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Paralegal Studies Program Info Session

San Francisco State University
College of Extended Learning



Agenda

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 - Paralegal Studies Overview
 - Who Should Apply
- Program Admission
 - Application Process
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 - Graduation Requirements
 - Required, Emphasis and Elective Courses
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- Where to Get Started
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Introduction

SF State Extended Learning offers a 30-academic-unit certificate program in paralegal studies, providing instruction in practical legal skills and substantive law.

Courses are conducted at the upper-division level and are taught by attorneys and paralegals, all of who have practical experience in the field. You also have the opportunity to participate in an internship—a practical on-the-job work experience in a supervised setting that makes a valuable addition to a resume.

What is a Paralegal?

- “A paralegal is a person, qualified by education, training or work experience who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible.”
- [ABA definition of Paralegal updated by the ABA House of Delegates in February 2020.](#)



What does a Paralegal do?

- Interview clients and others involved in legal matters
- Perform legal research, including checking the validity of authority and cite-checking
- Perform legal research electronically through computerized legal systems and the Internet
- Draft internal memoranda, correspondence, and legal forms
- Draft legal memoranda reflecting the results of research
- Draft a variety of litigation-related documents
- Gather and analyze legal and other documents
- Assist in the preparation of cases for trial



American Bar Association (ABA)

The SF State Paralegal Studies Program has been approved by the American Bar Association (ABA) since 2002.

To get more information on the ABA and Paralegal programs approved by the ABA please visit:

<https://www.americanbar.org/groups/paralegals.html>



Paralegal Profession

- National Federation of Paralegal Association (NFPA):
<https://www.paralegals.org/>
- CA Employment Development Dept. (use keyword search paralegal) <https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/occguides/>
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics:
<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/Legal/Paralegals-and-legal-assistants.htm>
- California State Senate: look for Business and Professions Code, section 6450 for California legislation which defines the job title “paralegal” and sets out their educational criteria:
www.senate.ca.gov



Paralegal Associations

- [American Association for Paralegal Education](#)
- [Association of Legal Administrators](#)
- [International Practice Management Association](#)
- [National Association of Legal Assistants](#)
- [National Federation of Paralegal Associations](#)
- [San Francisco Bar Association - Paralegal Section](#)
- [San Francisco Legal Professionals Association](#)
- [San Francisco Paralegal Association](#)



Who Should Apply

- The Paralegal Studies certificate program is designed for:
 - Professionals and individuals who are seeking to make a career change
 - Legal professionals wanting career advancement within their current company
 - Individuals who have the desire to attend law school, but can't afford law school tuition.
 - Student who are completing coursework that may be applied toward an academic program at SF State (most of the Paralegal classes are transferable into the Criminal Law degree)
 - International students who want to study U.S. law without applying for an LLM or LLB.



Program Admission

- Students are required to have a minimum of 60 semester or 90 quarter units of prior academic course credit to be admitted to the program and have completed those courses with a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or better.
- Students who hold a baccalaureate degree are automatically eligible for admission to the program.
- Students with at least three years of legal experience who have at least 45 semester or 68 quarter units of college work may petition for conditional admission. Applications must be accompanied by an attorney declaration attesting to their legal work experience, which must have been within five years of their application to SF State Paralegal program. Students with conditional admission do not qualify for federal financial aid.



Application Process

- To apply to the Paralegal Studies Certificate program, please complete the Cal State Apply online application
- See our Apply & Register page for application instructions and tips
- University Transcripts
 - To apply online you will need to submit an unofficial transcript
 - Hard copy official transcripts from your college or university must be submitted before you can be formally accepted
 - No electronic transcripts can be accepted
- Individuals taking one-off courses need only to register for a specific course
 - Obtain SFSU ID and Password
 - Register for course/s based upon prerequisites & goals
 - Pay course fees
 - Individuals taking one-off courses are not eligible for financial aid



International Students

- The Paralegal Studies program accepts international students. Students must apply for I-20 to obtain F-1 visa.
- Information on how to apply for admission can be found on our website:
<https://cel.sfsu.edu/global/certificate-admissions>



Writing Requirement: PLS 414

- PLS 414 Introduction to Professional Legal Writing – GWAR requirement
- Students without a Bachelor's Degree must complete PLS 414 with a grade "C" or better in order to achieve program completion



Graduation Requirements

- The certificate program requires completion of **30** academic units. These units are upper division academic units. Typical program length is 20 months.
- Unit Breakdown
 - **15 units** must be taken from required courses
 - Remaining units must be taken from elective courses to receive the certificate of completion



