Paralegal Studies Program
San Francisco State University
College of Extended Learning
Downtown Campus
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.
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
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
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/


• 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
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.
Admissions & Applying

• To be admitted requires 60 semester units of prior academic course credit with a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or better.
  
  o Students who hold a baccalaureate degree are automatically eligible.
  
  o Conditional admission option for students with 45 units and five years of recent law office experience. Letter of reference required.

• Applications submitted through Cal Apply for fall, spring, and summer terms.
Certificate Courses

Required Courses

• 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

Sample of Elective Courses

• PLS 414: Intro to Professional Legal Writing (GWAR)
• PLS 330: Family Law
• PLS 355: Wills, Trusts & Estate Planning
• PLS 370: Criminal Law
• PLS 436: Trademarks & Copyrights
• PLS 426: Contracts
Tuition & Registration

• Total cost of the program is approximately $8,990.
• Students pay for courses on a semester-by-semester basis. Additional costs for texts and materials vary by course.

• Register with Enrollment Services:
  o Online Self or Staff Assisted (cel.sfsu.edu/register)
  o In-person (Front Desk)
  o Telephone (415-405-7700, option 5)

• Payment Options:
  o Personal Check or Money order
  o Electronic Check ($0.50 fee)
  o Credit Card (Discover, MC, Visa or AMEX, 2.75% fee)
Funding Your Education

Federal Financial Aid - FAFSA available for students who apply, are admitted, and qualify

Veterans/GI Bill - Certified for tuition assistance for active and retired military, and qualified dependents

Workforce Investment Act - Listed on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) on CalJOBS website

Goldstein Scholarship – Two $3,000 awards given in the spring & fall semesters to students pursuing careers in criminal law
Want More Information?

Visit the program page:
cel.sfsu.edu/paralegal

Contact the Program Specialist:
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