

# PARALEGAL STUDIES

School of Business Sciences

**Dean:** Roger Owens, PhD

**Academic Chair:** Bob Urell

**Faculty:** June McLaughlin, JD

## Curriculum

Courses in the paralegal studies program provide students with the skills and knowledge needed to work as a paralegal in civil litigation, bankruptcy or estate planning law firms; an understanding of ethical rules and regulations applicable to legal professionals; an overview of legal theory; and a practical introduction to legal research and writing.

## Major

A paralegal is an individual who, although not a member of the legal profession, is qualified through education, training, and/or work experience to be employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, governmental agency, or other entity. The paralegal performs specifically delegated substantive legal work under the direction and supervision of an attorney. Some of the services that the paralegal provides for an attorney include legal research; development of law office systems; client interviews; drafts; pleadings; case briefs; legal calendaring; preparing discovery for litigated cases; preparing drafts of wills and trusts; and maintaining client records and files.

The paralegal program at Irvine Valley College prepares students to assist attorneys as paralegals in administrative agencies, corporations, insurance companies, private law firms, government and other legal environments. Emphasis is on training students in the practical application and development of up-to-date paralegal related job skills. In addition, the program introduces students to legal theory.

## Career Options

Most paralegals are employed by law firms, corporate legal departments, and various government offices. In these organizations, they can work in many different areas of the law, including litigation, personal injury, corporate law, criminal law, employee benefits, intellectual property, labor law, bankruptcy, immigration, family law, and real estate.

## Associate Degree

### Associate in Science Degree in Paralegal Studies

Students must complete a minimum of 60 units of credit, including the courses in the major ("Major Requirements") and general education requirements (pages 43-49), with an overall GPA of 2.0 or better, and a grade of "A," "B," "C," or "P" in all courses to be counted toward the major. A minimum of 12 units must be completed at Irvine Valley College. See pages 34-35 for further information.

## Certificate Program

### Certificate of Achievement: Paralegal Studies

Students must complete all courses in the certificate program ("Major Requirements") with a grade of "A," "B,"

"C," or "P." A minimum of 12 units in the certificate program must be completed at Irvine Valley College. See page 31 for further information.

## Transfer Preparation

Courses that fulfill major requirements for an associate degree at Irvine Valley College may not be the same as those required for completing the major at a transfer institution offering a bachelor's degree. Students who plan to transfer to a four-year college or university should schedule an appointment with an IVC counselor to develop a plan of study before beginning their program. It may be helpful to meet with the department faculty at IVC.

### ASSOCIATE IN SCIENCE DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT Major Requirements: Paralegal Studies

Complete the following courses:		Units
<b>LGL 201</b>	Introduction to Paralegal Studies and Ethics	3
<b>LGL 202</b>	Computer Technology and Electronic Research	3.5
<b>LGL 203</b>	Business Law Contracts and Torts	3
<b>LGL 205</b>	Introduction to Legal Research and Writing	3
<b>LGL 206A</b>	Civil Litigation I	3
<b>LGL 206B</b>	Civil Litigation II	3
<b>CWE 168</b>	Cooperative Work Experience: Paralegal	1-4
<b>Complete a minimum of 9 semester units from the following courses:</b>		
<b>ACCT 215</b>	General Accounting	3
<b>AJ 2</b>	Introduction to Administration of Justice*	3
<b>CIM 107.1</b>	Introduction to Personal Computer Applications	3.5
<b>OR</b>		
<b>CIM 210.3</b>	Word Processing III—Certification	3.5
<b>MGT 12A</b>	Legal Environment of Business*	3
<b>MGT 104</b>	Business Communications	3
<b>LGL 208</b>	Wills, Trusts and Estates	3
<b>LGL 209</b>	Bankruptcy	3
<b>RE 174A</b>	Legal Aspects of Real Estate*	3
<b>TOTAL UNITS:</b>		<b>28.5-31.5</b>

\* Recommended

## COURSES

### **CWE 168: COOPERATIVE WORK EXPERIENCE: PARALEGAL STUDIES**

**1, 2, 3 or 4 Units**

**1, 2, 3 or 4 hours lecture**

**Transfers: CSU**

**Prerequisite: Student must have taken or must be currently taking a course in college-level paralegal studies.**

**Limitation: Students must be concurrently enrolled in 7 units, including CWE. Application must be approved by CWE coordinator.**

