

# PARALEGAL STUDIES, BACHELOR OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

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## 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 its history, the program has maintained compliance with rigorous ABA guidelines governing curriculum, instruction, and student outcomes, ensuring graduates receive the high-quality legal education expected by employers and the legal profession.

The Paralegal Studies Major is offered within the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies (BIS), Tulane SoPA's bachelor's degree completion program designed for adult learners, working professionals, veterans, and transfer students seeking to complete their undergraduate education. The BIS provides a flexible interdisciplinary framework that integrates professional study with a broad academic foundation while supporting clearly defined career pathways.

As a major within the BIS degree, the Paralegal Studies pathway combines specialized legal training with the interdisciplinary goals of undergraduate education. Students develop professional competencies in legal research, writing, ethics, and law office practice while strengthening critical thinking, communication, and analytical skills that prepare graduates for evolving professional environments.

The eleven-course, 33-credit Paralegal Studies curriculum focuses on legal office skills, professional ethics, and substantive areas of law. Carefully sequenced coursework emphasizes legal research and writing, litigation documentation, analysis, and law office technology, alongside practical instruction in the organization and operation of legal services environments. Upon completion of the major, graduates also earn a Paralegal Certificate, a credential commonly required by legal employers.

In or near the final semester, students not already employed in legal settings complete PARA 5900 Paralegal Studies Practicum (3 c.h.) , which includes a 100-hour supervised internship together with coursework focused on legal ethics, professionalism, and career readiness.

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.

Graduates pursue careers as paralegals and legal professionals in law firms, courts, corporations, government agencies, and nonprofit legal organizations. Others continue their education by pursuing law school or graduate study.

The Paralegal Studies Program provides students with the skills, wisdom, and integrity to identify, communicate, and conserve knowledge while preparing them to serve as ethical and effective legal professionals working under attorney supervision.

### 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.

## Requirements

Students pursuing the Paralegal Studies Major within the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies (BIS) must earn a total of 120 credit hours and a 2.00 minimum GPA. They also must complete all Tulane School of Professional Advancement (SoPA) degree requirements and the SoPA Core Curriculum in addition to the requirements listed below. In accordance with SoPA policy, at least 60 of the 120 total credit hours required for graduation must be completed at the 2000 level or above. The Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies degree requires completion of a **minimum 45-credit residency** at Tulane SoPA.

### Paralegal Studies Major Requirements (33 Credit Hours)

The Paralegal Studies Major consists of a structured **eleven-course (33 credit hour)** curriculum emphasizing:

- Legal research and writing
- Ethics and professional responsibility
- Substantive law
- Legal analysis and communication
- Law office technology and practice management

Coursework is carefully sequenced to develop professional competencies required for employment in legal environments.

Course ID	Title	Credits
<b>Required Paralegal Studies Core Courses</b>		<b>24</b>
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	
PARA 4100 or PARA 4200	Legal Technology II Legal Research and Writing II	
<b>Required Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies Courses</b>		<b>6</b>
PAIS 2000	Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies	
Foundations of interdisciplinary inquiry and integration of multiple perspectives.		
PAIS 3000	Interdisciplinary Research Methods	
Development of research, analytical, and problem-solving methodologies.		
<b>Paralegal Studies Practicum or Advanced Interdisciplinary Studies Capstone Seminar</b>		<b>3</b>
PARA 5900	Paralegal Studies Practicum	
Students who are not already employed in a legal setting must complete PARA 5900.		
Or		
PAIS 4000	Advanced Interdisciplinary Studies (Capstone Seminar)	
Culminating experience requiring synthesis of interdisciplinary learning through a major applied project.		
<b>Total Credit Hours</b>		<b>33</b>

Students who are not already employed in a legal setting must complete **PARA 5900 Paralegal Studies Practicum (3 c.h.)**.

- Includes a supervised **100-hour internship** together with instruction in legal ethics, professionalism, and career readiness.
- Students already working as paralegals may be eligible for a practicum waiver, as approved by the Program Director, and will complete an approved alternative course.

Upon completion of the major, students also earn the **Paralegal Certificate**.

### Instructional Format Requirement (ABA Standard)

Consistent with American Bar Association (ABA) guidelines, each student must complete **at least three courses (9 credit hours)** in either:

- in-person format, or
- synchronous remote format.

Remaining coursework may be completed online, subject to course availability.

### Transfer Credit – Paralegal Coursework

The Paralegal Studies Program does **not** accept transfer credit for paralegal coursework completed at programs not approved by the ABA Standing Committee on Paralegals at the time the coursework was taken.

Students pursuing the Paralegal Studies Major may transfer **up to 6 credit hours (two courses)** of the required 27 legal studies credits provided that each course:

1. Meets Tulane SoPA transfer credit requirements;
2. Was completed within an ABA-approved paralegal or legal studies program; and
3. Is approved by the Paralegal Studies Program Director.

### Transfer Credit – BIS Degree Framework

While transfer of paralegal-specific coursework is limited as described above, students may transfer additional **non-paralegal coursework** toward completion of the BIS degree in accordance with Tulane SoPA transfer policies and residency requirements.

### Professional Scope Statement

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

**Program String and Field of Study:** PABIS\_UG, PARA

### Contact

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