

Paralegal Studies

Associate in Applied Science Degree

Paralegal Studies Certificate



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A paralegal performs basic legal work and is a vital part of the legal team. If you want to balance the basics of the legal profession with the importance of careful and thorough research, then paralegal studies may be the right choice for you. Paralegals work hand in hand with lawyers, helping to prepare cases for trial. In this role a paralegal may conduct legal research, obtain affidavits and assist with depositions. They might also perform duties such as investigation, detail work with regard to probate matters, preparation of tax forms and returns, searching public and court records, office management, library service, book keeping, serving and filing legal documents and preparing legal forms.

A significant portion of a paralegal's work involves writing reports and drafting documents applicable to a specific area of the law, such litigation, copyright law, real estate or corporate law.

Prospective students should note that paralegals may not provide legal services directly to the public, except as permitted by law.

A full-time student may complete this 63 credit-hour associate in applied science degree in two years. Part-time options for completion are offered, as well. The 24 credit-hour certificate program may be completed in three semesters. Classes are offered during the fall, spring and summer semesters.

The Paralegal Studies program is approved by the American Bar Association.

Did You Know?

The Harper College Paralegal Studies program was the first such program in Illinois and one of the first in the United States. It has been approved by the American Bar Association since 1975.

Program Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this program will be able to:

- demonstrate the skills necessary to gain employment.
- perform legal research and writing projects, such as a Law Office Memorandum.
- understand the legal and ethical requirements associated with the practice of law.
- complete major research projects utilizing Westlaw or LEXIS.
- understand the role of the paralegal in the law office and how a paralegal can assist an attorney in the practice of law.
- understand the litigation process and be able to draft pleadings and other documents commonly utilized in litigation.
- demonstrate effective critical analysis, resolution of legal problems and the ability to communicate these results in a clear and effective manner, both orally and in writing.
- effectively organize documents needed in the prosecution or defense of a lawsuit.
- understand common computer terminology utilized in the practice of law.
- perform basic computer functions necessary for the law office.

Career Opportunities

Career opportunities available to graduates of this program may include positions as a paralegal, legal assistant, administrative assistant or law office manager.

For a complete overview to all related positions and job market and salary trends, please consult the **Occupational Outlook Handbook**: <http://www.bls.gov/OCO/>

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FIRST YEAR

First Semester

ENG	101	Composition	3
		Humanities elective ¹	3
PLS	101	Introduction to Paralegal Studies	3
PSY	101	Introduction to Psychology	3
SOC	101♦	Introduction to Sociology	<u>3</u>
			15

Second Semester

ENG	103	Technical and Report Writing	3
PLS	102	Fundamentals of Legal Research	3
PLS	103	Litigation	3
PLS	105	Family Law	3
PLS	123	Real Property Law	<u>3</u>
			15

SECOND YEAR

First Semester

		Mathematics elective ²	3
PLS	201	Tort and Insurance Law	3
PLS	205	Contract Law	3
PLS	210	Corporate and Securities Law	3
PSC	101	American Politics and Government	<u>3</u>
			15

Second Semester

CAS	160	Introduction to Business Software Packages....	3
		Electives ³	9
PLS	208 ⁴	Internship in Paralegal Studies	3
PLS	223	Computer-Assisted Legal Research	<u>3</u>
			18

¹ Humanities electives must be chosen from the following ABA-approved humanities, listed with the requirements for AAS degrees: ART 105, ART 114, ART 130, ART 131, ART 132, any FNA, any FRN, any GER, any HST, any HUM, any JPN, any LIT, LNG 105, MUS 103, MUS 104, MUS 120, any PHI but not PHI 160, any SPA, or either SPE 107 or SPE 111.

² Only 100 level or higher mathematics courses are acceptable for the mathematics elective.

³ LEJ 201 or LEJ 202 (prerequisite of LEJ 101 will be waived for Paralegal Studies degree students), PLS 200, PLS 202, PLS 206, PLS 212, PLS 220, PLS 221, PLS 222, PLS 224, PLS 230.

⁴ Required for individuals without any legal experience. Individuals with legal experience may substitute another PLS course with coordinator approval.

♦This course meets the World Cultures and Diversity graduation requirement.

Paralegal Studies

Certificate

Paralegal Studies Certificate

This 24 credit-hour certificate program is designed for those individuals who are currently employed or employable in the legal field or those who, because of legal experience, could benefit from these specialty options. The various choices available allow the student to develop special interests and skills.

To receive a certificate in Paralegal Studies, students must have earned an associate in applied science degree, an associate in arts degree, or a bachelor's degree which include general education courses equivalent to those required in Harper College's associate in applied science degree in paralegal studies. Verifications of the degree must be submitted before the certificate will be awarded.

Students who complete the 24 credit-hour certificate are eligible to use our computerized placement service and otherwise work as paralegals for a practicing attorney. Students should be aware that there are legal restrictions on the practice of law by laymen.

Students electing to earn a certificate in paralegal studies are eligible to apply credits earned toward completion of the associate in applied science degree.

Required:

PLS	101	Introduction to Paralegal Studies	3
PLS	102	Fundamentals of Legal Research	3
PLS	103	Litigation.....	3
PLS	223	Computer-Assisted Legal Research	3

Electives: Select at least 12 credit hours from the following courses, providing the combination has the approval of the coordinator or a Student Development faculty member.

LEJ	201 ¹	Criminal Law or	
LEJ	202	Criminal Procedures	3
PLS	105	Family Law.....	3
PLS	123	Real Property Law	3
PLS	200	Probate	3
PLS	201	Tort and Insurance Law.....	3
PLS	202	Estate Planning.....	3
PLS	205	Contract Law.....	3
PLS	206	Environmental Law	3
PLS	208	Internship in Paralegal Studies	3
PLS	210	Corporate and Securities Law.....	3
PLS	212	Law Office Systems	3
PLS	220	Community Law	3
PLS	221	Bankruptcy Law	3
PLS	222	Intellectual Property	3
PLS	224	Commercial Real Estate Law.....	3
PLS	230	Topics in Paralegal Studies.....	3

¹ Students may take LEJ 201 or LEJ 202, but not both. Prerequisite of LEJ 101 will be waived for Paralegal Studies certificate students.