

LEGAL STUDIES INSTITUTE

Program Requirements

2009

Paralegal Certificate Program

Paralegals, also known as legal assistants, work with attorneys in the delivery of legal services. Through formal education, training and experience, paralegals have knowledge and expertise regarding the legal system and substantive and procedural law, which qualifies them to do work of a legal nature under the supervision of an attorney. Working under the supervision of an attorney, the paralegals work product is merged with and becomes part of the attorney work product. A paralegal may perform any function delegated by and under the supervision of an attorney, including but not limited to the following:

- Maintain general contact with the client
- Locate and interview witnesses
- Conduct legal research
- Draft legal documents, correspondence and pleadings
- Summarize depositions, interrogatories and testimony
- Attend executions of wills, real estate closings, depositions, court sessions, administrative hearings and trials with the attorney

Program Requirements

To be admitted to the program, it is preferred that you have at minimum an A.A. or A.S. degree. If you have a high school diploma or GED you will be considered for acceptance to the program on a case-by-case basis. You may be asked to take a Basic English writing assessment. Basic computer (knowledge of Word Excel, Outlook, Power Point and the internet) and keyboarding skills are helpful.

Coursework Requirements

79.95 CEU's (666 clock hours): Thirteen (13) courses and a 120-hour internship comprise the Paralegal Certificate Program. Required core courses include:

- Introduction to Paralegalism (must be taken first)
- The Professional Paralegal (to be taken in the first or second semester)
- Professionalism & Ethics
- Legal Interviewing & Investigation
- Legal Research/Writing/Analysis I & II
- Legal Technology
- Six (6) electives.

Computer I & II may be required if experience or previous classes are absent.

Internship

The Paralegal Internship is designed for students that have completed their course work. It consists of 120 hours, and there is no fee associated with this practicum/internship.

Students are asked to research the firms and offices practicing the type of law they wish to specialize in. Students usually make their own arrangements directly with the law office. If necessary, the Legal Studies Institute Program Manager will assist the student in locating a host agency.

All Internships must be planned with and approved by the Legal Studies Program Director prior to beginning. Students should arrange an internship meeting with the Program Director in the semester prior to performing the internship/practicum.

Legal Secretary Certificate Program

The Legal Secretary Certificate Program provides legal and administrative skills that are vital to those who wish to become a Legal Secretary

Legal Secretaries work with one or more attorneys or paralegals. They handle routine correspondence, travel and conference scheduling; draft documents; maintain calendars; interface with clients; and are expected to do research and prepare legal papers. They also must have extremely fast and accurate keyboarding skills.

Program Requirements

To be admitted to the program, you must have a high school diploma or GED.

Course Work Requirements

40.32 CEU's (336 Clock Hours): Eight (8) courses

- Introduction to Paralegalism (must be taken first)
- The Professional Paralegal (to be taken in the first or second semester)
- Professionalism & Ethics
- Legal Technology
- Office Administrative Fundamentals**
- Computer I** (online) and Computer II** (online)
- One (1) elective

**These may be waived with proof of proficiency or prior experience.

Paralegal and Legal Secretary Dual Certificate Program

Many of the skills of a legal secretary and a paralegal overlap. With the addition of a few courses, you can complete a Paralegal and Legal Secretary Dual Certificate.

Course Work Requirements

90 CEU's (750 Clock Hours): Fifteen (15) courses and 120-hour internship comprise the Dual Certificate Program.

- Introduction to Paralegalism (must be taken first)
- The Professional Paralegal (to be taken in the first or second semester)
- Professionalism & Ethics
- Legal Interviewing & Investigation
- Legal Research/Writing/Analysis I & II

- Legal Technology
- Four (4) electives.
- Office Administrative Fundamentals**
- Computer I** (online) and Computer II** (online) (These may be waived with proof of proficiency.)
- Five (5) electives
- 120-hour Internship

Electives

Topics covered under the electives include:

- Real Estate Law
- Criminal Law and Procedures
- Civil Procedures and Litigation
- Wills, Trusts and Estates
- Labor and Employment Law
- Business Law
- Intellectual Property
- Contract Law
- Family Law
- Torts
- Elder Law
- Law Office Management

Program Completion

The Certificate is awarded to those persons who successfully complete the program's curriculum with a "C" grade in each class and attend, at minimum, 80% of all classes.

Sub-Certificates

It is possible for each student to earn several sub-certificates in several areas. They include: ProDoc (document management); Westlaw (research); Litigation Technology; and Computer Proficiency (by completing a computer assessment). For more information on these sub-certificates, please speak with the program director.

Cost

There is a one-time application fee of \$60.

Each course is \$449. An early registration discount is available up to 12 days prior to the start of the semester at \$399 per course.

There is an annual technology fee of \$65 which entitles you to a subscription to Westlaw to be used from any computer, and available 24/7/365. This represents a **97%** savings to you off the individual rate of \$2,400.

Each course usually requires a text book that may be purchased from the UNF Bookstore or from any on-line seller.