

Academic Rigor and Expectations of Students
Paralegal Program
Minnesota State University Moorhead

Program Philosophy

The Paralegal Program is committed to the standards set forth in MSUM's Mission Statement and shares the values identified in the University's Vision Statement. Our goal is to provide a challenging course of study for students desiring to enter the legal field as paralegals or those who wish to continue their education in law school. We are dedicated to maintaining rigorous academic standards which develop critical thinking skills reflecting real-world expectations for future legal professionals.

Rigor

Student success is enhanced by regular rigorous assignments. Students should be prepared for class, which includes completing assigned work in advance of lecture. Assignments, tests and other projects are designed to prepare students for involvement in the fast-paced environment of the legal field. Student preparation and participation is essential to the preparation of becoming a professional.

Grading

The Paralegal Program does not participate in grade inflation. Grading is based upon A through F, plus/minus system. The following standards provide a guide to the expectations for each grade:

- A Exceptional: Significantly exceeds expectations for the assignment or course.
- A- Excellent: Meets very high standards for the assignment or course.
- B+ Very Good: Meets high standards for the assignment or course.
- B Good: Meets majority of the standards for the assignment or course.
- B- More than adequate: Meets most of the standards for the assignment or course.
- C+ Adequate: Meets basic standards for the assignment or course.
- C Acceptable: Meets some of the basic standards for the assignment or course.
- C- Minimally Acceptable: While acceptable, meets few of the basic standards for the assignment or course.
- D+ More than passing: Deficient in some respects, meets some of the basic standards for the assignment or course.

- D Passing: Deficient in many respects, meets few of the basic standards for the assignment or course.
- D- Lowest passing grade: Substantially deficient, fails to meet the basic standards in many ways for the assignment or course.
- F Failing: Very poor performance, meets none of the basic standards for the assignment or course.

Professionalism/Late Assignments

Students with a Paralegal Major are entering an exacting profession where deadlines are paramount. The failure to meet deadlines in the profession can result in serious consequences; therefore, deadlines for assignments and projects in class carry the same emphasis with consequences for the failure to meet such deadlines.

Students are expected to be aware of deadlines and submit assignments on time. It is the students' responsibility to be aware of any assignments given in class, even if they are unable to attend. Assignments are due when called for (usually at the beginning of class on the due date). The failure to take a test or turn in an assignment at the scheduled time will result in zero credit unless prior approval had been given by the professor for late submission or make-up. Registration for class indicates the student's commitment to follow the schedule and be aware of assignments whether scheduled in the syllabus or given in class. Rescheduling of tests and late submissions will be allowed only for emergency or exigent circumstances.

Academic Honesty

Special Statement Regarding Academic Dishonesty: In addition to the information listed above under "Student Conduct" all students should understand that cheating includes plagiarism or sharing your work. **Plagiarism** is copying another's work or ideas and calling them your own. Copying includes the use of any unauthorized outside materials including assignments, exams or other materials from prior semesters. **Collaboration** with other students can be permitted when it is authorized. It should be assumed that all assignments are individual assignments to be done on your own unless collaboration with other students is explicitly authorized by the professor. There should be no sharing of materials related to assignments, projects or exams - not even "just to see what it looks like" or "to get an idea how to start". Sharing your work, asking other students to share their work or working together is inappropriate collaboration and will be considered cheating unless such collaboration was explicitly authorized by the professor. When in doubt about whether collaboration is appropriate, ask the professor first.

(Adopted 1-13-10)
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