Paralegal Studies

The SIU Carbondale Paralegal Studies major 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 may research law and facts, interview witnesses and clients, draft and file court documents, and prepare for and assist with trials. Paralegals work under the supervision and direction of an attorney and may not provide legal services or advice except as permitted by law. Most paralegals work as vital members of legal teams in small and large law firms; medical or government offices; legal departments of corporations, insurance agencies, and banking or financial institutions; and, 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 and 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. Students majoring in Paralegal Studies must complete 34 credit hours of core legal specialty courses. These courses are: PARL 105, PARL 300A, PARL 300B, PARL 310, PARL 320, PARL 330, PARL 350, PARL 360, PARL 370, PARL 380, and PARL 405. A minimum of 15 credit hours of coursework defined as legal specialty coursework below must be completed at SIU Carbondale, at least 9 credit hours of which must come from PARL 300A, PARL 300B, PARL 310, PARL 320, PARL 330, PARL 350, PARL 360, PARL 370, or PARL 380. Nine credit hours must be completed through synchronous (i.e., face to face or live online) instruction. 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 work in a law-related occupation upon graduation. The pre-law specialization is an excellent path for students planning to pursue law school after graduation. For the general option, students must complete at least 12 credit hours of coursework chosen from the paralegal skills course list. For the pre-law specialization, students must complete 12 credit hours of 300-400 level Paralegal Studies, Criminology & Criminal Justice, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy, English, History, Africana Studies, Mass Communication and Media Arts, Journalism, and/or Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies courses, at least 3-credit hours 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; and develops confidence and knowledge of legal ethics.

Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Paralegal Studies Degree Requirements

Degree Requirements	Credit Hours
University Core Curriculum Requirements	39
Requirements for Major in Paralegal Studies	46

Degree Requirements	Credit Hours
Core Legal Specialty Courses: PARL 105, PARL 300A, PARL 300B, 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 [1]	12
Electives	35
Total	120

[1] *ACCT 220, ECON 240, ECON 241, ECON 350, ENGL 291, ENGL 391, FIN 200, FIN 270, FIN 320, FIN 280, FIN 380, MGMT 304, MGMT 350, MGMT 474, MKTG 304, MKTG 450, WGSS 320I, or any 300/400-level Paralegal Studies (PARL) elective.*

B.S. Paralegal Studies - Pre-Law Specialization Degree Requirements

Degree Requirements	Credit Hours
University Core Curriculum Requirements	39
Requirements for Major in Paralegal Studies	46
Core Legal Specialty Courses: PARL 105, PARL 300A, PARL 300B, PARL 310, PARL 320, PARL 330, PARL 350, PARL 360, PARL 370, PARL 380, and PARL 405	34
Four 300/400-level approved courses, at least one of which must be chosen from a program list of law-related courses [1]	12
Electives	35
Total	120

[1] *Students must take four 300/400-level courses from Paralegal Studies, Criminology & Criminal Justice, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy, English, History, Africana Studies, Mass Communication and Media Arts, Journalism, and/or Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies, at least one of which must be selected from the following list: PARL 315, PARL 325, PARL 335, PARL 340, PARL 345, PARL 355, PARL 375, FIN 380, PHIL 310 or any other 300/400-level law/Paralegal-related elective approved by the PARL coordinator.*

Undergraduate Certificate in Paralegal Studies

The Paralegal Studies Undergraduate Certificate is designed for students who want to earn a credential demonstrating their completion of paralegal-related coursework without completing all requirements of the Bachelor's degree in the field. The 60-credit hour option is available for students who have not earned any prior degree. It provides students with a foundation in oral and written communication skills and general education as well as significant background in legal research, writing, and substantive law.

The 33-credit hour option is intended for students who possess a Bachelor or Associate of Art or Science degree. The oral and written communication skills and general education requirements are reduced.

Students must complete PARL 300A, PARL 300B, and PARL 310 with a grade of C or better. A minimum of 15 credit hours of coursework, defined as legal specialty coursework below, must be completed at SIU Carbondale, at least 9 credit hours of which must come from PARL 300A, PARL 300B, PARL 310, PARL 320, PARL 330, PARL 350, PARL 360, PARL 370, or PARL 380. Nine credit hours must be completed through synchronous (i.e., face to face or live online) instruction. Coursework used to complete the certificate program may be counted toward the Paralegal Studies Bachelor's degree program if a student subsequently decides to pursue a B.S. in Paralegal Studies. Both certificates are American Bar Association-approved program offerings.

Paralegal Studies Certificate Requirements (No Earned Bachelor or Associate of Arts/Science Degree)

Degree Requirements	Credit Hours	
Writing Proficiency		6
ENGL 101	3	
ENGL 102	3	
Oral Communication Proficiency		3
CMST 101	3	
General Education: 18 credit hours chosen from at least three of the following areas: social science, humanities, fine arts, quantitative reasoning, or science. [1]		18
Paralegal Studies Specialty Courses		30
PARL 105, PARL 300A, PARL 300B, PARL 310, PARL 320, PARL 330, PARL 350, PARL 360, PARL 370, PARL 380		
Paralegal Studies Electives		3
Choose a minimum of 3 credit hours from: PARL 295, PARL 315, PARL 325, PARL 340, PARL 345, PARL 355, PARL 375, PARL 395, PARL 405, PARL 420		
Total		60

[1] *For a listing of classes in social sciences, humanities, quantitative reasoning, and science, see SIU Carbondale University Core Curriculum requirements.*

Paralegal Studies Certificate Requirements (Earned Bachelor or Associate of Arts/ Science Degree)

Degree Requirements	Credit Hours
Paralegal Studies Specialty Courses [1]	30
PARL 105, PARL 300A, PARL 300B, PARL 310, PARL 320, PARL 330, PARL 350, PARL 360, PARL 370, PARL 380	
Paralegal Studies Electives	3
Choose a minimum of 3 credit hours from: PARL 295, PARL 315, PARL 325, PARL 340, PARL 345, PARL 355, PARL 375, PARL 395, PARL 405, PARL 420	
Total	33

[1] *Students who already possess a Bachelor or Associate of Arts/Science degree from an accredited college/university will not need to complete the writing proficiency, oral communication proficiency, and general education requirements. Students who already possess an Associate of Applied Arts or Science degree may have some or all the writing proficiency, oral communication proficiency, and general education requirements waived with demonstrated equivalent coursework from an accredited college/ university.*

Paralegal Studies Minor

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

Dual B.S./J.D. Degree

Motivated, high achieving students interested in continuing their studies may save time and money by applying for entry to professional school during the 3rd Year through the dual Paralegal Studies B.S./ School of Law J.D. program. The program allows students to earn both degrees in as few as six years. Students should refer to the School of Law Catalog for full details. Consult an academic advisor for minimum admissions requirements and undergraduate course planning. Admission to the School of Law must be earned prior to graduation with the undergraduate degree.

Capstone Option for Transfer Students

The SIU Carbondale Capstone Option may be available to eligible students …who have earned an Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree or the equivalent. The Capstone Option reduces the University Core Curriculum requirements from 39 to 30 hours, therefore reducing the time to degree completion. See the Capstone Option section for more information on this option.

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