

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.) 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=) 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 / 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 <https://assist.org/>. Please stop by the Transfer Center in Building 55 or make an appointment with a counselor if you have questions.

Programs of Study

- Advanced Paralegal Studies Certificate of Achievement (<https://catalog.vvc.edu/degrees-certificates/paralegal-studies/advanced-paralegal-studies-ca/>)
- Paralegal Studies Certificate of Achievement (<https://catalog.vvc.edu/degrees-certificates/paralegal-studies/paralegal-studies-ca/>)
- Paralegal Studies, AA (<https://catalog.vvc.edu/degrees-certificates/paralegal-studies/paralegal-studies-aa/>)

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:

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

Paralegal Studies Courses

PAL 100 Introduction to Law and Paralegal studies (3.0 Units)

This course includes an overview of the legal system including the courts, the participants and various sources of law in the American legal system. Review of the legal and judicial process in the United States covering the adversarial system, jurisdiction of federal and state courts, and the general process of judicial review. Explanation of different sources of law including statutes, court cases and administrative agency rules. Review of basic legal reasoning and introductory legal research methods. Examination of legal ethics. Introduction to substantive areas of law and the effect the law has in various groups and individuals in our system.

Lecture Hours: 54.0; Lecture Hours: 48.0

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; Lecture Hours: 48.0

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

Lecture Hours: 54.0; Lecture Hours: 48.0

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

Lecture Hours: 54.0; Lecture Hours: 3.38

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; Lecture Hours: 3.38

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; Lecture Hours: 3.38

Transfer: Transfers to CSU only

PAL 201 Fundamentals of Litigation^{1/2}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; Lecture Hours: 48.0

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

Lecture Hours: 54.0; Lecture Hours: 3.38

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; Lecture Hours: 3.38

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; Lecture Hours: 3.38

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; Lecture Hours: 3.38

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; Lecture Hours: 3.38

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; Lecture Hours: 3.38

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