

# PARALEGAL STUDIES

The legal profession has evolved to include more paraprofessional assistance in the delivery of legal services to the consumer. Current economic trends and technologies find paralegals filling a space in the consumer market that was once filled only by attorneys. Law firms and corporate legal departments rely on paralegals as cost saving measures forwarded to the client. The Paralegal occupation is expected to grow at a faster than average rate through 2018 according to the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The Paralegal program at Victor Valley College prepares students to work in the legal industry by introducing students to legal theory which leads to employment in administrative agencies, governmental agencies, corporations, insurance companies, human resources departments, private and public law offices and other legal environments. Paralegals duties include performing factual and legal research and investigation, drafting legal documents and correspondence, interviewing clients and witnesses, trial preparation and organizing and maintaining court files. Training students in the practical application and the development of current paralegal related job skills is emphasized. Paralegals students will learn to adopt and use computer technology skills in the law setting, using electronic databases and research tools.

There are two types of legal industry paraprofessionals. California Business and Professions Codes 6400 (c) ([https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=BPC&division=3.&title=&part=&chapter=5.5.&article=1.](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=BPC&division=3.&title=&part=&chapter=5.5.&article=1.)) and California Business and Professions Code 6450 (a) ([https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=BPC&division=3.&title=&part=&chapter=5.6.&article=](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=BPC&division=3.&title=&part=&chapter=5.6.&article=)) define the duties, responsibilities and obligations that the industry and state regulate. Paralegals may not provide legal services directly to the public except as permitted by law. The primary goal of the paralegal program is to educate and prepare students for employment as paralegals where they can demonstrate competency and ethical standards demanded by and of the profession.

Students should take ENGL 101.0 English Composition and Reading / ENGL 101H Honors Composition and Reading prior to, or concurrently with, PAL 100 Introduction to Law and Paralegal Studies. The sequencing of courses has been designed to enhance student success in the field. PAL 100 Introduction to Law and Paralegal Studies, PAL 102 Beginning Legal Research for Paralegals, and PAL 103 Beginning Legal Writing are the foundational classes that are prerequisite to the higher level legal specialty classes. These three classes should optimally be taken concurrently to provide that firm foundation for success. PAL 104 Legal Ethics for Paralegals may be taken concurrent with PAL 100 Introduction to Law and Paralegal Studies, PAL 102 Beginning Legal Research for Paralegals and PAL 103 Beginning Legal Writing, but may be taken at any time. A firm foundation in writing and grammar skills and completion of POLS 102 Introduction to American Government And Politics are recommended. This is not a four year transfer program, is not a substitute for law school, nor is it intended to be used for advanced standing in law school applications. It is not a pre-law program. It is not intended to serve as a preparation for bar examination.

## Faculty

Glickstein, R. Lynne

## Transfer

- California State University, San Bernardino: Criminal Justice major, Paralegal Studies concentration

For the most up-to-date information on this program and others, visit [assist.org](https://catalog.vvc.edu/degrees-certificates/paralegal-studies/assist.org) (<https://catalog.vvc.edu/degrees-certificates/paralegal-studies/assist.org>). Please stop by the Transfer Center in Building 55 or make an appointment with a counselor if you have questions.

## Paralegal Studies, AA

**State Control Number:** 37411

**Program Code:** PLGL.AA

**Approved for Federal Financial Aid:** Yes

The Paralegal Studies Associate of Arts degree program prepares students to work in the legal industry and other related fields requiring professional skills learned through the designed required and elective curriculum.

To earn this degree, complete the major coursework with "C" grades or better and all of the following graduation requirements: 60 minimum degree-applicable units (including a maximum 4 units of activity); 2.0 minimum overall GPA; 12 degree-applicable units through VVC; Information Competency; Global Citizenship; Kinesiology, and the VVC General Education pattern (<https://catalog.vvc.edu/degrees-certificates/vvcge/#vvcge>). Courses may count in one area only, either in the major or in a general education category. Courses counted in one AA/AS major may not be used in another AA/AS major.

