



Paralegal Studies Certificate

Program Code:

PL

Academic Area:

Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education

Type:

Certificate of Achievement

Program Statement

The Paralegal Studies certificate provides a career concentration in one of the fastest growing professions in America. Students have an opportunity to explore the field of law and gain marketable skills to perform a wide range of supportive legal functions. Please note that a Certificate or Degree in Paralegal Studies does not enable a person to practice law, represent clients in court or give legal advice; only licensed attorneys can perform these functions.

Program Information

- Students acquire basic understanding of substantive and procedural areas of law for a variety of legal settings.
- Students acquire basic skills in legal research.
- Students gain work experience by selecting PLS 243: Paralegal Internship, which places students in legal positions related to their academic program and career goal.
- Courses are offered day and evening.
- Some courses are offered online.
- PLS courses are taught by licensed attorneys with J.D.s from ABA - accredited Law Schools.
- All credits may be applied to the Associate of Science in Paralegal & Legal Studies.

Admission Requirements

To gain admission into our Paralegal Certificate program, prospective students must have one of the following:

- Associate in Arts or Science Degree from an accredited college or university or
- Bachelor of Arts or Science Degree from an accredited college or university or
- Successfully completed 33 semester credits at an accredited college or university, which include 18 semester credits from an approved general education course.

Related Programs

- Paralegal Studies degree
- Legal Administrative Assistant degree
- Legal Office Assistant certificate



Program Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. Understand the legal process and fundamental concepts of substantive areas of law
2. Identify and manage resolution of practical ethical dilemmas commonly encountered by working paralegals.
3. Manage modern law offices through the use of technology and robust time management skills
4. Develop the skills to perform effective research and to prepare draft legal documents, including various memoranda and court-related correspondence, pleadings and forms.

After Bristol

- Employment in a variety of legal settings including law firms, corporate law departments, financial institutions, government agencies, or courts.
- Some graduates continue their education in advanced paralegal studies or pursue law degrees.

Paralegal & Legal Studies Transfer Policy

This policy is intended to govern the transfer of legal specialty courses taken at other colleges to earn credit for legal specialty courses required to earn an Associate Degree or Paralegal Certificate from Bristol Community College.

Bristol Academic, Career and Transfer Office

The Admissions Office at Bristol must receive an official transcript from the college where the credits have been earned.

The Admissions Office at Bristol then determines whether the college is an accredited institution and whether the student earned a C or better in the legal specialty course. If so, the Admissions Office forwards a copy of the transcript to the Paralegal Program Department Chair for further review.

Paralegal Program Office

The Paralegal Program Department Chair requests that the student provide the Program with copies of course descriptions from the college catalog as well as the syllabi for any legal specialty course desiring transfer credit.

Upon receipt of the requested materials, the Paralegal Program Department Chair reviews the course description and the syllabus to ensure that the course is similar to that offered at Bristol and meets the American Bar Association (ABA) requirements for a legal specialty course.

To be considered a legal specialty course by the ABA, the course must:

1. Cover a specific area of law, procedure, or the legal process
2. Be developed for paralegals/legal assistants
3. Emphasize legal assistant skills, forms, documents, procedures, and legal principles and theories
4. Be pertinent to the legal assistant's performance on the job

Restrictions



Transfer credit will not be accepted for the following classes:

- PLS 232: Advanced Legal Research & Writing
- PLS 243: Paralegal Internship

Transfer credit will not be given for more than two legal specialty courses to satisfy the paralegal major requirements.

No credit will be given for legal specialty courses taken more than six years prior to the student's completion of the program requirements.

Legal specialty courses will be reviewed by the Chair of the Paralegal & Legal Studies Program who will compare the content of the course to make sure that it meets ABA standards. Transfer credit will be given for no more than two legal specialty courses (6 credits) to satisfy requirements for an Associate Degree or a Certificate.

Program Requirements

Course #	Title	Credits
ENG 101	Composition I: College Writing	3
PLS 105	Law Office Management	3
PLS 100	Introduction to Legal Studies & Ethics	3
PLS 101	Civil Litigation and Procedure	3
PLS 120	Basic Legal Research	3
PLS 121	Family Law and Procedure	3
PLS 230	Criminal Law and Procedure	3
PLS 241	Wills, Estates, and Trusts	3
PLS 243	Paralegal Internship	3

Recommended Course Sequence - Semester 1

Course #	Title	Credits
ENG 101	Composition I: College Writing	3
PLS 105	Law Office Management	3
PLS 100	Introduction to Legal Studies & Ethics	3
PLS 101	Civil Litigation and Procedure	3

Recommended Course Sequence - Semester 2

Course #	Title	Credits
PLS 120	Basic Legal Research	3
PLS 121	Family Law and Procedure	3
PLS 230	Criminal Law and Procedure	3
PLS 241	Wills, Estates, and Trusts	3
PLS 243	Paralegal Internship	3
Total credits:		27