

PARALEGAL (PARLG)

Program Description

The Paralegal (PARLG) program is approved by the American Bar Association (ABA) and is a member of the American Association for Paralegal Education (AAfPE). Paralegal is one of the fastest growing occupations in the nation. The paralegal is a paraprofessional who has legal training and provides legal services under the supervision and direction of an attorney or as otherwise authorized by law. Paralegals work in law firms, as well as government and corporate offices. Duties may include drafting pleadings, summarizing depositions, indexing documents, conducting legal research, interviewing clients and witnesses, and assisting at trial. Entry-level positions, especially if you have no prior law office experience, require proficiency in word processing and related clerical skills. Being an effective problem-solver and having the ability to get along well with others are essential to a paralegal's success. Because this is a highly competitive field, you may need to conduct job searches beyond the local legal community. Some students may wish to continue their education toward a bachelor's degree at a four-year college or university to enhance their employment opportunities. Each four-year institution determines transferability of courses. Students will need to consult their advisor about course transferability.

The Paralegal program prepares you for the paralegal profession through the study of law, developing thinking and writing skills, and the acquisition of related occupational skills. Students entering the program may include people already working in law offices who wish to upgrade their skills, as well as those with no law-related background. You may choose to work toward a degree or certificate, or take individual courses.

Entry into the Program

Please apply to the Admissions Office. Prior to entry, students must see an advisor for appropriate course placement. Students are generally admitted to the Paralegal program Fall Quarter. However, if you have relevant law-related experience, equivalent coursework, or have or are near completion of a bachelor's degree, you may be admitted at other times with the permission of the Department Chair. For more information, contact the Department Chair or the Admissions Office.

Recommended Entry Skills

A survey of instructors and a review of textbooks indicate that the following will increase student success in this program: reading range 12th grade level and beyond; good computer skills, especially word processing, e-mail and Internet; excellent writing and speaking skills; ability to think critically and solve problems in a logical manner. Coursework in American Government, Elementary Logic, and other courses that help develop foundational knowledge and critical thinking and writing skills is highly recommended.

Work-Based Learning

Students will integrate their classroom learning with work-based learning experience by participating in an internship at a supervised work site (PARLG 199). Department Chair approval is required, based on completion of core paralegal courses and demonstrated adequate skills and professionalism. Credits and grades are based on job hours worked, work performance, and completion of learning objectives specified in a learning contract. Concurrent enrollment in a Seminar is required. If you desire a degree or certificate and are already employed in a law office, you may be able to develop an internship in your current job.

Associate in Technical Arts Degree

An Associate in Technical Arts degree (ATA) is awarded upon completion of a minimum of 90 credits of specified technical, general and related education coursework above 100 level with both an overall 2.0 grade point average and a 2.0 grade point average in the technical major. Twenty-five (25) of the credits must be completed at Skagit Valley College.

Your coursework must be carefully chosen from the following options: (You must see an advisor for assistance.)

All students must take PARLG 105 where assessment of critical thinking and writing occurs. Results will be used to determine whether a student should be advised into either the Track A or Track B sample schedule.

Track A (see Suggested Schedule) is for the student whose opportunities for success in the Paralegal Program will be enhanced by taking general education and other skill-building courses in advance of the core Paralegal courses.

Track B (see Suggested Schedule) is for the student who, in PARLG 105, has demonstrated a sufficient level of critical thinking and writing ability to enter immediately

into the core Paralegal courses. A student advised into Track B, Fall quarter, must have already completed PARLG 105 during the Summer/Fall intersession or earlier and is advised into Track B based on assessment outcomes. A student advised into Track B, Winter quarter, must take PARLG 105 and BUS& 201 or POLS 200 Fall quarter. Consult with an advisor for Spring quarter entry into the Paralegal program.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

ATA PARALEGAL

Includes required ATA courses. Student schedule may vary based on entry point, credit load, and prerequisites. Consult with department chair or SVC counselor for scheduling options.

