

2007-08 Catalog: Programs of Study

Paralegal Studies (Legal Assisting) (2299)

Associate in Science or Associate in Applied Science

Mission Statement

The Paralegal Studies (Legal Assisting) program is for students who wish to seek employment in the legal or criminal justice field as paralegals or for individuals presently employed who wish to advance in their careers. Florida Community College's program is structured to meet the needs of the legal profession in the state of Florida, as developed in response to a survey of local attorneys, which showed a great need for trained paraprofessional specialists in the field. Courses are taught by practicing attorneys or other legal professionals. An advisory committee composed of attorneys and other professionals meets regularly to make suggestions and recommendations for the program. The program culminates in a professional internship (PLA 1943 Internship). All other professional core courses must be completed prior to enrollment in the internship. In this course, students will work not less than 120 hours in a law or law-related office. In addition, students will meet to share work experiences and receive final preparation for paraprofessional practice.

Note

Students who want to pursue a baccalaureate degree should consult the program director.

The final responsibility for meeting graduation requirements stated in your Degree Audit Report rests with the student.

Transfer of Legal Specialty Courses from other institutions must be approved by the program director.

Educational Goals of the Legal Assisting Program

An associate in science degree prepares graduates to assist attorneys as legal assistants in administrative agencies, insurance companies, private law firms, state agencies, corporations, government, and other legal environments. The technical curriculum has been designed to provide students with knowledge and skills in the areas of the role of a legal assistant, ethical requirements, legal research, analysis, the preparation of legal documents, litigation practice and procedure, real estate transactions, family law, administrative law, tort law, criminal law and probate law and practice. Emphasis is on training students in both civil and criminal matters.

Accreditation

This program is approved by the **American Bar Association**. In fact, FCCJ has the only paralegal program in North Florida approved by the ABA. In accordance with stringent guidelines, all FCCJ legal program faculty members are ABA approved and the program has an active advisory committee of 24 area lawyers, judges, court administrators and business leaders.

Internship

The program culminates in a **professional internship program**. All other professional core courses must be completed prior to enrollment in the internship. In this course, students will work not less than 120 hours in a law-related office. In addition, students will meet weekly to share work experiences and receive final preparation for paraprofessional practice.

Career Opportunities, Rapid Placement

Florida Community College's Career Development Centers handle job placement for the majority of paralegals in Jacksonville and the surrounding five-county area. Lawyers benefit by shifting certain responsibilities to certified legal assistants and paralegals whose hours are billable.

Annual Salaries

Salaries and bonuses for paralegals average about \$39,000 and range as high as \$61,400 with advancement and experience.

Interested?

You can learn more about a career in legal assisting and how we can help you achieve that goal at the **FCCJ Legal Studies Institute Web page**. You'll also find information on continuing education for legal

professionals, internship information and links to other legal professional associations.

Certification

The Certified Legal Assistant/Certified Paralegal credential is recognized in the legal community as representing the highest standard of excellence and professionalism, especially for those who have taken the additional step to attain the Specialty designation in one or more fields of practice. FCCJ and the Northeast Florida Paralegal Association cosponsor a five-week review course to help you prepare for the rigorous two-day certification exam.

Articulation

This A.S. degree program articulates into a bachelor's degree program. For more information, please visit the [Transfer Services](#) Web site.

Application Procedure

Students desiring to enter the legal assisting program must have a personal interview with the program director prior to enrollment.

Cost

Estimated cost of tuition is \$4,250 (tuition rated for Florida residents, as of 7/07). Contact the program manager for additional costs (textbooks, materials, fees).

Need More Information? Contact:

Brian McDuffie, Kent Campus, 904.381.3589

Curriculum

Course Number and Title	Credits
General Education	
ENC 1101 English Composition I (prerequisite to PLA 1104)	3
ENC 1102 Writing About Non-Fiction	3
or LIT 2000 Introduction to Literature: Writing About Fiction	
*Mathematics	3
*Social and Behavioral Sciences	6
*Humanities	3
Credit Hours	18
Required Professional Courses	
BUL 2131 Business Law I — The Legal Environment of Business	3
****CGS 1100 Microcomputer Applications for Business and Economics	3
***SPC 2016 Speech Communication for Business and the Professions	3
Paralegal Studies Courses	
PLA 1003 Introduction to Paralegal Studies	3
PLA 1104 Legal Research and Writing I	3
PLA 2273 Torts Law	3
PLA 2610 Real Estate Law	3
PLA 2730 Computer Assisted Legal Research	1
PLA 2114 Legal Research and Writing II	3
PLA 2600 Wills, Trusts and Estates	3
PLA 2800 Family Law	3
PLA 2200 Litigation	3

