

PARALEGAL AND LEGAL STUDIES

Associate in Applied Sciences Degree | Career Program | Department of Business and Information Systems

The Paralegal and Legal Studies Curriculum was developed according to guidelines provided by the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Paralegals. It offers students a background in the legal fundamentals, appropriate skills and practical experience necessary for professional employment. The paralegal can perform tasks delegated by a lawyer as long as the lawyer is responsible to the client and assumes full professional responsibility for the work. A paralegal cannot give legal advice, appear in court or set fees. Paralegals may not provide legal services directly to the public, except permitted by law.

There is an increasingly wide range of paralegal job opportunities in both the private and public sectors. Law firms, banks, accounting firms, insurance companies, brokerage houses, the court system, schools, hospitals, welfare centers, public program law offices, neighborhood legal centers, legal aid offices and national, state and city government agencies all employ paralegals. Federal, New York State and New York City civil service systems have paralegal job classifications. The paralegal program gives the student a broad range of employment opportunities.

A paralegal education can prove to be a good background for an executive career in professions other than law and for the law profession itself. One can apply earned credits towards a law-related bachelor's degree. The program has a large liberal arts component, which enables students to continue their education after completion of the AAS Paralegal and Legal Studies Degree.

The Paralegal and Legal Studies curriculum emphasizes business and law courses that prepare students for employment that includes research, writing and other tasks commonly assigned by law firms to paralegals. The curriculum features a 75-100 hour internship (CWE 31) component in which students work in a legal setting. This exposes students to the legal profession and makes them further aware of their ethical and professional responsibilities.

The goals and objectives of the program are:

- To acquire an Associate in Applied Science Paralegal and Legal Studies degree or a Paralegal Certificate.
- To provide the students with a background in the legal fundamentals, appropriate skills and practical experience necessary for professional employment.
- To give students a broader range of employment opportunities, the curriculum offers a wide variety of business, law and liberal arts courses.
- To give students the opportunity to continue their education after completion of the AAS Paralegal degree. This is met by the curriculum's large liberal arts core. We presently have an articulation agreement with New York City Technical College as well as with SUNY Canton and SUNY Empire State.
- To expose our students to the legal profession in which they will be employed. This is met by a 210 hour working internship in a law related facility.
- To provide students with knowledge of the ethical responsibilities and the legal restrictions placed on legal assistants.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the Paralegal and Legal Studies program requirements, students will be able to:

1. Students will demonstrate competency in the preparation of the following legal documents: summons and complaint, discovery questions and legal memorandum, cover letters for possible employment
2. Students will demonstrate competency in conducting legal research to create a legal memorandum.
3. Students will demonstrate growth in ethical behavior in accordance with professional standards.
4. Students will demonstrate preparedness to seek employment within the legal profession.*

***NOTE: not applicable to the Lay Advocate Option.**

The **Lay Advocate Option** prepares students for service to people and institutions that are concerned with the criminal system, family law, the poor, the mentally and physically handicapped and the elderly.

Approved by the American Bar Association

Credit requirements for the Paralegal and Legal Students AAS degree

- Students must complete at least 50% of their Legal Specialty credits while in residence at BCC.
- Students must complete at least nine of their Legal Specialty credits through synchronous instruction.

PARALEGAL AND LEGAL STUDIES CURRICULUM (PATHWAYS)

Curriculum Coordinator: Professor Nikole Knight

Required Core

A. English Composition

- ENG 110 English Composition I: Fundamentals of Writing and Rhetoric *OR* ENG 111 English Composition I: Writing and Rhetoric (3 Credits)
- ENG 112 Composition and Rhetoric II
ENG 114 Written Composition and Prose Fiction *OR*
ENG 115 Written Composition and Drama *OR*
ENG 116 Written Composition and Poetry (3 Credits)

B. Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning

- MTH 21 Survey of Mathematics I *OR*
MTH 23 Probability and Statistics (3 Credits)
- SCI¹ Choose any 3-credit course from Required Core C or Flexible Core E