Required Courses

Remote Learning for fall 2021 using Zoom and iLearn

- PLS 300: Intro to Civil Procedure
- PLS 320: Legal Research & Writing
- PLS 310: Communication Skills & Legal Ethics
- PLS 305: Pleadings & Motions
- PLS 395: Investigation, Discovery & Trial Preparation



Elective Courses: Fall 2021

Remote Learning for fall 2021 using Zoom and iLearn

- PLS 414: Intro to Professional Legal Writing
- PLS 355: Wills Trust Estate Plan
- PLS 425: Torts
- PLS 430: Computer Applications in Law Practice
- PLS 380: Paralegal Internship



SF State Downtown Campus

- **Address: SF State Downtown Campus**
College of Extended Learning
835 Market Street, 6th Fl.
San Francisco, CA 94103
- **Email:** sfsucel@sfsu.edu
General Information: 415.405.7700, option 5
FAX: 415.817.4299

Public Transportation

BART

Exit at Powell Street Station.

Muni Metro

Exit at Powell Street Station.

Muni Bus

Take bus lines No. 5, 6, 9, 21, or 31, and exit at 5th & Market.

Parking Garages

- Mason & O'Farrell Parking Garage
- 5th & Mission Parking/Yerba Buena Parking Garage



Tuition and Fees

- The College of Extended Learning is not state supported and must charge supplementary fees to cover for its courses.
- The total cost of the program is approximately \$8,990. Most courses are \$299 per unit.
- Students pay for courses on a semester-by-semester basis only. Additional costs for texts and materials vary by course from approximately \$250 to \$500.
- There are no fees for receiving your Certificate of Completion
- Tuition for registered courses must be paid in full before the first day of class
- Students are responsible for dropping courses prior to drop deadlines – **see website for details**



Enrollment Services

- Register with Enrollment Services:
 - Online Self or Staff Assisted (cel.sfsu.edu/register)
 - ~~In-person (Front Desk)~~ **Campuses are closed**
 - Telephone (415-405-7700, option 5)
- Payment Options:
 - Personal Check or Money Order
 - Electronic Check (\$0.50 fee)
 - Credit Card (Discover, MC, Visa or AMEX, 2.75% fee)



Financial Aid

- University financial aid for academic certificate program students is available, but extremely limited:
 - Contact:
 - Khushboo Shah
 - 415.338.6091
 - kshah@sfsu.edu
 - Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
 - Apply Online - <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa>
 - FAFSA School Code: 001154



Financial Aid continued

University financial aid for academic certificate program students is available, but extremely limited.

- **Alternative Loan Program**

Some applicants accepted into a certificate program may not be eligible for federal financial aid, but you may qualify for an Alternative Loan

- **What is an Alternative Loan?**

Loans offered by banks or lending institutions to assist students in bridging the gap between college costs and traditional funding sources. These are private supplemental loans and are not guaranteed by the federal government. Terms and conditions can vary according to specific lender guidelines. SF State adheres to the [CSU Student Lending Code of Conduct](#) (Higher Education Opportunity Act Disclosures).

To view the CSU Lending code of conduct and get answers to common questions about the Alternative Loan program, visit the office of financial aid site:

<https://financialaid.sfsu.edu/newalt>



Scholarships

- **David Goldstein Memorial Scholarship**
 - The David Goldstein Memorial Scholarship for Criminal Law Students was established in honor of our long-time criminal law teacher. It is open to SF State Paralegal Studies certificate students planning a career in criminal law and to international students. The scholarship awards two \$3,000 scholarships in the fall and spring semesters.
- **Professional Organizations and Law Firms**
 - Students pursuing a career as a paralegal will find scholarship programs sponsored by professional associations and law firms.



Courses for Causes

CEL is offering 50% off course tuition for one introductory class from a variety of subjects.* These savings are available to everyone. There are no eligibility requirements.

Course are offered in select programs:

- Paralegal Studies
- Human Resource Management
- Project Management and more

Cost:

- PLS 300, Intro to Civil Procedure - \$450 with discount
- Applicable for fall 2021 semester only

*Enrollments are subject to course availability and space in class.



Where to Get Started

- Create SFSU ID & Password
 - <http://www.sfsu.edu/login.htm>
- Search for classes, and register
- Pay within 5 days



Contact

- **Eduardo Cerpa**, Program Specialist
 - (415) 817-4244
 - ecerpa@sfsu.edu

