Paralegal Studies

SIU Paralegal Studies is an American Bar Association approved program leading to the Bachelor of Science degree. A paralegal is qualified by specialized education, training, and experience to assist an attorney in non-clerical, substantive legal work. Paralegals – also known as legal assistants – may research law and facts, interview witnesses and clients, compose pleadings and correspondence, draft and file court documents, and prepare for and assist with trial. Paralegals work under the supervision and direction of an attorney and may not provide legal services or advice directly to the public except as permitted by law. Most paralegals work as vital members of legal teams in small and large law firms and medical or government offices; in legal departments of corporations, insurance agencies, and banking or financial institutions; and, in local, county, state, and federal administrative agencies. Many students major in Paralegal Studies as a preferred path to Law school.

The program’s goals and objectives reflect the Core Competencies for Paralegal Programs as stated by the American Association for Paralegal Education. Core competencies include essential knowledge of substantive and procedural law as well as evidence of practical legal skills developed from programmatic research, writing, and oral communication. Together these competencies demonstrate outstanding organizational, interpersonal, critical thinking, and analytical thinking skills. Also, program faculty and staff model and teach students to exemplify professionalism and the high ethical standards of the legal profession.

The program’s curriculum and degree requirements build on general education requirements in the University Core Curriculum and in the College of Liberal Arts. Students majoring in Paralegal Studies must complete 34 credit hours of core legal specialty courses. These courses are PARL 300A, PARL 300B, PARL 305, PARL 310, PARL 320, PARL 330, PARL 350, PARL 360, PARL 370, PARL 380, and PARL 405. At least 15 credit hours of these legal specialty courses must be completed at SIU Carbondale. Additionally, PARL 300A, PARL 300B, and PARL 310 require a grade of C or higher to satisfy program major requirements. For students who desire to begin their program of study with a basic paralegal skills course, PARL 295 is recommended but not required.

In addition to the 34 credit hours of core legal specialty course requirements, the major requires at least 12 credit hours of elective courses. There are two options for completing this requirement: the general option and the pre-law specialization option. The general option is an excellent choice for students planning to be employed in a law-related occupation upon graduation. The pre-law specialization is an excellent path for students planning to pursue law school after graduation. To fulfill the general option, students must choose and complete at least 12 credit hours of office support/management-related courses from a select list provided by the program. To earn the pre-law specialization, students must choose and complete 12 credit hours of 300-400 level Liberal Arts courses; at least one 3-credit hour course of which must be selected from a list of law-related courses provided by the program.

As a capstone experience, majors are required to complete PARL 405, a 4-credit hour course with an internship component that provides on-the-job training, and a classroom component that assists students with career planning. The complete program encourages the spirit of inquiry; embraces a range of social sciences, humanities, and communication skills that give students a grasp of the social and ethical contexts of the legal profession, and develops confidence and a strong grasp of legal ethics.

Bachelor of Science Degree in Paralegal Studies Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Requirements</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Core Curriculum Requirements</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Degree Requirements | Credit Hours
--- | ---
College of Liberal Arts Academic Requirements | 18

These requirements include 6 credit hours of foreign language and 6 credit hours of international coursework. Any or all of these 12 credit hours may be satisfied by choosing particular courses during completion of the University Core Curriculum. These requirements further include 6 credit hours of Writing-Across-the-Curriculum courses, and these 6 credits are fulfilled by completing PARL 300A and PARL 300B.

Requirements for Major in Paralegal Studies | 46
--- | ---
Core Legal Specialty Courses: PARL 300A, PARL 300B, PARL 305, PARL 310, PARL 320, PARL 330, PARL 350, PARL 360, PARL 370, PARL 380, and PARL 405 | 34

Four office support/management-related electives chosen from a program list | 12

Electives | 17

Total | 120

Bachelor of Science Degree in Paralegal Studies with a Specialization in Pre-Law Requirements

Degree Requirements | Credit Hours
--- | ---
University Core Curriculum Requirements | 39

College of Liberal Arts Academic Requirements | 18

These requirements include 6 credit hours of foreign language and 6 credit hours of international coursework. Any or all of these 12 credit hours may be satisfied by choosing particular courses during completion of the University Core Curriculum. These requirements further include 6 credit hours of Writing-Across-the-Curriculum courses, and these 6 credits are fulfilled by completing PARL 300A and PARL 300B.

Requirements for Major in Paralegal Studies | 46
--- | ---
Core Legal Specialty Courses: PARL 300A, PARL 300B, PARL 305, PARL 310, PARL 320, PARL 330, PARL 350, PARL 360, PARL 370, PARL 380, and PARL 405 | 34
### Degree Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four 300/400-level Liberal Arts courses, at least one of which must be chosen from a program list of law-related courses</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Paralegal Studies Minor

A minor in Paralegal Studies requires 15 credit hours at SIU Carbondale, from among any core Paralegal Studies legal specialty courses except PARL 405. The paralegal minor is not approved by the American Bar Association and is not intended to prepare a student for a career as a paralegal.