Flexible Core

A. World Cultures and Global Issues

- HIS 10 History of the Modern World *OR*
HIS 11 Introduction to the Modern World (3 Credits)

D. Individual and Society

- COMM 11 Fundamentals of Interpersonal Communication (3 Credits)

Additional Flexible Core Requirement (Area A)

- SOC 11 Introduction to Sociology (3 Credits)

SUBTOTAL 21-22

Major Requirements

- CWE 31² Cooperative Work Experience (2 Credits)
- DAT 33 Microcomputer Applications (3 Credits)
- FYS 11³ First Year Seminar (0-1 Credit)
- LAW 17 Introduction to Paralegal Studies (3 Credits)
- LAW 19 Introduction to Law Office Management and Computers (3 Credits)
- LAW 41 Business Law (3 Credits)
- LAW 47 Civil Procedures (3 Credits)
- LAW 95 Legal Research and Writing (3 Credits)
- LAW 96 Advanced Legal Research and Writing (3 Credits)
- POL 11 American National Government *OR*
SOC 35 Introduction to Social Work (3 Credits)

SUBTOTAL 26-27

Restricted Electives

Choose one of the following three courses:

- ACC 111 Principles of Accounting I (4 Credits)
- BUS 111 Applications of Mathematics for Business (3 Credits)
- TAX 11 Introduction to Taxation (3 Credits)

Choose three of the following nine courses:

- LAW 52 Business Organizations (3 Credits)
- LAW 62 Family Law (3 Credits)
- LAW 64 Constitutional Law (3 Credits)
- LAW 65 Criminal Law and Procedures (3 Credits)
- LAW 72 Real Property (3 Credits)
- LAW 77 Immigration Law (3 Credits)
- LAW 82 Insurance and Torts (3 Credits)
- LAW 92 Estates, Trusts and Wills (3 Credits)
- LAW 91+ Landlord Tenant Advocacy (3 Credits)
- Free Electives to complete the 60 credit requirement (0-1 Credit)

SUBTOTAL 38-40

TOTAL 60-61 Credits required for AAS Degree³

Lay Advocate Option

Students selecting the Lay Advocate option should replace 9 credits of the Paralegal and Legal Studies curriculum restricted electives and CWE 31 in the specialization requirements with the following:

- **HLT 97#** Field Work in Community Health Resources (3 Credits)
- **LAW 62** Family Law (3 Credits)
- **LAW 65** Criminal Law and Procedures (3 Credits)
- **LAW 89** Legal Advocacy (3 Credits)

SUBTOTAL 12

¹ Students must choose one science course. This course may be selected from any 3-credit courses included in Required Core C or Flexible Core E. Completion of a 4-credit science course will fulfill this requirement, but is not mandatory. This may result in students exceeding 60 total degree credits.

² CWE 31 is a two (2) credit course. Students should enroll in CWE 31 one year before graduating or when they have completed 30 credits towards their degree. Students should see the CWE 31 Coordinator in the Department of Business and Information Systems, during their second semester. Students who are employed full-time are not

required to complete the internship portion of CWE 31, provided their employer agrees to participate in course-related surveys. Permission must be obtained from the CWE 31 Coordinator or Department Chairperson by submitting documentation of current full-time employment. College Work- Study assignments within CUNY may not be used as substitutes for the CWE internship.

³ Students must take FYS 11 prior to earning 24 degree or equated credits. Students who have earned 24 or more degree or equated credits are permitted to use the one credit as a free elective. It is highly recommended that students take FYS 11 in their first or second semester. This requirement will be waived for students who have earned 24 or more degree or equated credits at BCC or another college and transfer into this program.

⁴ Students enrolled in the Lay Advocate option must choose from BUS 111 and TAX 11.

⁵ Students transferring into the program with 24 or more degree or equated credits will be exempt from FYS 11 and only required to complete 60 credits to graduate.

+ Department permission required

HLT 97 is in lieu of CWE 31

