

PARALEGAL STUDIES

Objectives

The Paralegal Program prepares students to work as paralegals (sometimes referred to as legal assistants) and is approved by the American Bar Association. Graduates will be knowledgeable about and have expertise in the operation of the legal system, substantive laws, and legal procedures. Paralegals may perform functions delegated by an attorney, such as conducting interviews with clients and witnesses, conducting legal research, and drafting documents. Paralegals are typically employed by lawyers, law offices, corporations, or governmental agencies. Paralegals may not engage in the unauthorized practice of law. This includes giving legal advice, representing clients in court, or engaging in any legal activity that requires a licensed attorney. Paralegals must work under the direct supervision of an attorney.

This program is housed in the Department of Justice, Law and Public Safety Studies. It is offered in both a sixteen-week traditional format. All Paralegal core courses offered at Lewis University include instruction in substantive law or legal procedures or processes, have been developed specifically for paralegals, and emphasize practical paralegal skills. All applicants are reviewed by the Program Director and Chair of the Department of Justice, Law, and Public Safety Studies.

Criteria Affecting Transfer Students

Students who transfer from an ABA (American Bar Association)-approved school may be eligible for transfer credit for specific Lewis University paralegal course requirements (up to a maximum of 24 credit hours). Students who transfer from a non-ABA-approved school may also be eligible for transfer credit for specific Lewis University paralegal course requirements (up to a maximum of 18 credit hours). All transfer credit for both ABA-approved and non-ABA-approved schools is premised upon the following:

1. The paralegal courses were completed within seven years of the date credit is to be granted. Paralegal transfer credit for those students who have completed paralegal course work more than 7 years before the date they apply to the Lewis University program will be evaluated on an individual basis.
2. Course content is equivalent to the course(s) for which credit is being requested.
3. With one exception, transfer credit will not be awarded for the following 3 courses, which must be taken at Lewis University:
 - PRLG 30100 Legal Research, Analysis, and Writing for Paralegals, Analysis, and Writing for Paralegals (3) *[This requirement will be waived for those students who have achieved a final grade of B or better in the second course of a two-course legal writing sequence. In this case, a maximum of three additional transfer credit hours may be applied to the Lewis University Paralegal Program.]*
 - PRLG 30300 Ethics and Professional Responsibility for Paralegals
 - PRLG 40100 Paralegal Capstone: Practicum

Programs

Bachelor

- Paralegal Studies / Bachelor of Arts (<https://catalog.lewisu.edu/undergraduate/education-social-sciences/paralegal-studies/paralegal-studies-bachelor-arts/>)

Minor

- Paralegal Studies / Minor (<https://catalog.lewisu.edu/undergraduate/education-social-sciences/paralegal-studies/paralegal-studies-minor/>)

Courses

PRLG 10100 - Introduction to Paralegal Studies (3)

This course provides an overview of the role of a paralegal and procedures common to most law offices. It includes an introduction to the sources of law, the court system, basic legal terminology, legal research, discovery, rules of evidence, select legal specialty areas, and ethical guidelines for the profession.

PRLG 20100 - Fundamentals of Litigation for Paralegals (3)

This course includes steps in litigation from the initial client conference to enforcement of judgments. It includes jurisdiction, legal duty, cause of action, proximate cause and damages, pleadings, motions, pretrial conferences investigation, discovery and trials. It explains development of a legal theory of the case, analysis of claims and defenses, and developing trial strategies.

Prerequisite: PRLG 10100

PRLG 20200 - Law Office Management and Computer Use for Paralegals (3)

This course covers practical day-to-day law office management topics, focusing on such issues as client relations and communication skills; legal fees, timekeeping, and billing; client trust funds and law office accounting; calendaring, docket control, and case management; legal marketing; and file and law library management.

Prerequisite: PRLG 10100

PRLG 30100 - Legal Research, Analysis, and Writing for Paralegals (3)

This course covers fundamentals of legal analysis and writing, including basic legal principles and tools, statutory and case law analysis, and writing briefs legal memoranda and correspondence.

Prerequisite: ENGL 11200 and PRLG 10100

PRLG 30200 - Interviewing and Investigation for Paralegals (3)

This course will teach basic interviewing skills. Students will learn how to develop and ask questions and probe responses from clients, expert witnesses, and others. They will also learn basics investigating skills common among paralegals.

Prerequisite: PRLG 10100

PRLG 30300 - Ethics and Professional Responsibility for Paralegals (3)

This course covers guidelines for professional conduct in the paralegal profession. It includes professional responsibility, and ethical rules governing the field, and real world examples likely to confront working paralegals.

Prerequisite: PRLG 10100

PRLG 31000 - Torts and Personal Injury Law for Paralegals (3)

This course includes an overview of tort law, with focus on torts to the person, property, and reputation; malpractice civil rights torts. It also includes defenses and remedies and focuses on the role of the paralegal in handling tort cases.

Prerequisite: PRLG 10100

PRLG 31200 - Basic Contract Law for Paralegals (3)

This course includes an overview of contract law, including basic contract requirements and various types of contracts. It includes the drafting of contracts and typical contract clauses. Focus is on tasks typically assigned to paralegals in drafting and enforcing contracts.