FIRST YEAR-TRACK A

Fall	Cr	Winter	Cr	Spring	Cr
PARLG 105	1	PE 100 +		~MATH& 107.5	
†ENGL& 101	5	1 act. cr	2	@Electives	10
OFTEC 122	3	CMST& 210	5		
POLS& 202	5	SOSC 125	2		
@Elective	5	@Electives	6		
Total	19	Total	15	Total	15

SECOND YEAR-TRACK A

Fall	Cr	Winter	Cr	Spring	Cr
PARLG 100	5	PARLG 101	4	PARLG 102	4
PARLG 111	4	PARLG 112	4	PARLG 113	4
SOSC 113	1	*PARLG Elec	3	‡PARLG 199	5
PARLG Elec	3	*PARLG Elec	3	PARLG Elec	3
@Elective	3			PARLG 298	1
Total	16	Total	14	Total	17

FIRST YEAR-TRACK B

^ Summer/Fall intersession: PARLG 105

Fall	Cr	Winter	Cr	Spring	Cr
PARLG 100	5	PARLG 101	4	PARLG 102	4
PARLG 111	4	PARLG 112	4	PARLG 113	4
†ENGL& 101	5	CMST& 210	5	SOSC 113	1
OFTEC 122	3	@Elective	4	SOSC 125	2
				@Elective	5
Total	17	Total	17	Total	16

SECOND YEAR-TRACK B

Fall	Cr	Winter	Cr	Spring	Cr
‡PARLG 199	5	*PARLG Elec	3	*PARLG Elec	3
PE 100+1act.cr2		*PARLG Elec	3	PARLG 298	1
@Electives	5	@Electives	7	PARLG Elec	3
~MATH& 107.5				@Electives	8
Total	17	Total	13	Total	15

* Students must choose 12 credits from among the following: PARLG 201, 202, 203, 205, 206, 207, and 208.

^ If you have not completed PARLG 105 before Fall quarter but wish to pursue Track B, you must consult an advisor to select your Fall quarter classes.

@ A minimum of 15 elective credits must be taken from the following list of Paralegal department-approved general education courses: POLITICAL SCIENCE (5-10 cr.): POLS& 101, 202 (preferred), 203; POLS 201, 204; CULTURE AND ARTS (5-10 cr.): ART 141, 142, 143, 144; CMST& 220, 230, CMST 141, 205, HIST& 126 or above; PHIL& 101, 106; PSYC& 100, 200, 220; PSYC 117, 205, 220; SOSC 100, 101, 110, 190; and/or any class(es) listed under Anthropology, Ethnic Studies, Humanities, Literature, Sociology, World Language.

A minimum of 8 elective credits must be taken from the following Technology courses: PARLG 210, 212, 214, 216; CIS 145, 146, 147, 148; OFTEC 132, 134, 162. Faculty have ranked these technology courses in the following order of importance: OFTEC 122, CIS 146, PARLG 212, PARLG 214, OFTEC 132, CIS 147, and PARLG 216.

Additional credits may be selected from among any college courses 100 level or above. You must consult with your faculty advisor for appropriate sequencing of general education and Paralegal courses.

† Students who do not receive an appropriate test score will require additional coursework to develop necessary skills for entry into class.

~ MATH& 107 or above; OR may take MATH 100 plus 5 credits Natural World course(s) numbered 100 or above.

‡ PARLG 199 may be taken only after completion of the first-year curriculum, unless waived by the Department Chair.

Program Certificates

A certificate in Paralegal is granted upon completion of the following requirements with a 2.0 grade point average or above.

CERTIFICATE IN PARALEGAL STUDIES

(For baccalaureate degree holders or candidates with junior standing).

