

PARALEGAL STUDIES, BACHELOR OF ARTS

Overview

The School of Professional Advancement's Paralegal Studies Program was first approved by the American Bar Association's (ABA) Standing Committee on Paralegals in 1981 and earned its most recent reapproval in 2023. Throughout this time, the program has maintained compliance with the rigorous ABA guidelines that govern all aspects of our operations, instilling in our graduates the superior education that ABA requires and legal employers demand.

The Paralegal Studies Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree and accompanying Paralegal Certificate, awarded simultaneously, require 120 credits for completion, including 36 credits in the PARA major. Carefully sequenced coursework begins with core skills classes that emphasize legal research, writing, and analysis, along with law office technology, legal ethics, and other practical aspects of the legal profession. In ensuing semesters, upper-level electives allow students to explore major areas of substantive law.

In or near the final semester, students not already employed as paralegals take PARA 5900 Paralegal Studies Practicum (3 c.h.), a course that includes both a 100-hour internship in a legal services office and an instructional component focusing upon legal ethics, professionalism, and career success skills. Students already employed as paralegals may apply to waive PARA 5900 and replace the course with an additional PARA 4000-level elective.

Paralegal Studies courses are offered online, including synchronous remote formats that meet weekly via Zoom and fully online formats designed for working adults. In accordance with ABA requirements, each student must complete at least three courses (9 credit hours) in either in-person or synchronous remote format. Subject to this requirement, students may complete coursework in formats that accommodate professional and personal commitments.

Many of our graduates pursue careers as paralegals or in other positions in law firms, courts, corporations, government agencies, non-profit legal service providers, and other legal services offices, while others choose to enter law school and become attorneys.

Paralegal Studies Program Mission Statement

The Paralegal Studies Program provides our students with the skills, wisdom, and integrity to identify, communicate, and conserve knowledge and to pursue careers as efficient, ethical legal professionals who are prepared to assist attorneys in courts, governmental agencies, law firms, and other legal services offices, or to apply to law school after graduation, if they choose.

Paralegal Studies Program Learning Outcomes

On completion of the Paralegal Studies Program curriculum, graduates will have the knowledge and skills to:

1. Describe and analyze the jurisdictions and functions of the state and federal civil, criminal, and administrative court systems.
2. Perform legal research and factual investigations using both print and electronic methods and summarize findings in legal memoranda and briefs.
3. Cite authorities consistent with the adopted legal citation manual (The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation.)
4. Draft memoranda of law and legal correspondence.
5. Identify, draft, and file standard pretrial and litigation documents in Federal and State Courts.
6. Use industry-standard law office technology to organize and manage documents, files, billing data, and dockets for trial and other law practice management purposes.
7. Identify and apply the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct and the NALA and NFPA ethics guidelines.

Note: Paralegals are trained professionals who work under the supervision of licensed attorneys. Paralegals are not lawyers and are not permitted to practice law or to provide legal services directly to the public, except as permitted by law.

Credit Transfers toward the BA in Paralegal Studies

Tulane SoPA's Paralegal Studies Program does not accept the transfer of credits for paralegal or legal studies courses completed at paralegal or legal studies programs that were not approved by ABA's Standing Committee on Paralegals at the time the courses were taken.

Consistent with Tulane SoPA's undergraduate credit transfer policy, which is found here: <https://sopa.tulane.edu/admissions/student-transfers/>, undergraduate, students pursuing the Paralegal Studies BA and Paralegal Certificate may be permitted to transfer in up to 18 credits (50%) of the 36 legal studies/paralegal course credits required for the PARA major, provided each course (1) meets all SoPA undergraduate course transfer requirements; (2) was completed at a paralegal or legal studies program that was approved by ABA's Standing Committee on Paralegals at the time the class was completed; and (3) has been reviewed and approved by the Paralegal Studies Program Director.

Requirements And Plan of Study

Students pursuing this bachelor's degree must earn a minimum of 120 credit hours in their degree and a 2.000 minimum GPA. Additionally, students must complete the School of Professional Advancement core curriculum. More information on general degree and core curriculum requirements can be found here (<https://catalog.tulane.edu/professional-advancement/#degreerequirementstext>).

