

Mt. San Antonio College

Paralegal Program

Information Sheet

We are delighted that you are interested in the Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC) paralegal program! This sheet answers basic questions about the paralegal program. If you have any additional questions, please contact the paralegal program director, Prof. Abby Wood at awood10@mtsac.edu.

Two Pathways

We offer two American Bar Association-approved pathways to become a paralegal: a degree or a certificate. Requirements for each are listed in on the paralegal program's [degrees and certificates website](https://mtsac.edu/paralegal/degrees-and-certificates) (bit.ly/4cQs9oX) or the [Paralegal program website](https://mtsac.edu/paralegal/) (mtsac.edu/paralegal/)

Paralegal Certificate

The paralegal certificate requires the completion of ten paralegal courses plus a prior two or four-year degree. An official transcript noting the prior degree must be on file with Mt. SAC Admissions and Records. Please send your transcripts as soon as possible, following the instructions available on the Mt. SAC Counseling [transcript submittal website](https://bit.ly/4cO0ll8) (bit.ly/4cO0ll8).

If your prior degree was completed outside of the US, submit an evaluated foreign transcript to Admissions & Records. Instructions are available on the [Foreign Evaluation Service site](https://mtsac.edu/international/foreignevaluationservices.html) (mtsac.edu/international/foreignevaluationservices.html).

Paralegal Degree

The paralegal degree is meant for students who do not have a prior degree. It requires the same ten paralegal courses as the paralegal certificate plus completion of general education coursework.

Paralegal classes are usually taught on a 16-week schedule in fall and spring and a limited number of paralegal courses are offered during each six-week summer and winter session. Each course is three credit units and each unit currently costs \$46 if you are considered an in-state student. Course descriptions are available on the Mt. SAC [catalog website](https://bit.ly/4dozTi5) (bit.ly/4dozTi5). Please review the online [Schedule of Classes](https://bit.ly/4eoLdfd) (bit.ly/4eoLdfd) for course offerings.

Required Coursework

Ten paralegal courses are required:

PLGL 30	Introduction to Paralegal	PLGL 31	Legal Analysis and Writing
PLGL 32	Adv. Legal Analysis & Writing	PLGL 33	Civil Procedure
PLGL 34	Law Office Procedures	PLGL 35	Automated Law Office Procedures
PLGL 37	Tort Law	PLGL 38	Employment and Ethical Issues in Paralegalism
PLGL 39	Contract Law	One Elective	Elective information is listed below.

Electives

PLGL 41	Property Law	PLGL 42	Family Law
PLGL 43	Wills and Trusts	PLGL 44	Bankruptcy Law
PLGL 48	Criminal Law & Procedure	PLGL 49	Evidence Law
BUSL 18	Business Law	BUSL 19	Adv. Business Law

Although not required for graduation, PLGL 36, Paralegal Internship, is recommended.

Nine Synchronous Units Are Required

The American Bar Association requires completion of at least three courses (nine units) through synchronous delivery, which involves real-time interaction between students and the professor in either a face-to-face course on campus or a synchronous online course which has scheduled Zoom meeting times. To comply with this requirement, we offer PLGL 31, 32, and 33 on campus or synchronously online. Other courses may be offered on campus or asynchronously online and the method of delivery may change each session depending on who is teaching the course and other considerations.

Course Sequence

The recommended course sequence depends on which pathway you are pursuing.

Paralegal Certificate (requires prior two or four-year degree)

Please use the sequence below. **Taking the courses in a different sequence may result in a delay in earning the certificate.**

First Semester	Units	Interession	Units	Second Semester	Units
PLGL 30	3	PLGL 37 or PLGL 39	3	PLGL 32	3
PLGL 31	3			PLGL 35	3
PLGL 33	3			PLGL 38	3
PLGL 34	3			PLGL 39 or PLGL 37	3
Paralegal Elective	3				
TOTAL	15	TOTAL	3	TOTAL	12

Paralegal Degree (continued on page 3)

To complete both paralegal coursework and general education requirements, please use the sequence below.