This course provides students an opportunity for supervised work experience. Students extend their classroom-based occupational learning by working at a job related to their major and to their occupational goal. Student, instructor, and employer will cooperatively develop a minimum of three learning objectives. One unit of credit will be awarded for each 75 hours of paid or 60 hours of volunteer employment for successful completion of learning objectives, and for attendance at scheduled seminar sessions. A maximum of four units may be applied toward major requirements or a certificate. R-I-3

### **LGL 201: INTRODUCTION TO PARALEGAL STUDIES AND ETHICS**

**2 Units**

**2 hours lecture**

This course explores the dynamic of working as a paralegal, career opportunities in the legal environment, and the skills necessary to succeed in the field. Focus is on rules of ethics and the ethical guidelines that paralegals must follow. Topics include identifying career opportunities, performing legal investigations, evaluating sources, investigating facts and applying rules to facts, interviewing clients, witnesses, and experts, understanding discovery documents, providing litigation assistance, researching the law, drafting legal documents using computer software to conduct research and prepare documents, representing clients at administrative agencies where authorized by law, and understanding legal/ethical issues. NR

### **LGL 202: COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY AND ELECTRONIC RESEARCH**

**3.5 Units**

**3 hours lecture, 1.5 hours lab**

*Recommended Preparation: CIM 100 or 210.1 or equivalent*

This course introduces computer software used in law offices and other legal environments including Microsoft Office, calendaring, billing, docketing and indexing programs. Includes training in the use of electronic methods of performing research. NR

### **LGL 203: BUSINESS LAW CONTRACTS AND TORTS**

**3 Units**

**3 hours lecture**

*Recommended Preparation: LGL 201*

This course is an introduction to laws relating to the conduct of business, with an emphasis on the role and responsibilities of the paralegal. Topics include contracts, the Uniform Commercial Code, sales of personal and real property, negotiable instruments, agency, employment, torts, liability, nuisance, ethics, and social responsibility. NR

### **LGL 205: INTRODUCTION TO LEGAL RESEARCH AND WRITING**

**3 Units**

**3 hours lecture**

**Prerequisite: LGL 202**

This course provides instruction in the fundamentals of legal research, analysis, and writing for the paralegal. Topics include the reading and analysis of statutes; research using primary authorities, secondary sources, and computer-assisted research tools; law office writing, including transmittal and client opinion letters, pleadings, law office memorandums, case briefs, and memorandums of law; and legal citation rules. NR

### **LGL 206A: CIVIL LITIGATION I**

**3 Units**

**3 hours lecture**

*Recommended Preparation: MGT 12A*

This course introduces civil law processes and procedures with an emphasis on the role of the paralegal in civil litigation investigation, jurisdiction, pleadings, and discovery. Topics include evidence gathering and investigation, jurisdiction, venue identification, initiation of civil proceedings, drafting the complaint, filing a lawsuit, defending and testing a lawsuit, and discovery procedures. NR

### **LGL 206B: CIVIL LITIGATION II**

**3 Units**

**3 hours lecture**

**Prerequisite: LGL 206A**

This course continues the study of litigation processes and procedures, focusing on the role of the paralegal in civil litigation. Topics include motions, subpoenas, trial preparation, alternative dispute resolution, settlement, trial procedures, dismissal, judgment, and judgment enforcement. NR

### **LGL 208: WILLS, TRUSTS, AND ESTATES**

**3 Units**

**3 hours lecture**

*Recommended Preparation: LGL 205*

This course provides an introduction to wills, trusts, and estates and the role of the paralegal/legal assistant in estate planning and administration, and probate. Topics include wills, intestacy, trusts, guardianships, conservatorships, advance directives, incapacitation, estate planning, taxation, probate procedures, and ethical considerations. NR

### **LGL 209: BANKRUPTCY**

**3 Units**

**3 hours lecture**

*Recommended Preparation: LGL 205*

This course provides an overview of bankruptcy laws and processes from the perspective of both the debtor and the creditor. Topics include the Bankruptcy Code and Rule, debtor relief, bankruptcy litigation, liquidation, creditor claims, and reorganization proceedings. The course covers the paralegal's responsibilities in researching and preparing legal documents related to bankruptcy. NR