

PARALEGAL STUDIES

School of Business

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School/Department Location: www.swccd.edu/cvlocation

Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/C4E3PnKsdU92> (<https://goo.gl/maps/C4E3PnKsdU92/>)



AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

ABA Approved Paralegal Program

General Description

Southwestern College offers two American Bar Association (ABA) approved programs, paralegal studies and paralegal studies—bilingual. Both programs are approved to be completed entirely online. As per ABA requirements, students take a minimum of nine semester credits of legal specialty coursework through synchronous instruction (such as courses completed through synchronous videoconferencing format). The department ensures compliance with this through the scheduling process. These programs provide students with a litigation background and focus on developing an awareness of the common legal issues of various clients. An understanding of international legal issues which impact San Diego due to its geographical location and other legal and business related activities are also developed.

The goals of the Paralegal Studies Program are to prepare students for employment in the legal field as paralegals and in administrative positions where a knowledge of the legal system is utilized and to educate its students to perform effectively in a variety of legal settings, including, but not limited to those in our local service area, and to adapt to changes in the legal environment.

The paralegal works under the supervision of an attorney. Responsibilities are broad and varied including understanding procedural and substantive law; applying strong written and oral communication skills; engaging in critical thinking; identifying legal ethical issues; preparing legal documents in both transactional and litigation cases; interviewing clients; locating, analyzing, citing, and effectively using legal authority; preparing for trial; and organizing and managing documentation. Paralegals often work with attorneys in specialized areas of law such as immigration, family law, personal injury, contracts, wills, trusts, and probate.

Employment in the field tends to vary. Larger, well-established law firms commonly require a bachelor's degree, and smaller law firms and legal agencies often require a two-year associate degree or its equivalent. Potential employees who have an advanced education level, knowledge

of a frequently used foreign language, and/or an emphasis in a legal specialty will have the greatest opportunities in the job market.

Program Objectives

- Apply legal research, analytical, written, and oral communication skills in the legal setting;
- Understand and uphold ethical and professional rules for paralegals;
- Understand California's rules and regulations for the paralegal profession;
- Gain familiarity with relevant computer software and online resources commonly used in law offices;
- Understand the basic concepts of procedural and substantive law;
- Understand the basic concepts of state and federal court systems.

Career Options

Below is a sample of the career options available for the paralegal studies major. A few require a certificate of achievement, some require an associate in science degree, and some require a bachelor's degree: claims examiner, compensation and benefits manager, compliance and enforcement inspector, contract consultant, forms and procedures specialist, freelance paralegal, labor relations specialist, law clerk, legal aide, legal assistant, legal research assistant, legal technician, Occupational Safety and Health Worker, paralegal, patent, agent, and title examiner.

Note: Transfer of Legal Specialty Credits: Students requesting credit by transfer must present the course description from the catalog of the outside institution along with their transcript from the outside institution attached to a Petition to Substitute to the Business Department Chair and the School of Business Dean. Up to 6 semester units of legal specialty courses may be accepted in transfer.

| Degree/Certificate Options | Major Code |
|---|------------|
| Associate in Science Degree: | |
| Career/Technical | |
| Paralegal Studies (https://catalog.swccd.edu/associate-degree-certificate-programs/paralegal-studies/paralegal-studies-as/) | A2516 |
| Certificate of Achievement | |
| Paralegal Studies (https://catalog.swccd.edu/associate-degree-certificate-programs/paralegal-studies/paralegal-studies-certificate/) | A2518 |

Consult with a counselor to develop a Student Education Plan (SEP), which lists the courses necessary to achieve your academic goals.

Faculty

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