

Program Overview

A “paralegal” is a professional who is trained to handle certain law-related responsibilities as an integral member of a legal staff. A paralegal is not admitted to the practice of law in Texas but has, through education, training and experience, demonstrated knowledge of the legal system, legal principles and procedures and uses such knowledge in rendering paralegal assistance to an attorney in the representation of that attorney’s clients. The functions of a paralegal are limited only to the extent that they are limited by law. The properly trained paralegal may, under the supervision of a lawyer, perform a variety of functions that include researching legal issues, drafting documents, managing complex files, developing legal practice systems, interviewing witnesses, conducting fact investigations, summarizing depositions, and assisting the attorney in and out of the courtroom.

Our program is unique because we have one of the few professional certificate programs offered by a university at the graduate level. Our program is offered through the Department of Political Science and the Graduate College. We must comply with strict requirements regarding our curriculum, our faculty, and the type of student entering our program.

The program consists of 24 graduate level hours and may be completed in two or more semesters.

As a result of the inherent structure of our program, we offer one of the best professional paralegal programs in the state of Texas and in the United States. Our program is superior for at least three reasons:

- the type of student entering the program (see admission requirements (<http://mals.polisci.txstate.edu/LS-program/Admission-Requirements.html>)).
- the balanced curriculum offered.
- the faculty teaching in the program. (Each of our faculty instructors has had experience as a practicing attorney, and all have experience working with paralegals.

Also, our program has been approved by the American Bar Association (ABA) and is an institutional member of the American Association for Paralegal Education (AAfPE).

This certificate program requires concurrent enrollment in the Master of Arts major in Legal Studies (<http://mycatalog.txstate.edu/graduate/liberal-arts/political-science/legal-studies-ma/>) at Texas State University.

The Paralegal Studies certificate program is an ABA-approved, non-degree certificate program available to students who have a baccalaureate degree and a minimum 3.0 grade-point average (on a 4.0 scale) on the last 60 semester hours of undergraduate work and are currently pursuing a master’s degree at Texas State. This certificate program is designed to prepare students to perform as highly qualified paralegals (also referred to as “legal assistants”) with both a theoretical knowledge of substantive law as well as practical skills. A paralegal is not licensed to practice law but is trained to handle certain law related responsibilities under the supervision and direction of a licensed attorney. Applicants to this program must also successfully complete an interview with the director of the paralegal program. This certificate program requires concurrent enrollment in the Master of Arts major in Legal Studies at Texas State University.

Course Requirements

Students must successfully complete a 24-hour curriculum while maintaining an overall “B” average and must receive a “B” or better in each required course.

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses		
LS 5310	Introduction to the Paralegal Profession and Legal Technology	3
LS 5320	Legal Research	3
LS 5330	Legal Theories and Analysis	3
LS 5340	Litigation	3
LS 5350	Legal Drafting	3
LS 5389	Law Office Internship	3
Prescribed Electives		
Select 6 hours from the following:		6
LS 5341	Administrative Law	
LS 5343	Family Law	
LS 5349	Business Organizations	
LS 5351	Estates and Trusts	
LS 5353	Real Estate	
LS 5359	Alternative Dispute Resolution	
LS 5361	Criminal Law and Procedure	
LS 5363	Social Legislation	
LS 5371	Intellectual Property Law	
LS 5373	Contract Law	
Total Hours		24