**PLA 1943	Internship (students must request permission from program director to enroll)	3
	Credit Hours	37

Professional Electives (minimum 6 credit hours)

ACG 2021	Financial Accounting	4
ACG 2071	Managerial Accounting	3
ACG 2100	Intermediate Accounting I	3
CJL 2062	Constitutional Law	3
ENC 2210	Technical Report Writing	3
BSC 1005	Life in Its Biological Environment	3
BSC 1005L	Biology Laboratory	1
BSC 2050	Biology of Environmental Systems	3
BSC 2010C	Principles of Biology	4
BSC 2020C	Human Biology	4
BSC 2085C	Human Anatomy and Physiology I	4
BSC 2086C	Human Anatomy and Physiology II	4
CGS 1060	Introduction to Information Technology	3
CGS 2512	Spreadsheet Concepts and Practices	3
CGS 2525	Introduction to Multimedia	3
CGS 2542	Database Concepts for Microcomputers	3
CGS 2554	Introduction to Electronic Commerce	4
CGS 2555	Introduction to the Internet	4
HSC 1531	Medical Terminology	3
MAN 2021	Principles of Management	3
MAN 2043	Quality Management	3
MAN 2125	Supervision and Performance Improvement	3
MAN 2300	Human Resources Management	3
MAN 2582	Introduction to Project Management	3
MAR 1011	Principles of Marketing	3
MAR 2612	Marketing Research	3
OST 1581	Professional Development in the Work Environment	3
OST 2501	Office Systems Management	3
OST 2771	Word Processing for Windows I	3
OST 2773	Word Processing for Windows II	3
OST 1100	Keyboarding/Introduction to Word Processing	3
OST 1108	Keyboard Skills/Speed Building	3
OST 1336	Fundamentals of Business Communications	3
OST 1355	Introduction to Information and Records Management	3
OST 1384	Introduction to Customer Service	3
OST 2335	Applied Business Communications	3
OST 2402	Administrative Support Systems and Procedures	3
SBM 2000	Small Business Management	3
SPA 1602	American Sign Language I	3

SPN 1120	Beginning Spanish I	3
FRE 1120	Beginning French I	3
GER 1120	Beginning German I	3
Any course with an ACG, CCJ, CJL, FRE, GER, MAN, MAR, OST, SPA or SPN prefix		
Credit Hours		6

**Professional Law-Related Elective Courses
(minimum 3 credit hours)**

PLA 2880	Constitutional Law	3
PLA 1931	Selected Topics in Paralegal Studies	1
PLA 1933	Selected Topics in Paralegal Studies	3
PLA 1303	Criminal Law and Procedure for Legal Assistants	3
PLA 1423	Contract Law	3
PLA 2240	Alternative Dispute Resolution	3
PLA 2263	Evidence for the Legal Assistant	1
PLA 1080	Legal Interviewing and Communicating	3
PLA 2763	Law Office Procedures	3
BUL 2242	Business Law II	3
PLA 2465	Debtor/Creditor Law	3
PLA 2433	Business Organizations	3
PLA 2732	Technology in the Law Office	3
Any course with a PLA prefix		
Credit Hours		3

Total Credit Hours 64

*Refer to A.S. degree **General Education Requirements**.

**An approved elective may be substituted for this course if students have verifiable, related work experience of not less than 12 consecutive months.

***Transfer students may use speech equivalent **SPC 2600** or **SPC 2040** or an acceptable SPC prefix elective.

******CGS 1570** may be substituted for **CGS 1100**.

Notes

While legal assistants/paralegals are not permitted by law to give legal advice, they do work under the direct supervision of attorneys, performing specifically delegated duties necessary in the effective delivery of legal services to the client. The program supports these ethical guidelines against the unauthorized practice of law by non-attorneys and students have extensive training in legal ethics.

You have two options in this program: the associate in science (A.S.) degree, which can prepare you for employment or transfer to a state university, and the associate in applied science (A.A.S.) degree, which is intended primarily for students who want immediate employment after graduation. If you choose the A.S. degree you must take **MAC 1105, MGF 1106** or a higher level mathematics. The A.A.S. degree requires **MAT 1033** or higher. Please see an advisor to determine the option that is best for you.

Record of Conviction of a Crime

Most public service agencies and some law firms require students to undergo drug screening and criminal background checks prior to placement in legal departments. Students whose drug screening and criminal background checks are deemed unsatisfactory may be denied access to public service agencies. If the students enroll in an internship or cooperative education class and are seeking experience at a State Attorney's Office or other public service agency, then a background check is performed by the SAO or facility and the student may be denied the internship based on their criminal record.

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To request information, contact the Learner Support Center at info@fccj.edu or 904.646.2300.

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