

# PARALEGAL, ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE



## Program Information

### What is a paralegal/legal assistant?

A paralegal, also called a *legal assistant*, is a person who is qualified by education, training, or work experience; who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, government agency, or other entity; and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible.

### What does a paralegal do?

The lawyer delegates duties to the paralegal. These duties will depend on the individual's abilities, specialty, and/or employment. Generally, those duties will include one or more of the following categories:

- Perform legal research,
- Interview clients/witnesses and conduct investigations,
- Draft legal documents,
- Calendar and track deadlines,
- Provide litigation support,
- Assist at hearings and trials, and
- Use technology to perform tasks.

A paralegal may not provide legal services directly to the public unless specifically authorized by law.

## Additional Information

Employment opportunities for the paralegal are wide ranging and numerous. There are many job opportunities for a qualified paralegal including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Private law firms (70 percent),
- Corporate legal departments,
- Insurance companies,
- Real estate agencies,
- Title companies,
- The court system,

- Trust and mortgage departments, and
- Government agencies.

### Associate of Applied Science

The Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Paralegal program is approved by the American Bar Association (ABA).

The Paralegal curriculum at San Jacinto College is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills required to work under the supervision of lawyers. The program provides the Paralegal student with knowledge and skills for employment in law firms, corporations, government agencies, and other legal departments.

Lambda Epsilon Chi (LEX) is the national honor society founded by the American Association for Paralegal Education. San Jacinto College Paralegal students who have completed two-thirds of the College's Paralegal program with a 3.25 overall GPA and a 3.5 legal specialty courses GPA and who demonstrate academic excellence may qualify for LEX.

## Paralegal Associations

- American Bar Association (ABA)
- American Association for Paralegal Education (AAfPE)
- State Bar of Texas, Paralegal Division (TXPD)
- Houston Metropolitan Paralegal Association (HMPA)
- Houston Paralegal Association (HPA)

## Career Opportunities

The US Department of Labor predicts the paralegal profession will grow 15 percent through the year 2026. The San Jacinto College Paralegal program enjoys more than a 90 percent success rate.

Most of the entry-level job opportunities are with private law firms from one-attorney firms to large firms. The paralegal will usually specialize in one or two areas of law, but some in general practice will work in various areas.

Corporate law departments, government agencies, and other legal departments also provide jobs for our graduates.

Paralegals pursue careers in:

- Litigation,
- Personal Injury,
- Corporate Law,
- Criminal Law,
- Employee Benefits,
- Intellectual Property,
- Bankruptcy,
- Immigration Law,
- Family Law,
- Real Estate, and
- Many other areas of law.

Internship opportunities include work for paralegals in law firms, corporate business, government agencies, real estate, insurance, and non-profit organizations.

## Earning Potential

Paralegal: \$52,406 per year<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: texaswages.com (<http://texaswages.com>), median salary Gulf Coast region, 2020

For more information, students may contact 281-998-6150 x7201.

## Campus

North Campus

## Information

The Paralegal curriculum at San Jacinto College is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills required to work under the general direction of attorneys to assist them in the completion of legal tasks. The ABA-approved program provides knowledge and skills for employment in law firms, courts, utility companies, title companies, trusts and mortgage departments of banks, government agencies, industrial companies, and other legal departments. A paralegal may not provide legal services directly to the public unless specifically authorized by law.

Students enrolling into San Jacinto College programs with external learning experiences (i.e., clinical, practicum, externship, cooperative, etc.) will be required to comply with the immunization requirements and policies of the clinical/external learning sites to engage in all clinical/external learning experiences. Vaccination requirements at clinical/external learning sites are implemented pursuant to the independent authority of such facilities and are not mandated by San Jacinto College. Failure to meet the immunization requirements mandated by clinical/external learning sites may limit a student's ability to complete the program and/or may delay the student's graduation date. San Jacinto College does not process exemptions, and students should address potential vaccination exemptions directly with the clinical/external learning site.

### Program Outcomes and Goals:

- Students will be able to deploy legal terminology in the creation of documents and presentations.
- Students will be able to analyze sources of law including both primary and secondary sources.
- Students will be able to research sources of law.
- Students will be able to use and apply the rules of civil and criminal procedure.
- Students will be able to distinguish the roles and ethical obligations of paralegals and attorneys.
- Students will be able to compose correspondence and legal documents.
- Students will be able to conduct client and witness interviews and factual investigations in a professional manner.
- Students will be able to use common law office technology, including ProDoc, West Law, and efilng.
- Students will be able to demonstrate oral and written communication skills.

## Plan of Study

3PARA-LGL

First Term		Credits
LGLA 1311	Introduction to Law	3
LGLA 1313	Introduction to Paralegal Studies	3
LGLA 1345	Civil Litigation	3
ENGL 1301	Composition I	3
Mathematics		3
<b>Credits</b>		<b>15</b>
Second Term		
LGLA 1301	Legal Research and Writing	3
LGLA 1317	Law Office Technology	3
LGLA 1349	Constitutional Law	3
LGLA 1351	Contracts	3
ENGL 1302	Composition II	3
<b>Credits</b>		<b>15</b>
Third Term		
LGLA 1355	Family Law	3
LGLA 2305	Interviewing and Investigating	3
LGLA 2313	Criminal Law and Procedure	3
LGLA 1359 or LGLA 2303	Immigration Law or Torts and Personal Injury Law	3
Language, Philosophy, and Culture (Humanities) or Creative Arts (Fine Arts)		3
<b>Credits</b>		<b>15</b>
Fourth Term		
LGLA 1353	Wills, Trusts, and Probate Administration	3
LGLA 2335	Advanced Civil Litigation	3
LGLA 2333	Advanced Legal Document Preparation	3
LGLA 2380	Cooperative Education-Legal Assistant/ Paralegal	3
Select one of the following:		3
GOVT 2306	Texas Government (Texas Constitution and Topics)	
HIST 1301	United States History I	
PSYC 2301	General Psychology	
<b>Credits</b>		<b>15</b>
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>60</b>

**External Learning Experience:** LGLA 2380 Cooperative Education-Legal Assistant/Paralegal

*Students must be TSI complete in order to graduate: Math level 8.*