Code	Title	Units
<b>Required Courses</b>		
BADM 117	Legal Environment of Business	3.0
or BADM 118	Business Law	
PAL 100	Introduction to Law and Paralegal Studies	3.0
or LAW 100	Introduction to Law & Paralegal Studies	
PAL 101	Law Office Technology for Paralegals	3.0
PAL 102	Beginning Legal Research for Paralegals	3.0
PAL 103	Beginning Legal Writing	3.0
PAL 104	Legal Ethics for Paralegals	3.0
PAL 200	Law Office Management for Paralegals	3.0
PAL 201	Fundamentals of Litigation For Paralegals	3.0
PAL 202	Family Law	3.0
PAL 203	Tort Law for Paralegals	3.0
Complete at least 12.0 units from the following electives with at least 1.0 unit of Cooperative Education:		
BET 112	Spreadsheet: Excel for Windows A/B/C	
CJ 103	Criminal Law	
CJ 104	Legal Aspects of Evidence	
LAW 205	Mock Trial Advocacy	
PAL 138	Cooperative Education Paralegal	
PAL 204	Wills and Trusts for Paralegals	
PAL 205	Basic Bankruptcy Law for Paralegals	
PAL 206	California Employment and Labor Law	
PAL 207	Conflict Resolutions and Negotiations	
PAL 208	Immigration Law for Paralegals	

**Total Units**

**42**

## Advanced Paralegal Studies Certificate of Achievement

**State Control Number:** 40656

**Program Code:** ADVPRLGSTDS.CERT

**Approved for Federal Financial Aid:** Pending (<https://catalog.vvc.edu/student-resources/financing-education/#Pending-FedAid>)

A paralegal works in a paraprofessional capacity as an assistant to an attorney in a private law firm, government agency industry, private association or as a legal document assistant governed by California Business and Professions code 6400, et seq. The paralegal performs many tasks normally handled by an attorney, such as preparing forms, writing memorandum, interviewing clients, researching legal matters, managing the law office, and a variety of other tasks. There are also self-employed paraprofessionals who work for attorneys on request.

VVC offers an Advanced Paralegal Certificate for VVC graduates earning their certificate before 2017. New legal specialty courses are available to add to the prior certificate award.

Code	Title	Units
<b>Required Courses</b>		
Complete all of the following with a C or better		
PAL 101	Law Office Technology for Paralegals	3.0
PAL 200	Law Office Management for Paralegals	3.0
PAL 204	Wills and Trusts for Paralegals	3.0
PAL 205	Basic Bankruptcy Law for Paralegals	3.0
Complete 6 units from the following:		6.0
BADM 116	Human Relations in Business	
BADM 118	Business Law	
BRE 110	Legal Aspects of Real Estate I	
PAL 206	California Employment and Labor Law	
PAL 207	Conflict Resolutions and Negotiations	
<b>Total Units</b>		<b>18</b>

## Paralegal Studies Certificate of Achievement

**State Control Number:** 11836

**Program Code:** PLGL.CERT

**Approved for Federal Financial Aid:** Yes

The Paralegal Studies Certificate program at Victor Valley College is designed for students pursuing paraprofessional careers in the legal field.

Code	Title	Units
<b>Required Courses</b>		
Complete all of the following with a C or better		
CJ 104	Legal Aspects of Evidence	3.0
PAL 100	Introduction to Law and Paralegal Studies	3.0
or LAW 100	Introduction to Law & Paralegal Studies	
PAL 101	Law Office Technology for Paralegals	3.0
PAL 102	Beginning Legal Research for Paralegals	3.0
PAL 103	Beginning Legal Writing	3.0
PAL 104	Legal Ethics for Paralegals	3.0
PAL 138	Cooperative Education Paralegal	1.0-8.0
PAL 200	Law Office Management for Paralegals	3.0

