



## INDIANA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS AT IUPUI

# PARALEGAL STUDIES CERTIFICATE

*Preparing Students for a Supporting Career in Law*

The Department of Political Science offers a Certificate in Paralegal Studies. The program is designed to educate students about a broad range of legal topics, and we work to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in law-related careers. Our program focuses on developing the critical thinking and analytical skills of students through research, writing and practical assignments. Our faculty includes many successful attorneys from Indianapolis and surrounding communities.

The Certificate is crucial to finding work as a paralegal. Most law firms now require the Paralegals they hire to have a Certificate from a university. However, the Paralegal Studies courses are also helpful for those students who wish to pursue other law-related occupations. A substantive knowledge of the law and legal systems is important for employees in areas from private business to government agencies. The Paralegal Studies courses teach students to navigate the legal system. Students will leave the program with the professional and analytical skills necessary for law-related careers or even law school.

### WHY CHOOSE PARALEGAL STUDIES?

The Paralegal Certificate is one of the most popular certificates in the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI. We have approximately 80 students working on the certificate each year. Class sizes range from 15 students to a maximum of 30, which means plenty of faculty-student interaction. The majority of our classes are held in the evening to meet the needs of our working students.

All faculty that teach the certificate classes are practicing attorneys. Faculty apply their real-world experiences to the classroom. The Certificate is guided by an advisory board made of practicing attorneys and paralegals from central Indiana. The advisory board meets two times per year to review courses and insure the Certificate meets the needs of the local legal community.

### OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

The Certificate includes an optional internship course. Students are encouraged to participate in an internship with a private practice attorney, governmental entity or with area non-profit groups. This is a great way to gain practical experience and to make contacts in the legal field.

Programs are presented each semester on topics of interest to paralegals. One of our most popular programs is the paralegal panel. Working paralegals from all sectors gather to discuss their jobs and network with students.

### CAREERS

The paralegal certificate will train you for a wide variety of work for different legal employers. You will learn how to think critically about law, how to develop an argument and draw reasoned conclusions, how to communicate ideas in an effective and compelling way, how to better understand and assess what you read in case law, how to prepare legal documents, and how to communicate with clients. Skills like these can prepare you for careers in the following areas:

- Law firms – Paralegals are used in law firms of all sizes and types.
- Government – Paralegals work in local state, and federal government including the courts system and administrative agencies.
- Non-profit organization – Paralegals are used to staff non-profit entities, especially those that provide low cost legal services.
- Business – Paralegals are hired to work in the legal department.

To earn the Certificate, students must complete nine courses (27 credit hours) *with a grade of C or better in each course*. Of the 10 paralegal courses needed for the certificate (9 required courses + Intro to Law prerequisite), at least 6, or a majority of courses, must be completed at IUPUI.

### PREREQUISITES

- College-level writing proficiency: ENG W131 Reading, Writing and Inquiry, or its equivalent
- Public Speaking Proficiency: COMM-R 110 Fundamentals of Speech Communication
- Computing proficiency: BUS-K 201 Computers in Business, or another class approved by the School of Liberal Arts Baccalaureate Competency Degree Sheet
- POLS Y211 Introduction to Law. Take this either before beginning the Certificate, or in your first semester.
- 30 Credit Hours of General Education (including the pre-requisites) are required before you can receive your Certificate. A prior Associates Degree or a Bachelor's Degree fulfills the general education requirement.

### Required Courses (9 cr.):

- POLS Y221 - Legal Research & Writing for Paralegal Studies I
- POLS Y222 - Litigation for Paralegal Studies I
- POLS Y232 - Professional Responsibility for Paralegals

**Elective Courses (18 cr.)\*.** Choose six of the following 3 cr. courses:

- POLS Y223 - Litigation for Paralegal Studies II
- POLS P324 - Property Law for Paralegal Studies
- POLS P325- Contract Law for Paralegal Studies
- POLS P326- Tort Law for Paralegal Studies
- POLS P327- Criminal Law for Paralegal Studies
- POLS P328- Family Law for Paralegal Studies
- POLS P329- Estate Law for Paralegal Studies
- POLS P330- Bankruptcy Law for Paralegal Studies
- POLS P431- Advanced Legal Writing for Paralegal Studies
- POLS P333- Business Associations
- POLS Y481- Field Experience (Paralegal Internship)

**Online Electives.** Only two online courses are permitted for the certificate from the following list:

- INFO I330 Legal and Social Informatics of Security
- INFO I350 Foundations in Legal Informatics
- INFO I410 Electronic Discovery
- INFO I470 Litigation Support Systems and Courtroom Presentation
- NEW-N 480 Technology and the Law

\* Y211 and Y221 are prerequisites for most of these courses (see Schedule of Classes for details).

Students may take these classes before, or at the same time, as taking Y211 and Y221, but instructors in these elective courses will assume that you have the skills taught in Y211/221.

### CONTACT US

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