

Certificate Program in PARALEGAL STUDIES

Program Objectives

Paralegals (or legal assistants) are employed by law offices, businesses, or government agencies to do specifically delegated, substantive legal work such as research, conducting interviews, preparing documents, and performing investigations. They may *not* give legal advice, accept cases, argue in court, or set fees.

Cal State L.A.'s Certificate Program in Paralegal Studies has been fully approved by the American Bar Association since 1978 and has met the NALA eligibility requirements for the CLA examination. The program awards certificates of completion to students who meet the requirements of one or more "tracks" of study: i.e., Litigation, Corporate, or General. Each track consists of eight legal specialty courses (32 quarter units). Students may pursue multiple tracks if they wish, since the tracks allow the transfer of several courses between specialty areas.

Each class meets one night a week for 11 weeks. While students set their own timelines, most complete a track in four academic quarters (one calendar year). Special topics courses (PLS754) are scheduled at regular intervals to keep students current on subjects not regularly covered. In addition, the program offers students work experience through paralegal internships (PLS782) in private and public sectors.

The program strives to produce competent, well-rounded paralegals who communicate effectively, demonstrate professional skills, and assist attorneys. Students who successfully complete the program are able to:

- 1) demonstrate the functions, skills, and roles of paralegals,
- 2) use legal terminology correctly and work effectively within the court systems,
- 3) observe the ethics of paralegalism, including avoiding the unauthorized practice of law,
- 4) conduct legal research and follow proper procedures,
- 5) write and analyze legal documents,
- 6) develop a strategy for continuing their legal education,
- 7) perform standard paralegal tasks in general areas including legal interviewing and investigation, law office management, computer applications in the law, civil procedure, mediation and arbitration, computer-assisted legal research, and perform specific paralegal tasks in one or more specialty areas.

Employment, Placement, and Internship Opportunities

Paralegal positions are available in law offices, corporations, banks, insurance companies, savings and loan associations, and local, state, and federal government agencies. Although the program does not guarantee employment, it uses its contacts with the legal community to help graduates find employment. In addition to placement services, the program offers internships and seminars on job-seeking strategies and resume-writing, maintains a web site of current opportunities, and offers immediate job postings via e-mail.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must submit an application form and transcripts indicating that they have earned an associate of arts or baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution or have completed a minimum of 58 quarter (or 39 semester) units at the post-secondary level. At least 27 quarter units (or 18 semester units) must be general education courses (i.e., in areas where at least three of the following disciplines are represented: language and composition, mathematics, social and behavioral sciences, natural sciences, and the arts and humanities). To demonstrate writing proficiency, applicants must have completed a freshman composition course with a "C" or better or a comparable writing exam. Applicants who have completed these requirements at a foreign institution must also submit proof that they have passed the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with a score of at least 550. Foreign applicants may substitute a college freshman composition course, completed with a grade of "C" or better, from a U.S. college or university.

New students are urged to take PLS750 (Role of the Paralegal) or PLS751 (Introduction to the Law) as early as possible in the program. The two courses are interchangeable, subject to prior approval by the Student Advisor. In addition, students are urged to complete PLS750 or PLS751 and PLS760 (Civil Procedures I) before enrolling in PLS752 (Legal Research).

Course Substitutions and Transfers

Students may transfer up to eight quarter units from other paralegal programs (generally excluding courses that fail to develop paralegal competency, such as business law, constitutional law, and criminal justice).

In addition, they may substitute up to two courses per certificate track within the program itself, and may replace one course per track with a Special Topics course, PLS754.

The total number of quarter units transferred or substituted under these provisions may not exceed 12 per certificate track. All course substitutions and transfers require written approval by the Program Coordinator.

Certificate Requirements

Students who complete a certificate track with a minimum grade of "C" in each course earn a Certificate of Completion. Students must submit certificate applications to the Student Advisor no later than the end of the quarter preceding the proposed graduation date.

Scholarships and Loans

Three *Law Offices of Manuel Hidalgo Paralegal Scholarships* are awarded twice a year in fall and spring quarters, with preference given to Mexican/American students. Each scholarship pays the fees of two courses over two quarters, plus \$50 for books and supplies for each course. Call (323) 343-4967 for an application.