Code	Title	Units
PAL 201	Fundamentals of Litigation For Paralegals	3.0
Complete at least 12 units from the following courses:		12.0
BADM 117	Legal Environment of Business	
or BADM 118	Business Law	
CJ 103	Criminal Law	
LAW 205	Mock Trial Advocacy	
PAL 202	Family Law	
PAL 203	Tort Law for Paralegals	
PAL 204	Wills and Trusts for Paralegals	
PAL 205	Basic Bankruptcy Law for Paralegals	
PAL 206	California Employment and Labor Law	
PAL 207	Conflict Resolutions and Negotiations	
PAL 208	Immigration Law for Paralegals	
<b>Total Units</b>		<b>37-44</b>

## Paralegal Studies Courses

### PAL 100 Introduction to Law and Paralegal Studies (3.0 Units)

This is the beginning course for students pursuing a Certificate of Achievement in Paralegal Studies. This class is also included in the Guided Pathway to Law School program. Students will learn the nature of the career field, the skills and knowledge required, the ethical requirements, the background in court systems, and the legal research and writing skills that are necessary for success in the profession. An emphasis is placed on the functions of a paralegal within a private law firm, within a government agency, as a business owner, and as a litigation assistant.

Lecture Hours: 54.0

Transfer: Transfers to CSU only

### PAL 101 Law Office Technology for Paralegals (3.0 Units)

This class introduces the students to the legal industry technology utilized in the current legal environment. Skills developed include document creation and assembly, spreadsheet software, and data and case management. Students will gain an understanding of the growing and critical role of electronic discovery in litigation, including electronic discovery rules of law, workflow and processes, and the production of electronically stored information. Students will be introduced to litigation support and case management software, and introduction to paperless presentation tools used in today's courtrooms.

Co-requisite(s): PAL 100

Lecture Hours: 54.0

Transfer: Transfers to CSU only

### PAL 102 Beginning Legal Research for Paralegals (3.0 Units)

Equips the student with the research methods needed as a paralegal to locate sources of federal and state law. Topics include legal terminology; proper citation form; sources of primary and secondary law; statutes and legislative history; court reports; validating legal research; and a thorough overview of computer legal research. Explore the array of legal research tools available, and gain hands-on experience you need to locate and apply the law effectively on the job through outside assignments and practice in the library.

Co-requisite(s): PAL 100 previously or concurrently

Lecture Hours: 54.0

Transfer: Transfers to CSU only

**PAL 103 Beginning Legal Writing (3.0 Units)**

This course provides the Paralegal student with the development of good legal writing skills. Critical analysis of proper legal writing forms stressing logic, clarity and format will be used to shape the Paralegal student's ability to produce such legal documents as correspondence, legal briefs, memorandum of law, and common pleadings.

Co-requisite(s): PAL 102 previously or concurrently

Lecture Hours: 54.0

Transfer: Transfers to CSU only

**PAL 104 Legal Ethics for Paralegals (3.0 Units)**

This course examines the role of the paralegal in the rendering of legal services by attorneys to clients and the ethical rules that govern that relationship. The student will become familiar with the concept of the unauthorized practice of law, the criminal penalties such practices carry and the best means to avoid liability.

Lecture Hours: 54.0

Transfer: Transfers to CSU only

**PAL 138 Cooperative Education Paralegal (1-8 Units)**

This course is designed for students who are cross-training at their current worksite for upward mobility or possible career changes, as well as those looking for entry-level occupational training through work-based learning experiences. Students must have a co-op approved worksite to enroll in this class and establish new learning objectives.

Transfer: Transfers to CSU only

**PAL 200 Law Office Management for Paralegals (3.0 Units)**

Introduction to the role of the paralegal in law office management and practice procedures, including managerial challenges in a legal environment, office activities, policies, and role of the office administrator, comprehensive understanding of financial resources, human resources, risk management, and supervision unique to the legal environment.