Prerequisite: PRLG 10100

PRLG 31400 - Wills, Trusts and Estates for Paralegals (3)

This course covers estate planning, including managing and disposing of real and personal property during life and after death. Focus of the course is on the role of the paralegal in working with clients, drafting wills, trusts, living wills and powers of attorney, executing estates, and facilitating related court actions.

Prerequisite: PRLG 10100

PRLG 31600 - Real Estate and Property Law for Paralegals (3)

This course covers real estate and property law, focusing on practical aspects likely to involve paralegals. It includes both residential and commercial real estate transactions, including sales, closings and mortgages.

Prerequisite: PRLG 10100

PRLG 31800 - Family Law for Paralegals (3)

This course considers issues related to cohabitation and domestic partnerships, as well as marriage, divorce, annulment, and separation. It covers adoption, child abuse, dependency and neglect, as well as paternity, child custody. Focus is on the role of the paralegal in drafting documents, investigating legal issues and working with clients experiencing family-related problems.

Prerequisite: PRLG 10100

PRLG 32000 - Sole Proprietorship, Corporations, and Partnerships for Paralegals (3)

Students will be introduced to corporate and business law concepts. There will be a general discussion of various types of business organizations such as sole proprietorships, general partnerships, and limited partnerships. Students will learn about agreements and documents and how they are prepared and utilized in a business corporation. These will include shareholders and employment agreements, merger, asset, and stock purchase documents, closing documents, and other related agreements. Students will be taught the ethical and the specific functions of a corporate paralegal.

Prerequisite: PRLG 10100

PRLG 32200 - Commercial Law for Paralegals (3)

This course covers legally enforceable agreements, forms of organization, and selected portions of the Uniform Commercial Code. Topics include drafting and enforcement of contracts, leases, and related documents as well as selection and implementation of business organization forms, sales, and commercial papers. Upon completion, students should be able to apply the elements of a contract, prepare various business documents, and understand the role of commercial paper.

Prerequisite: PRLG 10100

PRLG 32400 - Elder Law for Paralegals (3)

A study of the field of elder care law, including the areas of advance directives, wills and guardianships. Special attention is focused on patients' rights in health care decision making, Medicare and Medicaid, managed care, long term care insurance, living facilities for the elderly, and financial planning for the elderly. Unit topics include the role of the paralegal as a member of the elder care law team, living wills and advance directives, the law of wills and guardianships, physician assisted suicide, managed care, nursing home and assisted living facilities, and Social Security benefits.

Prerequisite: PRLG 10100

PRLG 32600 - Bankruptcy Law for Paralegals (3)

This course will provide the student with a basic but complete analysis of bankruptcy theory and practice based on the United States Bankruptcy Code. Instruction in the activities which are conducted by paralegals in bankruptcy practice is a major focus of the course. Discussion topics include the filing of bankruptcy petitions, motion practice in bankruptcy, the role and powers of the bankruptcy trustee, dischargeability of debts, reorganization cases, and the analysis and preparations of Statements and Schedules.

Prerequisite: PRLG 10100

PRLG 32800 - Environmental Law for Paralegals (3)

This course introduces the student to the study of environmental law, with emphasis on the role of the paralegal in this field. It surveys major environmental acts in the United States, such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and other legislation. The course also presents an overview of the treatment of issues concerning the environment from a legal perspective.

Prerequisite: PRLG 10100

PRLG 33000 - Immigration Law for Paralegals (3)

This course provides the student with the necessary knowledge to function as an effective and ethical immigration paralegal. In that regard, the course introduces and explores all significant aspects of the immigration and naturalization process. The student will learn about the immigration system and who can come to, who can stay in, and who has to leave the United States; including a brief history of immigration law. At the end of the semester, the student will understand the basic features of the federal court systems involving immigration issues and will be familiar with basic areas of immigration law including asylum, amnesty, refugee, family sponsored, and employment-based issues.

Prerequisite: PRLG 10100

PRLG 33200 - Intellectual Property for Paralegals (3)

The goal of this course is to provide a background in intellectual property law and the skills required of an intellectual property paralegal. Discussion topics include: rights granted under copyright, principles of fair use, and the first sale doctrine; issues of ownership; copyright registration; state and federal trademark rights; federal trademark registration; securing Internet domain; trademark disputes; trade secrets; patent registration; and ownership, transfer and administration of patents. Students will work through an infringement lawsuit from cease and desist letter to settlement.

Prerequisite: PRLG 10100

PRLG 33400 - Taxation for Paralegals (3)

This course is an overview of the fundamental principles and concepts of financial accounting and taxation to provide a background and understanding of these concepts as used by paralegals in a law office. The course focuses on the accounting cycle, payroll and basic concepts of taxation. Frequent reference to various ethical rules will be used.

Prerequisite: PRLG 10100

PRLG 40100 - Paralegal Capstone: Practicum (3)

This course will provide students with an opportunity to develop real world experience as a paralegal directed by an onsite supervisor along with a Lewis practicum coordinator. Work during the practicum must emphasize paralegal skills and competencies. 150 clock hours of experience are required.

Prerequisite: PRLG 20100 and PRLG 20200 and PRLG 30100 and PRLG 30200 and PRLG 30300 and PRLG 10100

Attributes: Experiential Learning Gen Ed