

PARALEGAL PLUS POST-BACHELOR CERTIFICATE

(40-44 credits)

Program Description

Do you pride yourself on your organization and attention to detail? Do you enjoy supporting others and advocating for underserved causes? Paralegals, as “the hands and feet” of a law firm, play a key role in the legal system, working with both legal professionals and their clients to help serve their needs.

At SPSCC, you'll gain the fundamental skills required to enter the legal office: skills like legal research, documentation and writing, knowing the basis of court proceedings, and more. Our advisory board includes public and private attorneys and judges from the local community.

The overall program goal of the Paralegal Plus Post-Bachelor Certificate is to prepare students who have already obtained either a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree from an accredited four (4) year institution, but otherwise do not have any legal experience, and are interested in careers as paralegals or legal assistants working under the supervision of lawyers. In addition, it is the aim of the program to provide students with knowledge of legal concepts, procedures and essential skills required to serve the needs of a complex legal and business community by assessing existing courses and updating and/or developing new courses that meet the future needs of the profession. The Program emphasizes organizational, interpersonal, analytical and technological skills that support students in their professional pursuits and provides a broad range of skills for positions in a variety of legal settings such as private law firms, government agencies, community action agencies, corporate legal departments, insurance companies, estate and trust departments of large banks, or real estate and title companies. The curriculum consists of a combination of legal practice concentration, law-related, and general education courses. Students seeking a career as a paralegal must be able to write clearly, communicate effectively, be proficient with office computer systems, and possess a high degree of motivation and analytical reasoning capability. The Paralegal Program promotes ethical awareness and professional responsibility, and encourages development of the Paralegal and LLLT occupations.

Career Opportunities

The paralegal field continues as one of the fastest growing professions. The American Bar Association and Washington State Bar Association recognize the benefit of two-year paralegal and Limited License Legal Technician (LLLT) programs. Job opportunities are continuing to increase and expand into new areas. Paralegal positions open in private law firms, corporate legal departments, insurance companies, estate and trust departments of large banks, real estate and title insurance companies, nonprofit private and public organizations and professional trade associations. Job opportunities in the public sector are available in community legal services programs, offices of public defenders, prosecutors, and attorney generals, government agencies and the court system. Earnings vary depending on the size of the community,

geographic location, size, and business of the employing agency, and the paralegal's education, background, and work experience.

Length of Program

Because legal courses are offered only in the evening, program completion may require 4 – 6 quarters.

Outcomes

South Puget Sound Community College believes that all students need to develop a broad range of abilities that will not only make them more effective in their professional pursuits but will enhance their capacity to relate well to others in their daily lives.

At the completion of the Paralegal Program, the successful student will be able to:

- Exhibit critical thinking skills in analyzing legal processes and problems
- Analyze, synthesize and communicate information about legal issues and processes in writing and in oral presentations
- Use technological applications to efficiently produce, manage, and submit accurate legal documents
- Recognize and apply reason to ethical issues in business, including the legal implications of business practices
- Engaging in legal and factual investigation and research using traditional and technology-based tools
- Briefing and analyzing legal issues in writing
- Understanding the court system and the process of civil litigation from case inception through trial and post-trial matters
- Using a variety of current computer applications to efficiently produce, manage, and analyze legal documents
- Demonstrating effective communication with attorneys, clients, court personnel, and coworkers, orally and in writing
- Effectively interviewing clients or witnesses

The SPSCC college-wide abilities are embedded into each program:

- Effective Communication
- Information Literacy
- Analytical Reasoning
- Multicultural Awareness
- Social Responsibility

Admission Requirements

Program Requirements

Special Program Note

Only an attorney or Limited License Legal Technician (LLLT) pursuant to Admission and Practice Rule (APR) 28, can counsel others as to their legal rights or responsibilities. Non-lawyer assistants act under the supervision of a lawyer in compliance with Washington State Court Rules of Professional Conduct (RPC) 5.3, General Rule (GR) 24. *See also*, APR 28 and LLLT RPC.