Lecture Hours: 54.0

Transfer: Transfers to CSU only

**PAL 201 Fundamentals of Litigation For Paralegals (3.0 Units)**

This course will focus on the litigation process that begins with a client interview, extends through the filing of a lawsuit, develops in the discovery stage, takes final shape in the trial stage and ends in enforcement of a judgement or an appeal.

Prerequisite(s): PAL 103, Minimum grade C

Lecture Hours: 54.0

Transfer: Transfers to CSU only

**PAL 202 Family Law (3.0 Units)**

This course examines family law for the paralegal working in California. Concepts covered include marital contracts, annulment, separation, dissolution, child custody and support, spousal support, property division and tax consequences of each.

Co-requisite(s): PAL 201 previously or concurrently

Lecture Hours: 54.0

Transfer: Transfers to CSU only

**PAL 203 Tort Law for Paralegals (3.0 Units)**

This course introduces the paralegal to the basic concepts of tort law including negligence, intentional torts, and strict liability. Introduces the student to investigative procedures in personal injury cases.

Co-requisite(s): PAL 201

Lecture Hours: 54.0

Transfer: Transfers to CSU only

**PAL 204 Wills and Trusts for Paralegals (3.0 Units)**

This course introduces the Paralegal student to the laws of Wills, Trusts and Estates, including the creation of wills, testate succession, intestate succession, trust creation and arrangements, family protection, estate planning, probate courts, and estate taxes.

Prerequisite(s): PAL 201, Minimum grade C

Lecture Hours: 54.0

Transfer: Transfers to CSU only

**PAL 205 Basic Bankruptcy Law for Paralegals (3.0 Units)**

This course is an introduction to the Federal Bankruptcy law, with emphasis on Chapter 7 Bankruptcies, and discussions and introduction to Chapter 11 and 13 proceedings.

Prerequisite(s): PAL 201, Minimum grade C

Lecture Hours: 54.0

Transfer: Transfers to CSU only

**PAL 206 California Employment and Labor Law (3.0 Units)**

This course provides students with a understanding of employment and labor related law and its impact on the employer/employee relationship.

The student will study applicable federal and state laws applicable to the employer/employee relationship. Areas covered include common law and statutory employer/employee relationships, pre-employment concerns, legal aspects of the employment relationship, discrimination issues, discrimination actions, termination of the employer/employee relationship, the collective bargaining process, employee unions, union certification and de-certification and ethical issues.

Lecture Hours: 54.0

Transfer: Transfers to CSU only

**PAL 207 Conflict Resolutions and Negotiations (3.0 Units)**

This course builds knowledge and skill base for applying practical and effective conflict resolution practices and techniques regarding the use of alternative solutions to explore the changing climate of litigation-oriented practices, including ethical considerations.

Lecture Hours: 54.0

Transfer: Transfers to CSU only

**PAL 208 Immigration Law for Paralegals (3.0 Units)**

Immigration Law for Paralegals offers the student a thorough, accessible, and practical approach to understanding and putting to use U.S. laws and regulations to applied immigration practice. This course surveys immigration in the United States and how the paralegal supports the attorney including interviewing, gathering information, case management and document preparation techniques; analysis of temporary and permanent employment visas; analysis of family-based petitions, political asylum and naturalization. Enforcement and deportation process and procedure for proceedings will be reviewed. Also covered will be representation before Department of Homeland Security agencies.

Lecture Hours: 54.0

Transfer: Transfers to CSU only

## Program Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are statements of the kind of learning a program hopes a student will achieve. The PLOs describe the knowledge, skills, problem-solving, communication and values that apply to all certificates and/or degrees within that program.

Upon completion of this program, students should be able to:

1. Describe the role and function of a paralegal.
2. Perform basic legal tasks.
3. Demonstrate ability to assist in law office procedures and substantive areas.

4. Prepare pleadings, discovery, correspondence, as related to Bankruptcy, Probate/ Estate Planning, Labor Law, Business Law, Criminal Law, Evidence, Computer Applications, and law Office Management in the legal industry.