closing process
- Explain the role of lawyers and paralegals in the process of real estate financing
- List the provisions of a standard lease and explain their purpose

PLS217: Wills and Estates

Basic, practical, everyday duties of paralegals working in the fields of wills, trusts, and estate administration; terminology and general principles of law that are the basis for drafting wills and trusts; planning and administering estates.

- Understand statutes and statutory language
- Draft a preliminary will for the supervising attorney's review
- Prepare preliminary drafts of the various kinds of trusts
- Prepare legal forms to create an estate plan
- Apply the procedures and prepare the legal forms used in probate and estate administration
- Prepare the tax returns of a decedent's estate

ENG200: Speech

This course provides students with a foundation in the basic concepts of public speaking. Students will learn how to research, organize, and write effective speeches; incorporate presentation aids; and rehearse and deliver speeches effectively. Students will prepare, rehearse, record, and submit speeches in a number of rhetorical styles to be graded.

- Analyze the different methods and principles required for effective public speaking
- Point out the principles, methods, and skills required to rehearse and deliver effective public speaking
- Prepare and record a narrative or speech on personal experience
- Prepare and record an informative podcast for a website
- Create and record an infomercial by using one of the mentioned methods
- Prepare and present a motivational or reasoning speech to persuade your audience
- Develop a speech by using key information delivery of a speech

Note: The titles of your learning materials may be different from those listed on your program outline. There is no need to call your instructor about these differences. While the titles of certain learning materials may differ, the educational content is the same. All learning materials are designed to give you the finest education in your field. If you need instructional assistance, however, be sure to call for help. We reserve the right to revise the program of study and the instructional materials and to substitute for the items of equipment offered.