Who Should Participate

The goal of the certificate program is to prepare students who have already obtained either a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree from an accredited four-year institution, but otherwise do not have any legal experience, and are interested in careers as paralegals or legal assistants working under the supervision of lawyers. In addition, it is the aim of the program to provide students with knowledge of legal concepts, procedures and essential skills required to serve the needs of a complex legal and business community by assessing existing courses and updating and/or developing new courses that meet the future needs of the profession. The program emphasizes organizational, interpersonal, analytical and technological skills that support students in their professional pursuits and provides a broad range of skills for positions in a variety of legal settings such as private law firms, government agencies, community action agencies, corporate legal departments, insurance companies, estate and trust departments of large banks, or real estate and title companies. The curriculum consists of a combination of legal practice concentration, law-related, and general education courses. Students seeking a career as a paralegal must be able to write clearly, communicate effectively, be proficient with office computer systems, and possess a high degree of motivation and analytical reasoning capability.

Other Program Notes

A cumulative college-level GPA of 2.0 is required in order to earn a certificate or degree and a "C" or better is required in all LEGL courses.

A "C" or better must also be earned in all prerequisite LEGL courses.

Students are required to participate in the Paralegal Skills Application course, which places them in the Paralegal Community Justice Clinic. With approval of the Paralegal Program Lead, this requirement may be waived in lieu of a relevant substantive internship or current relevant substantive work experience. (**The Paralegal Skills Application courses are currently under review due to the COVID 19 pandemic and not being offered. With approval by the Paralegal Program lead, this requirement can be satisfied by an internship, simulated work experience, or current and relevant legal work experience.*)

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Courses by Quarter

Code	Title	Credits
Quarter 1		
POLS& 200	Introduction to Law: Diversity	5
LEGL 121	Civil Procedure	5
LEGL 112	Law Office Procedures	3
LEGL 210	Real Estate, Property Law and Estate Planning ¹	5
Quarter 2		
LEGL 120	Contracts	3
LEGL 111	Criminal Law	5
LEGL 124	Legal Research Writing I	5
LEGL 221	Technology in the Law Office	5
Quarter 3		
LEGL 134	Legal Research & Writing II	5

LEGL 230 Legal Ethics 3

Select one of the following:

LEGL 131	Tort Law
LEGL 231	Electronic Discovery
LEGL 232	Family Law
LEGL 190 - Cooperative Work Experience ²	

¹ Students only need one (1) elective. The electives indicated here are what they can take each Quarter as an option.

² Contact Program Lead one (1) quarter in advance of taking your internship to ensure you are properly enrolled.

Students must have completed a BA degree or complete a BA degree while enrolled at SPSCC prior to receiving their certificate.

Pathway Maps

South Puget Sound Community College has provided pathways and associated recommended courses for ease of student selection based upon a student's career interest. Please review the pathway maps for required and recommended courses.

Paralegal Plus Post-Bachelor Certificate*
Certificate
40 - 44 Credits

Qtr. 1	Qtr. 2	Qtr. 3
POLS& 200 Introduction to Law (5cr) Fall	LEGL 120 Contracts (3cr) Winter	LEGL 134 Legal Research & Writing II (5cr) Spring
LEGL 121 Civil Procedure (5cr) Fall	LEGL 111 Criminal Law (5cr) Winter	LEGL 230 Legal Ethics (3cr) Spring
LEGL 112 Law Office Procedures (3cr) Fall	LEGL 124 Legal Research & Writing I (5cr) Winter	Choose One: Elective** LEGL 131 Tort Law (3cr) Spring
Elective**	LEGL 221 Technology in the Law Office (5cr) Winter	LEGL 231 Electronic Discovery (3cr) Spring
LEGL 210 Real Estate, Property, Estate Planning (5cr) Fall		LEGL 232 Family Law (3cr) Spring
		LEGL 190 Cooperative Work Experience*** (1cr to 5cr)

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