First Semester	Units	First Interession	Units	Second Semester	Units
PLGL 30	3	PLGL 37 or PLGL 39	3	PLGL 32	3
PLGL 31	3	GE-AREA F	3	PLGL 33	3
ENGL C1000 (ENGL 1A)	4			College-level math	3
				KIN ACTIVITY	1
TOTAL	10	TOTAL	6	TOTAL	10

Second Interession	Units	Third Semester	Units	Third Interession	Units
PLGL 39 (or PLGL 37)	3	PLGL 34	3	COMM C1000 (SPCH 1A)	4
		Paralegal Elective	3		
		GE AREA B	3		
		GE AREA E	3		
TOTAL	3	TOTAL	12	TOTAL	4

Fourth Semester	Units
PLGL 35	3
PLGL 38	3
GE AREA C-1	3
GE AREA D-1	3
GE AREA D-2	3
TOTAL	15

Fourth Intersession	Units
GE AREA C-2	3
TOTAL	3

SUMMARY	
General Education Units	33
Paralegal Units	30

*Cal-GETC (bit.ly/4eZ62ho) may be used to complete associate degree general education and graduation requirements.

General Scheduling Considerations

- **When planning your schedule, be mindful of prerequisites and corequisites.** This information is available online at bit.ly/4dozTi5. *We are not able to waive prerequisites or corequisites.*
- **PLGL 38 has the most prerequisites and corequisites** because it is designed to be taken in your last semester. Plan carefully to make sure you will have met all of the prerequisites and corequisites satisfied in order to enroll in this class.
- **A limited offering of classes, if any, may be scheduled for the summer and winter intersessions.** Do not assume you will be able to complete your course of study over the summer or winter. Generally, we offer PLGL 37 *or* PLGL 39 over winter and summer on an alternating basis. Both PLGL 37 and PLGL 39 are required courses.
- **We do not offer each elective every semester.** If a desired elective is on the schedule, please take the course that semester because the elective may not be offered the next semester. Generally, the only elective offered every session is BUSL 18.
- **Every paralegal course is not offered every term.**
- **We cannot guarantee that all paralegal courses will be offered nor can we guarantee how the course will be delivered** (instruction on campus, online synchronously, or online asynchronously). Further, we cannot guarantee that a course that has been scheduled will have enough enrollments to avoid cancellation by the College.
- **You must carefully plan your course of study to avoid delays in completion.**

Helpful Websites

Most of the information you need is located on the following websites:

- [Paralegal program website](https://mtsac.edu/paralegal/) (mtsac.edu/paralegal/)
- [Paralegal course descriptions](https://bit.ly/4d7se6H) (bit.ly/4d7se6H)
- [Paralegal degrees and certificates website](https://bit.ly/4cQs9oX) (bit.ly/4cQs9oX)
- [Schedule of Classes](https://bit.ly/4es0uvU) (bit.ly/4es0uvU)
- [Cal-GETC transfer requirements](https://bit.ly/4eZ62ho) (bit.ly/4eZ62ho)

Counseling Appointment

You will work with the counseling liaison for the paralegal program, Counselor Patricia Maestro, in PLGL 30 to complete an educational plan and, in PLGL 38, to conduct a degree audit. If you need to speak to a counselor outside of these courses, please contact Patricia Maestro at pmaestro@mtsac.edu. If she is unavailable, schedule a meeting on the [Counseling website](https://bit.ly/4cO0ll8) (bit.ly/4cO0ll8), selecting what works best for you.

Technological Skills

Technological skills are a must for today's paralegals! Our Automated Law Office Procedures class (PLGL 35) provides training in the following areas: computer assisted legal research, legal research on the internet, legal billing software, legal scheduling software, preparation of legal forms and formatting of legal documents, and other areas. Students taking PLGL 35 will find it helpful to have some word processing experience, mainly the use of Microsoft Word. If you do not already have good word processing skills, consider taking CISB 15, Microcomputer Applications, before enrolling in PLGL 35.

Additionally, please consider taking courses within our eDiscovery certificate to expand your technological skills in eDiscovery and litigation support applications. More information about the eDiscovery certificate is located below.

