

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) and California Business and Professions Code 6450 (a) 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 must, before entering the program, complete English 101/101H or assess at an English 101 level. The sequencing of courses has been designed to enhance student success in the field. PAL 100, 102, and 103 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 may be taken concurrent with PAL 100, 102 and 103, but may be taken at any time. A firm foundation in writing and grammar skills and completion of POLS 102 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.

At this time, VVC offers PAL 204, Wills and Trusts, and PAL 205, Bankruptcy, but have not yet been incorporated, as electives or core classes, into the certificate award. However, these classes are required classes for the NEW Advanced Paralegal Certificate offered at Victor Valley College. Please see below for the Certificate requirements.

Degrees and Certificates Awarded

Advanced Paralegal Studies Certificate

Paralegal Studies Certificate

Associate Degree

At this time, Victor Valley College does not offer an associate degree with a major in Paralegal Studies.

Transfer

For the most up-to-date information on this program and others, visit www.assist.org. Please stop by the Transfer Center in Building 55 or make an appointment with a counselor if you have questions.

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

Course Sequences

English 101/H101 → (Completion of POLS 102 is strongly recommended prior to the Paralegal classes)
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PAL 100 with → PAL 102 (first 8 weeks) → PAL 103 (second 8 weeks)

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PAL 104

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PAL 201
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PAL 202 / PAL 203

Note: After completing PAL 201, students may take the elective courses PAL 204 and PAL 205.

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ADVANCE PARALEGAL STUDIES CERTIFICATE OF CAREER PREPARATION		
Students must complete a minimum of 17 units, with at least 6 units taken in residence at Victor Valley College, with a minimum grade of "C" in all paralegal classes.		
Units Required: 17.0		
<i>Group I — All of the following must be completed:</i>		
PAL 101	Law Office Technology for Paralegals	3.0
PAL 200	Law Office Management for Paralegals	2.0
PAL 204	Wills and Trusts for Paralegals	3.0
PAL 205	Basic Bankruptcy Law for Paralegals	3.0
<i>Group II — At least 6 units of the following must be completed:</i>		
BADM 116	Human Relations in Business	3.0
BADM 118	Business Law	3.0
BRE 110	Legal Aspects of Real Estate I	3.0
PAL 206	California Employment and Labor Law	3.0
PAL 207	Conflict Resolution and Negotiations	3.0
PARALEGAL STUDIES CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT (11836)		
Students must complete a minimum of 36 units, with at least 12 units taken in residence at Victor Valley College, with a minimum grade of "C" in all paralegal classes. Most Paralegal course descriptions may be found under Political Science.		
Units Required: 36.0		
<i>Group I — All of the following must be completed:</i>		
AJ 103	Criminal Law	3.0
BADM 117	Legal Environment of Business	3.0
PAL 100	Introduction to Paralegal Studies	3.0
PAL 102	Beginning Legal Research for Paralegals	3.0
PAL 103	Legal Writing for Paralegals	3.0
PAL 104	Legal Ethics 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
<i>Group II — At least 9 units of the following must be completed:</i>		
AJ 102	Criminal Procedures	3.0
AJ 104	Legal Aspects of Evidence	3.0
BADM 101	Financial Accounting <i>or</i>	4.0
BADM 103	Financial Accounting Fundamentals	3.0
BET 104	Beginning Word Processing/Typing Word for Windows A/B/C	1-3
BRE 110	Legal Aspects of Real Estate I	3.0
CMST 109	Public Speaking	3.0
ENGL 104/104H	Critical Thinking and Composition	3.0
PHIL 109	Introduction to Logic	3.0

Note: After completing PAL 201, students may take the elective courses PAL 204 and PAL 205.

Paralegal Studies Courses

PAL 100 INTRODUCTION TO PARALEGAL STUDIES

Units: 3.0 **CSU** | 48-54 hours lecture

(Prerequisite: ENGL 101.0 or ENGL H101)

This is the beginning course for students pursuing a Certificate of Paralegal Studies. 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 that are necessary for success in the profession. The emphasis is placed on functions of a paralegal within a private law firm, within a government agency, as a business owner, and as a litigation assistant.

PAL 101 LAW OFFICE TECHNOLOGY FOR PARALEGALS

Units: 3.0 **CSU** | 48-54 hours lecture

(Co-requisite: PAL 100)

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.

PAL 102 BEGINNING LEGAL RESEARCH FOR PARALEGALS

Units: 3.0 **CSU** | 48-54 hours lecture

(Prerequisite/Co-requisite: PAL 100 (POLS 130))

This course provides the paralegal student with a beginning introduction to the sources and means of legal research. The course will focus on developing the student's ability to locate and use various types of legal authority including legal encyclopedias, constitutions, statutes, court opinions, administrative regulations, and appellate decisions. The student will be expected to learn and practice Shepardizing and citation checking skills.

PAL 103 BEGINNING LEGAL WRITING

Units: 3.0 **CSU** | 48-54 hours lecture

(Prerequisite/Co-requisite: PAL 102)

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, pleadings, and appellate briefs.

PAL 104 LEGAL ETHICS FOR PARALEGALS

Units: 3.0 **CSU** | 48-54 hours lecture

(Prerequisite: None)

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. Comprehensive study of the ABA's Model Rules of Professional Conduct will give the student a broad base from which to operate ethically and legally as a paralegal.

PAL 200 LAW OFFICE MANAGEMENT FOR PARALEGALS

Units: 2.0 **CSU** | 32-36 hours lecture

(Prerequisite: PAL 100)

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.

Paralegal Studies Courses

PAL 201 FUNDAMENTALS OF LITIGATION FOR PARALEGALS

Units: 3.0 **CSU** | **48-54 hours lecture**

(Prerequisite: PAL 103 minimum grade C (POLS 136))

This course examines the intricate working of the American court system and the role of the paralegal in litigation practice. This course will focus on the process that begins with the client interview, extends through the filing, develops into the discovery state, takes final shape in the trial stage and ends with enforcement of a judgment. Critical analysis of statutory and judicial rules for the conduct of litigation will be used extensively to provide a strong foundation for operating within the legal field.

PAL 202 FAMILY LAW

Units: 3.0 **CSU** | **48-54 hours lecture**

(Corequisite: PAL 201)

This course examines Family Law rules and procedures for the paralegal working in a California family law practice. Concepts covered include marital contracts, annulment, separation, dissolution, child custody and support, spousal support, property division, and tax consequences of family law procedures. Included will be current topics in family law such as demise of marriage, same-sex unions, adoptions, and practice and procedure.

PAL 203 TORT LAW FOR PARALEGALS

Units: 3.0 **CSU** | **48-54 hours lecture**

(Corequisite: PAL 201)

This course introduces the paralegal to the world of tort law; takes them through the basic concepts that are the foundation of negligence litigation (duty, breach, causation, damages), intentional torts to both persons and property, and strict liability. Introduces the student to investigative procedures in personal injury cases.

PAL 204 WILLS AND TRUSTS FOR PARALEGALS

Units: 3.0 **CSU** | **48-54 hours lecture**

(Prerequisite: PAL 201 minimum grade C.)

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.

PAL 205 BASIC BANKRUPTCY LAW FOR PARALEGALS

Units: 3.0 **CSU** | **48-54 hours lecture**

(Prerequisite: PAL 201 minimum grade C.)

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. The student will complete an entire Chapter 7 Bankruptcy petition and other documents and motions involving a bankruptcy case under the Bankruptcy Code. Included will be creditors' claims and motions for relief of automatic stay.