See Sample Plan of Study (<https://catalog.tulane.edu/professional-advancement/paralegal-studies/paralegal-studies-ba/#para-ba-plan-of-study>) below.

To ensure compliance with ABA requirements, all students must complete at least 9 credits of Paralegal Studies coursework (three PARA classes) via in-person or synchronous remote format. The Paralegal Studies BA degree requires completion of 120 credits, including these courses in the Paralegal Studies major:

Course ID	Title	Credits
Major Core Courses (Offered every semester, in online or remote format)		24
PARA 2010	Introduction to the Legal System	
PARA 3020	Legal Research I	
PARA 3030	Legal Writing I	
PARA 3050	Litigation I	
PARA 3060	Litigation II	
PARA 3070	Legal Technology I	
PARA 4190	Legal Ethics	
Select one:		
PARA 4100	Legal Technology II	
PARA 4200	Legal Research and Writing II	
Major Electives		
Select three (3) PARA 4000-level electives (offerings vary by semester)		9
PARA 4030	Louisiana Succession Practice	
PARA 4040	Real Property Practice	
PARA 4050	Family Law	
PARA 4060	Advanced Discovery and Evidence	
PARA 4070	Immigration Law Practice	
PARA 4080	Criminal Law	
PARA 4150	Commercial Law	
PARA 4160	Interviewing and Investigation	
PARA 4180	Bankruptcy Practice	
PARA 4240	Intellectual Property and Entertainment Law	
PARA 4250	Civil Rights Law	
PARA 4280	Personal Injury and Medical Malpractice	
PARA 4300	Louisiana Notary Law	
PARA 4310	Employment Law	
PARA 4330	White Collar Crime	
PARA 4350	Law and Government in American Society	
PARA 4380	Evidence Law	
Internship		
PARA 5900	Paralegal Studies Practicum	3
Total Credit Hours in Major:		36

¹ Preceding course is a prerequisite

Optional 4+1 Program

Undergraduate students in the Paralegal Studies Program who have earned at least 75 credits, including all 36 credits in the Paralegal Studies major, and a cumulative GPA of at least 3.000, may apply for admission to SoPA's John Lewis Master of Public Administration (MPA) 4+1 Program.

If accepted, students attending full-time may earn the MPA in a single year after completing the PARA BA degree. Up to six graduate-level public administration credits (at the 6000 level or higher) may count toward both the non-major requirements of the Paralegal Studies B.A. degree and the MPA degree, and up to six additional graduate credit hours taken as overload during undergraduate study (exceeding the required 120 credit hours of the bachelor's) may be applied toward the MPA degree.

Sample Plan of Study

This sample plan of study for the Bachelor of Arts in Paralegal Studies assumes a fall start, a four-year timeline, and reflects the full set of program requirements (*subject to course availability*). Students are responsible for reviewing all university, school, and program requirements-including prerequisites, transfer credit applicability, and appropriate course sequencing-in coordination with their academic and major advisors.

Year 1		Credit Hours
Eight Week Classes, Part 1		6
PARA 2010	Introduction to the Legal System	
PARA 3020	Legal Research I	
Eight Week Classes, Part 2		6
PARA 3030	Legal Writing I	
PARA 3050	Litigation I	
Full Semester Classes		18
SoPA Core and General Electives		
Credit Hours		30
Year 2		
Eight Week Classes, Part 1		6
PARA 3060	Litigation II	
PARA 3070	Legal Technology I	
Eight Week Classes, Part 2		6
PARA 4100	Legal Technology II	
PARA 4190 or PARA 4200	Legal Ethics or Legal Research and Writing II	
Full Semester Classes		18
SoPA Core and General Electives		
Credit Hours		30
Year 3		
Full Semester Classes		30
Select two 4000-level PARA electives <small>(see list above)</small>		
SoPA Core and General Electives		
Credit Hours		30
Year 4		
Full Semester Classes		30
PARA 5900	Paralegal Studies Practicum	
Select one 4000-level PARA elective <small>(see list above)</small>		
SoPA Core and General Electives		
Credit Hours		30
Total Credit Hours		120

Program String and Field of Study: PAUBA_UG, PARA

Contact

For more information, contact the School of Professional Advancement (<https://sopa.tulane.edu/degrees-programs/programs-study/general-legal-studies>).