



CONTINUING EDUCATION

Course Outline

Paralegal Certificate Part 1: Paralegal Essentials

Criminal and civil trials don't just happen - they require careful planning, case management and analytical thinking on the part of the entire legal team. Gain a broad overview of the paralegal profession, so you can assist your team to a positive outcome in civil or criminal litigation. Topics include the responsibilities of the paralegal profession; ethics; legal terminology; court structures; introduction to legal writing; fee structure and timekeeping; introduction to civil litigation practices and documents; interviewing witnesses; and the discovery process. This is the first of three required courses in the Paralegal Certificate program.

Who Should Take This Course?

This certificate program will benefit junior paralegals, legal secretaries, paralegal clerks, legal receptionists, and document or file clerks interested in increasing their knowledge or advancing their careers as well as anyone interested in law, investigation, legal research or legal writing.

Course Objectives

- Describe the paralegal profession
- Practice applying for a paralegal position
- Identify accepted standards of paralegal ethics
- Discuss the various types of law in the legal field
- Recognize the differences in law office structure
- Apply knowledge of fees and billing
- Differentiate between the various types of court systems: federal, state, local
- Describe the initial procedures of civil litigation
- Utilize effective process service techniques
- Employ effective interviewing techniques to gather, evaluate and summarize witness' testimony
- Understand and manage the discovery process
- Facilitate the deposition process
- Manage all aspects of record retrieval
- Draft professional emails
- Demonstrate persuasive legal writing and analytical thinking

Course Info

- Length: 30 hours
- Format: Classroom instruction, group exercises and homework assignments
- Prerequisite: High school diploma or GED

Course Content

Describe the paralegal profession

- Describe the paralegal role
- Identify the skills needed to successfully serve in a paralegal role
- Describe the industries that utilize paralegals, and discuss the different places paralegals work
- Recognize average paralegal compensation based on several factors
- Identify the various associations for paralegals
- List the various certifications available to paralegals
- Determine individuals who can be used as references

Practice applying for a Paralegal position

- Identify appropriate jobs to apply for via the job description
- Document your experience via a resume
- Distinguish yourself from others via a cover letter
- Determine individuals who can be used as references

Identify accepted standards of paralegal ethics

- Recognize unauthorized practice of law
- Identify Rules of Professional Conduct

Discuss the various types of law in the legal field

- Civil law
- Criminal law
- Administrative law

Recognize the differences in law office structure

- Describe a Solo Practitioner
- Describe a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC)
- Describe a Professional Limited Liability Company (PLLC)
- Describe how various departments work cohesively

Apply knowledge of fees and billing

- Discriminate what is considered billable
- Keep billable time contemporaneously

Differentiate between various types of court systems

- Federal courts
- State courts
- Local courts

Describe the initial procedures of civil litigation

- Summons
- Complaint
- Declaration of Service
- Notice of Appearance
- Answer and Affirmative Defenses
- Confirmation of Joinder and/or Statement of Arbitrability

Utilize effective process service techniques

- Define who can be served
- Identify ways to effectuate service

Employ effective interviewing techniques to gather, evaluate and summarize witness testimony

- Locate witnesses, including experts
- Select questions to ask
- Determine differences between opinion and fact
- Evaluate witnesses
- Prepare post interview memo summarizing conversation
- Utilize interviewing “best practices”

Understand and manage the discovery process

- Identify types of discovery available
- Draft interrogatories, requests for production and requests for admission
- Draft response to interrogatories, requests for production and requests for admission
- Draft objections to interrogatories and requests for production
- Track incoming and outgoing discovery
- Prepare documents for production

Facilitate the deposition process

- Schedule depositions
- Assemble deposition notebooks
- Summarize depositions
- Track depositions

Manage all aspects of record retrieval

- Identify types of records
- Request records - stipulation vs subpoena vs retrieval company
- Track records
- Summarize records

Draft professional emails

- Relate proper protocol
- Recognize discoverability

Demonstrate persuasive legal writing and analytical thinking

- Prepare a Demand Letter
- Prepare an Interoffice Memorandum

Homework

Students should anticipate spending 5-15 hours a week on homework assignments, which will include reading, researching, writing and various other assignments.

Assessment /Evaluation

This course is not assigned a letter or numerical grade. However, in some cases, skill assessments may be administered during the course to gauge progress and comprehension.

Course Completion/Continuing Education Unit (CEU) Letter

If your company requires proof of course completion, or if you would like to have proof for your own records, you may request a Course Completion/Continuing Education Unit (CEU) letter **after the final session of your course**. You must attend* 80 percent of the course to qualify for the letter. You can [request a Course Completion/CEU letter online](#).

Certificates of Completion for Certificate Programs

To receive a Certificate of Completion for the Paralegal Certificate, you must attend* 90 percent of the entire certificate program (81 course hours); regularly participate in class; complete all assignments by the deadline given; and receive a minimum score of 75 percent on all assignments, quizzes and tests. For those who qualify, certificates will be sent within three weeks of completing the final course.

*Attendance for CEU letters and certificate programs is verified via the sign-in sheets provided at each class session. It is your responsibility to sign-in.

Green River College is committed to providing access to all who visit, work and study on campus. The College will provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities, with advance notice of need. If you require accommodations, please contact Disability Support Services as soon as possible to determine eligibility and/or request accommodations. Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis. Please contact Disability Support by email at dss@greenriver.edu; by phone at 253-833-9111, ext. 2631; TTY 253-288-3359; or in person at the Student Affairs and Success Center, Room 210, to request accommodations. For additional information, please visit www.greenriver.edu/dss.

The accommodations authorized on your forms should be discussed with your instructor. All discussions will remain confidential. Accommodations are not provided retroactively, so it is essential to discuss your needs at the beginning of the quarter. Additionally, only accommodations approved by Disability Support Services will be provided. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Green River College is an equal opportunity educator and employer. Learn more at www.greenriver.edu/accessibility.