Students who have completed or have junior standing toward completion of a Bachelor's Degree may take courses toward a Certificate in Paralegal Studies (CPS). This Certificate can be completed in one year. Students will be awarded the Certificate in Paralegal Studies upon completion of 43 credits of approved paralegal courses (22 credits must be at Skagit Valley College) and evidence of having earned a Bachelor's Degree. Classes required are PARLG 100, 101, 102, 105, 111, 112, 113, 199, 298; three of the following courses: PARLG 201, 202, 203, 205, 206, 207, 208; and at least 2 credits from technology courses: PARLG 210, 212, 214, 216; CIS 145, 146, 147, 148; OFTEC 122, 132, 134, 162. Faculty have ranked these technology courses in the following order of importance: OFTEC 122, CIS 146, PARLG 212, PARLG 214, OFTEC 132, CIS 147, and PARLG 216.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

CERTIFICATE IN PARALEGAL STUDIES

^ Summer/Fall intersession: PARLG 105*

Fall.....	Cr	Winter.....	Cr	Spring.....	Cr
PARLG 100.....	5	PARLG 101.....	4	PARLG 102.....	4
*PARLG 105.....	1	PARLG 112.....	4	PARLG 113.....	4
PARLG 111.....	4	PARLG Elec.....	6	PARLG Elect.....	3
.....		PARLG Tech.....	2	PARLG 199.....	5
.....			PARLG 298.....	1
TOTAL.....	10	TOTAL.....	16	TOTAL.....	17

* Students must take PARLG 105 no later than Summer/Fall Intersession to enroll for Fall courses.

^ If you have not completed PARLG 105 before Fall quarter, you must consult an advisor to select beginning courses.

Course Descriptions

PARLG 100 Introduction to the Law and Legal System (5)

Introduction to study of law, analyzing its origins and development, and its role in society. Covers legal rights and remedies, courts and court procedures, torts, contracts, and criminal law and proce-

dures. Critical thinking skills are developed through writing brief summaries of court opinions. Required to attend court proceedings. Recommended: ENGL& 101 with a minimum grade of 2.0 or equivalent. Prerequisite: PARLG 105.

PARLG 101 Legal Research and Writing I (4)

Introduction to legal resource materials and methodology. Emphasis on research in the law library and drafting assignments to develop research skills and effective written communication of research results. Prerequisite: PARLG 100 with minimum grade 2.0 or equivalent with Department Chair permission.

PARLG 102 Legal Research and Writing II (4)

Advanced research skills and drafting and preparation of additional legal documents by paralegals. Prerequisite: PARLG 101 and ENGL& 101 with minimum grade of 2.0 or equivalent with Department Chair permission.

PARLG 105 Paralegal Career Seminar (1)

Introduction to and exploration of paralegal career field; review of employment opportunities, qualifications and skill requirements and professional expectations; assessment and advising for course placement; skills practice and development; resumes and job search. (May be taken more than one quarter.)

PARLG 111 Law Office Procedures (4)

Introduction to the paralegal's role in the practice of law, including ethics, office practices, technology, employment opportunities, and client/employer communications. Recommended: basic word processing and concurrent enrollment in PARLG 100. If PARLG 105 not previously taken, concurrent enrollment also recommended.

PARLG 112 Interviewing & Investigation (4)

Introduction to factual investigation through witness interviews and other investigative techniques; analyzing elements of a claim; use of experts; exploring available evidence; procedures for obtaining clear statements; management of files and evidence; additional legal applications of computer word processing; introduction to computer database management. Prerequisite: PARLG 100 with a minimum 2.0 grade or equivalent with Department Chair permission.

PARLG 113 Litigation I/Civil Procedure (4)

Study of civil and appellate process with emphasis on procedures necessary to bring a lawsuit in Washington trial courts. Recommended: PARLG 112. Prerequisite: PARLG 100 with a minimum grade of 2.0 or equivalent with Department Chair permission.

PARLG 199 Cooperative Education Experience (1-5)

Supervised work experience in the field. Includes a required seminar. Students must have completed the first year curriculum before enrolling unless waived by Department Chair. Prerequisite: Department Chair approval.