The *Educational Resources Institute (TERI)* of Boston, Mass. offers loans of \$500 to \$5,000 to Continuing Education students. The loans require no collateral and are repayable for up to 10 years. For details, call (323) 343-4967. Student loans are also available through the *Cal State L.A. Federal Credit Union*. For more information loan, contact the credit union at (323) 343-4990/6400.

Special scholarships may also become available from time to time. Call (323) 343-4967 for more information.

Yearly Schedule Of Classes (*subject to change*):

Fall Quarter

- PLS 750 The Role of the Paralegal
- PLS 760 Civil Procedures I
- PLS 770 Criminal Law for the Paralegal
- PLS 780 Computers for the Paralegal or PLS 754 Special Topics: to be announced
- PLS 782 Practicum: Private or Public Sector

Winter Quarter

- PLS 752 Legal Research
- PLS 754 Special Topics: to be announced
- PLS 781 Immigration Law
- PLS 761 Civil Procedures II
- PLS 766 Corporate Law I
- PLS 782 Practicum: Private or Public Sector

Spring Quarter

- PLS 751 Introduction to the Law
- PLS 753 Legal Writing
- PLS 755 Law Office Administration
- PLS 762 Civil Procedures III
- PLS 780 Computers for the Paralegal
- PLS 782 Practicum: Private or Public Sector

Summer Quarter

- PLS 754 Special Topics: to be announced or PLS 757 Real Estate for the Paralegal
- PLS 756 Family Law
- PLS 758 Income Tax Law
- PLS 763 Probate Procedures I
- PLS 768 Corporate Law II
- PLS 782 Practicum: Private or Public Sector

Course Descriptions

PLS750 - The Role of the Paralegal (4 Units)

The role and functions of the paralegal in the modern law office. Introduction to legal theory, legal research, legal procedures, and ethics.

PLS751 - Introduction to the Law (4 Units)

Introduction to substantive law: crimes, torts, contracts, sales, commercial paper, partnerships, corporations.

PLS752 - Legal Research (4 Units)

Introduction to the sources, tools, and techniques of legal research. Enrollment limited to 25 students.

PLS753 - Legal Writing (4 Units)

The drafting and writing of legal documents., including briefs, memorandums of law, and points and authorities. Review and application of Standard English grammatical principles. Enrollment limited to 25 students. Prerequisite: PLS7,52 or consent of instructor.

PLS754 - Special Topics for the Paralegal (1-4 units)

Special subjects not regularly covered within the program. With prior approval of advisor may be substituted for one course (of equivalent unit value) per specialty track. May be repeated for credit as subject matter changes. Possible subjects include Environmental Law, Elder Law, Paralegal Litigation Skills, Entertainment Law, Intellectual Property Law, Juvenile Law and Proceedings, Contract Law, Torts, Bankruptcy Law; Personal Injury Law, and Interviewing and Investigation Skills for the Paralegal.

PLS755 - Law Office Administration (4 Units)

An overview of management in a law office, including information retrieval, filing, calendaring, billing and technical innovation.

PLS756 - Family Law (4 Units)

Marriage and dissolution procedures in family law. Basic information on related legal theory and mandatory forms.

PLS757 - Real Estate for the Paralegal (4 Units)

The role and functions of the paralegal in real property transactions. Concepts and procedures in real estate law, including interests and conveyances in real property, escrow and title insurance, and tax considerations.

PLS758 - Income Tax Law (4 Units)

Introduction to federal and California income tax law for paralegals. Tax problems and their resolution through the application of general taxation concepts. Methods of research.

PLS760 - Civil Procedures 1 (4 Units)

Introduction to pleadings and general preliminary procedures in civil actions.

PLS761 - Civil Procedures 11 (4 Units)

Discovery procedures, including review of California Code of Civil Procedure and practical application of discovery tools. Prerequisite: PLS760 or consent of instructor.

PLS762 - Civil Procedures III (4 Units)

The psychology of a law suit, with emphasis on innovative, use of pre-trial motions. Pre-trial procedures, conferences, trial, appeal and satisfaction of judgment. Prerequisite: PLS761 or consent of instructor.

PLS763 - Probate Procedures 1 (4 Units)

Survey of basic probate practice and procedures.

PLS766 - Corporate Law for the Paralegal I (4 Units)

Legal concepts and procedures essential to the formation, transformation, dissolution, and financing of various forms of business enterprise.

