

PARALEGAL STUDIES

School of Business

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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 and sensibility to the common legal issues of clients from various ethnic groups within the community. 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 goal of the Paralegal Studies Program is to prepare students for employment in the legal field as paralegals, and this program is offered for paralegal education. 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.

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.

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