PARLG 201 Litigation II-Trial Preparation and Procedure (4)

Preparation and organization of trial materials; pretrial discovery and trial briefs; jury selection; preparation of witnesses and exhibits; rules of evidence; post-trial practice; appeal and enforcement of judgments. Theory and practice of alternative disputes resolution (ADR). Prerequisite: PARLG 112 and 113 with a minimum grade of 2.0 or equivalent with Department Chair permission.

PARLG 202 Domestic Relations (3)

Washington laws and procedures regarding marriage and dissolution of marriage; community and separate property rights; child custody and support obligations; parenting plans; temporary orders and domestic violence; dependency and termination of parental rights; paternity and meretricious relationships; and adoptions. Recommended: PARLG 113. Prerequisite: PARLG 100 with minimum 2.0 grade or equivalent with Department Chair permission.

PARLG 203 Estate Planning & Probate (3)

Introduction to the law of trusts, estate planning and probate with emphasis on paralegal skills; forms and procedures in gathering information and preparing appropriate documents. Recommended: PARLG 113 or 201. Prerequisite: PARLG 100 or equivalent with Department Chair permission.

PARLG 205 Real Estate Practice (3)

Law of real property; common types of real estate transactions and conveyances, forms and procedures; document recording and title searches. Preparation of basic real estate documents. Prerequisite: PARLG 100 or equivalent with Department Chair permission.

PARLG 206 Business Organizations (3)

Introduction to common areas of law practice by firms handling general business matters for clients with emphasis on corporations and partnerships. Prerequisite: PARLG 100 with minimum 2.0 grade or equivalent with Department Chair permission.

PARLG 207 Criminal Law and Procedure (3)

Introduction to criminal law and procedure, and paralegal skills in both prosecution and defense cases, and related criminal justice areas. Prerequisite: PARLG 100 or equivalent with Department Chair permission.

PARLG 208 Administrative Law & Procedure (3)

Basic concepts of administrative law and procedure in federal and state agencies. Emphasis on paralegal's role in the administrative process and formal and informal advocacy techniques including representing clients before administrative bodies. Topics include administrative delegation of power, rule making, agency discretionary powers, remedies and judicial review, agency operation, adjudication, hearing preparation, and administrative and judicial appeal. Prerequisite: PARLG 100 or equivalent with Department Chair permission.

PARLG 210 Computer Assisted Legal Research (2)

Computer-assisted legal research (CALR) using the online WESTLAW legal database; advanced research topics. Prerequisite: PARLG 101 or equivalent with Department Chair permission.

PARLG 212 Time and Billing Technology (2)

Introduction to computer software used in law offices to track billable time and prepare billing to clients. Prerequisite: Department Chair permission.

PARLG 214 Case Management Technology (2)

Introduction to computer software used in law offices to manage cases and other client matters. Prerequisite: Department Chair permission.

PARLG 216 Litigation Support Technology (2)

Introduction to computer software used to provide support for litigation and trial practice. Prerequisite: Department Chair permission.

PARLG 251-255 Paralegal Independent Study (1-5)

Selected research and writing projects on law-related topics. Prerequisite: Department Chair permission.

PARLG 260 Leadership Project (1-2)

Develop leadership skills relevant to the paralegal profession by coordinating activities sponsored by the student paralegal association. Prerequisite: PARLG 105 and Department Chair permission.

PARLG 280 Communications Project (1-2)

Research, write and produce a professional quality newsletter about the paralegal program, the paralegal profession, and related topics. Prerequisite: PARLG 105 and Department Chair permission.

PARLG 290 Legal Specialty Series (1-4)

Instruction and study in a selected legal specialty area. Course content varies to provide skills to keep pace with changing practice areas. Prerequisite: PARLG 100 or equivalent with Department Chair permission.

PARLG 298 Portfolio Project (1)

Degree and certificate candidates will assemble a portfolio of completed work. Portfolio may include finished writing samples, a summary of cooperative education experience, resume and cover letter; self-evaluation is required. Prerequisite: completion of, or concurrent enrollment in, PARLG 199, Department Chair permission, and within 6 credits of completing program requirements.