PLS767 - Corporate Law for the Paralegal II (4 Units)

Corporate liquidations, mergers, and reorganizations. Prerequisite: PLS766 or consent of instructor.

PLS768 - Corporate Law for the Paralegal III (4 Units)

Theoretical and procedural aspects of state and federal securities regulation. Prerequisite: PLS767 or consent of instructor.

PLS770 - Criminal Law for the Paralegal (4 Units)

A course in the substantive and procedural criminal law of California. Emphasis on the role and functions of the paralegal in the criminal law office.

PLS780 - Computers for the Paralegal (4 Units)

An overview of computer hardware and software commonly used in law offices, with emphasis on the most effective use of computers in paralegal work. Word processing skills required. Enrollment limited to 20 students.

PLS781 - Immigration Law for the Paralegal (4 Units)

A course in substantive immigration law. including practical advice on how to deal with the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

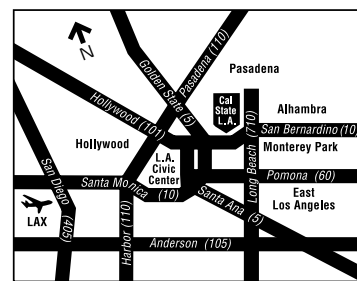
PLS782 - Practicum, Private or Public Sector (4 Units)

A minimum of 12 hours per week of. volunteer, study-related, work experience in a private law firm or public law agency, under the joint supervision and guidance of the CPS and sponsoring attorney. Prerequisites: PLS750 or PLS751, plus PLS752, PLS753, and PLS760. Word-processing skills recommended.

Directions to Cal State L.A.

The University is located five miles east of the Los Angeles Civic Center at the interchange of the San Bernardino (10) and Long Beach (710) freeways.

- Long Beach Freeway (northbound) exit at Ramona Blvd.
- San Bernardino Freeway (east & westbound) exit at Eastern Ave.
- Valley Blvd. (east & westbound) turn south on Mariondale



Certificate Tracks

Litigation

More paralegals work in litigation than in any other area. They help attorneys gather factual materials for discovery, pleadings, and other investigatory work. Required courses include:

PLS750 - The Role of the Paralegal

PLS752 - Legal Research

PLS753 - Legal Writing OR

PLS755 - Law Office Administration OR

PLS757 - Real Estate for the Paralegal OR

PLS766 - Corporate Law for the Paralegal I

PLS756 - Family Law

PLS760 - Civil Procedures I

PLS761 - Civil Procedures II

PLS762 - Civil Procedures III

PLS763 - Probate Procedures I

Corporate

Corporate paralegals are employed either in-house to handle a corporation's legal housekeeping or by a firm to assist in handling the organization and liquidation of corporations, corporate mergers and acquisitions, and the maintenance of corporate files. Required courses include:

PLS750 - The Role of the Paralegal

PLS752 - Legal Research

PLS753 - Legal Writing OR

PLS755 - Law Office Administration OR

PLS757 - Real Estate for the Paralegal

PLS758 - Income Tax Law

PLS760 - Civil Procedures I

PLS766 - Corporate Law for the Paralegal I

PLS767 - Corporate Law for the Paralegal II

PLS768 - Corporate Law for the Paralegal III OR

PLS754 Contract Law)

General

This track gives paralegals a general background of core courses, while allowing for elective courses for individual career objectives. Required courses include:

PLS750 - The Role of the Paralegal

PLS751 - Introduction to the Law

PLS752 - Legal Research

PLS755 - Law Office Administration

PLS760 - Civil Procedures I

Plus three elective courses (one of which may be PLS782).

Student Advisement and Information

Student advisement is provided year around. Contact Robin Hall daily at (323) 343-4967, or Kathleen Leroy at (323) 343-4968. Ask for a current catalog of classes.

Members of the Los Angeles Paralegal Association are eligible for a 10% discount on tuition for all classes. To obtain your discount, you must submit proof of current LAPA membership on the day you register.

**Refer a new student to the program.
If they enroll in classes,
get \$100 of your next course!**



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LOS ANGELES

DIVISION OF EXTENDED EDUCATION

5151 State University Drive

Los Angeles, California 90032-8619

21730-0104-031320

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