

Paralegal  **Course Outlines**

TITLE: Introduction to Paralegal
(PARA 125)

- OBJECTIVES:
1. To provide students with an understanding of the definitions of a paralegal.
 2. To present an overview of the various tasks and roles of a paralegal, as well as the relationship between attorney and paralegal.
 3. To present general information regarding job prospects, trends, salaries, etc.
 4. To learn how to study law.
 5. To introduce students to Minnesota State University Moorhead's Paralegal Department.
 6. To study the history and future of regulation of paralegals, including rules of ethics.
 7. To help the students evaluate their level of interest in a career as a paralegal.
 8. To introduce the students to the legal system including classifications of laws and their development.
 9. To introduce the students to the various organizational forms of law practice.
 10. To introduce the students to various forms of management systems within law offices, including personnel, communication, time management, file organization, etc.

CREDITS: 3 semester credit hours

INSTRUCTION: Lecture; guest speakers.

EVALUATION: Tests; final comprehensive exam; paper

OUTLINE:

Time

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| I. | Introduction and overview | 4 hours |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. How to study the law B. History and current information about MSUM's Paralegal Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Curriculum 2. Course descriptions 3. General studies requirements 4. Internships | |
| II. | History and development of the career | 4 hours |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Definitions B. Job titles C. Organizations D. Salaries E. Why and how the career developed | |
| III. | Paralegal Employment | 6 hours |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Variety of employment settings B. Tasks and functions of paralegals C. How to find a job D. The law office setting E. Organizational forms of law practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Solo practice 2. Office sharing 3. Group practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Partnerships b. Professional corporations 4. Government legal departments 5. Non-profits 6. Corporation legal departments | |
| IV. | Regulation of paralegals | 5 hours |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Unauthorized practice of law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the practice of law? 2. What types of "law tasks" are non-lawyers authorized to do? B. Licensure, certification, and registration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. History 2. Current trends and issues among the states C. Bar associations and paralegals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ABA approval of education programs 2. Associate memberships D. Tort liability of paralegals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Malpractice 2. Professional liability insurance | |

E.	Ethics	
	1. For attorneys	
	2. Applicability to paralegals	
	3. Discussion of the primary rules	
	4. Some case examples	
V.	Introduction to the legal system	3 hours
	A. Terminology	
	B. Court systems	
	1. Federal	
	2. State	
	C. Administrative agencies	
	D. Introduction to the legislative process	
VI.	Introduction to legal analysis and research	4 hours
	A. Identification of issues and key facts	
	B. Briefing court opinions	
VII.	Management in the law office	3 hours
	A. Goals and objectives of management	
	B. Levels of decision-making	
	C. Management structures	
	1. Senior partner	
	2. Committees	
	3. Paralegals as managers	
	D. Management concepts and techniques	
VIII.	Personnel administration	3 hours
	A. Staffing patterns and relationships	
	B. Personnel policies	
	C. Job descriptions	
	D. Hiring and firing	
	E. Orientation and training	
	F. Supervision	
	G. Performance evaluations	
	H. Delegation	
IX.	Communication within the law office	2 hours
	A. Assertiveness	
	B. Criticism between supervisor and employee	
X.	Time management	2 hours
	A. Importance	
	B. Practical tips on effective use of time	
XI.	Overview of systems in the office	5 hours

- A. Client funds and accounting
 - B. Docket control; ticklers
 - C. File management
 - D. Forms, briefs, and pleading banks
- XII. Guest speakers 4 hours
- A. Panels of paralegals from cross-section of types of practice
 - B. Attorney-paralegal teams from variety of practices