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)
Annual review: 10/3/12
Revised: 9-7-16