

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN PARALEGAL STUDIES

OVERVIEW

The paralegal program prepares students to work as paralegals (sometimes referred to as legal assistants). 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 perform attorney functions, such as providing legal advice or representing a client in court.)

This program is housed in the Department of Justice, Law and Public Safety Studies. 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.

Paralegal courses from ABA-approved programs may be applied to the Paralegal Studies major or minor at Lewis University. Paralegal courses taken in programs not approved by the American Bar Association do not transfer to Lewis.

CONTACT

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CAREER OUTCOMES

Working under the supervision of an attorney, the legal assistant's work product is merged with and becomes part of the attorney work product. A legal assistant may perform any function delegated by an attorney, including: conducting interviews, conducting investigations and legal research, drafting legal documents, and summarizing depositions, interrogatories and testimony. Knowledge of the legal system and ethics is useful in many other careers. A student may be able to bring valuable knowledge to job employers in many industries, giving them an edge over their competition.

EARNING POTENTIAL

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, earnings of paralegals and legal assistants vary greatly. Salaries depend on education, training, experience, the type and size of employer, and the geographic location of the job. In general, paralegals that work for large law firms or in large metropolitan areas earn more than those who work for smaller firms or in less populated regions. In May 2006, full-time wage-and-salary paralegals and legal assistants had median annual earnings, including bonuses, of \$43,040. The middle 50 percent earned between \$33,920 and \$54,690. The top 10 percent earned more than \$67,540.

PARALEGAL STUDIES / BACHELOR OF ARTS

Total Credit Hours: 54

Paralegal students with an interest in criminal law are encouraged to take the substantive and procedural criminal law courses (81-430 and 81-445) as part of their law-related electives. Paralegal students with an interest in business law are encouraged to take 61-250 Business Law.

I. Paralegal Core Courses (33)

A. Required Courses (21)

- 90-101 Introduction to Paralegal Studies (3)
- 90-201 Fundamentals of Litigation for Paralegals (3)
- 90-202 Law Office Management and Computer Use for Paralegals (3)
- 90-301 Legal Research, Analysis and Writing for Paralegals (3)
- 90-302 Interviewing and Investigation for Paralegals (3)
- 90-303 Ethics and Professional Responsibility for Paralegals (3)
- 90-401 Paralegal Capstone: Practicum (3)

B. Select four Specialty Electives from courses listed below (12)

- 90-310 Torts and Personal Injury Law for Paralegals (3)
- 90-312 Basic Contract Law for Paralegals (3)
- 90-314 Wills, Trusts and Estates for Paralegals (3)
- 90-316 Real Estate and Property Law for Paralegals (3)
- 90-318 Family Law for Paralegals (3)

II. Select two Law-Related Courses: (6)

- 18-371 Constitutional Law (3)
- 18-372 Civil Liberties (3)
- 61-250 Business Law I (3)
- 81-260 Juvenile Justice System (3)
- 81-430 Elements of Criminal Law (3)
- 81-445 Criminal Procedures / Rules of Evidence (3)

III. Select two courses in the Context and Role of Law in Society: (6)

- 18-361 History of Political Thought I (3)
- 18-362 History of Political Thought II (3)
- 18-363 American Political Thought (3)
- 15-310 Philosophy of Law (3)

IV. Select two additional Program Electives from courses listed below and / or throughout the Paralegal curriculum: (6)

- 09-325 United States Since 1941 (3)
- 18-321 Comparative Government (3)
- 18-331 International Relations (3)
- 20-350 Sociology of Criminal Behavior (3)
- 20-345 Sociology of Delinquent Behavior (3)
- 81-200 Court Systems and Probation (3)

V. Paralegal majors must select an American Government course as a General Education course in Social Studies. Choose one American Government course: (3)

- 18-200 American National Government (3)
- OR
- 18-210 State and Local Government (3)

VI. The advanced writing requirement of the General Education curriculum is satisfied by successful completion of 90-301 Legal Research, Analysis and Writing for Paralegals.