The ABA's Definition of General Education Courses

The American Bar Association does not recognize the following Mt. SAC courses as meeting its definition of General Education: ARTB 14, ARTD 15A, ARTD 20, ARTD 25A, ARTS 30A, ARTS 40A, THRT 11, MUS 7, AD 3, COUN 5, and/or the Physical Wellbeing Requirement. Please select another course from the Mt. SAC General Education area to satisfy that area's General Education requirement.

Variances, Requests for Equivalencies, and/or Petitions for Exceptional Action

We must work within the policies set by the College, the Paralegal Program Advisory Committee, and the American Bar Association. Policies set by these entities may affect scheduling decisions, including our class offerings and certificate requirements. We are not able to approve requests to waive a prerequisite and/or a corequisite, or requests based on work experience or work history. We are only able to provide credit for coursework that is comparable to the Mt. SAC course outline of record and was taken at a college approved by the ABA at the time of the course offering, in accordance with the below transfer policy.

Paralegal Program Transfer Policy for Legal Specialty Coursework Completed Outside of Mt. SAC

Mt. San Antonio College has adopted the following policy to be used when a student requests transfer credit for any legal specialty course taken at another institution.

Any student seeking transfer credit for any legal specialty course taken at another institution must provide the following documentation and information to the Paralegal Program Director ("Director"):

1. The name and address of the institution;
2. A transcript showing the course title, date taken, and grade received;
3. The course syllabus or a course description from the institution's course catalog, reflecting the description of the course at the time the course was taken; and
4. Documentation of whether or not the paralegal program at that institution was ABA- approved at the time the course was completed.

Please refer to [Course Equivalency and Program Course Substitution Form](https://bit.ly/4wadWeb) (bit.ly/4wadWeb) for more information on this process. You'll need to submit the completed form, with an unofficial transcript from your other institution, to the Business Division using the [submit form webpage](https://bit.ly/49vD70S) (bit.ly/49vD70S). They will send the form to the program director for review. The director will review it and send it to the department chair, who will send it to the Business Division. After it is processed at the division level, it will be sent to Admissions and Records for processing.

In determining whether or not transfer credit can be given, the Director shall take into consideration the following:

1. Transfer credit shall only be allowed if the legal specialty course complies with all criteria of an equivalent legal specialty course offered in the Mt. San Antonio College Paralegal Studies Program.
2. Transfer credit shall only be allowed for a legal specialty course in which the student received a grade of C (2.0) or higher.
3. Transfer credit shall only be allowed for a legal specialty course which was completed up to seven years prior to the request for transfer credit, depending on the subject matter of the course.
4. The maximum number of legal specialty credit allowed for transfer shall not exceed twelve (12) semester units.
5. Transfer credit shall not be allowed for any legal specialty course which was taken at an institution that was not ABA-approved at the time that course was taken.

The second step requires you make a request to your other institution to send an official transcript to Mt. SAC's Admissions and Records, not the program director. Instructions available on the [transcript submittal website](https://bit.ly/4cO0ll8) (bit.ly/4cO0ll8)

How to Apply for Your Certificate or Degree

Near the end of your paralegal coursework, a formal application is required to receive your certificate.

1. Log into the Mt. SAC Student Portal. Access the Mt. SAC Student Portal using your credentials.
2. Navigate to the Degree/Certificate Application. Once logged in, click on the "Student" tab. In the Student Self-Service area, select link #45 labeled "Degree/Certificate Application".
3. Complete the Application. Fill out the application form, ensuring all required information is accurate.
4. Submit the Application. After completing the form, submit it electronically through the portal. Your application will be sent directly to the Admissions & Records Office.

If you need assistance or have further questions, consider reaching out to the Admissions & Records Office at (909) 274-4415.

eDiscovery and Litigation Support Certificate

Mt. San Antonio College offers a four-course (12 unit) eDiscovery and Litigation Support certificate which is designed to teach additional skills, however, does not prepare students for a career as a paralegal. Additional information is available in the [Mt. SAC catalog](https://bit.ly/4u3JkcA) (bit.ly/4u3JkcA).

In California, a paralegal shall perform work under the direction and supervision of an active member of the State Bar of California or other entity authorized under California law. A paralegal may not provide legal advice or engage in conduct that constitutes the unauthorized practice of law. (Business & Professions Code Sections 6450, 6451).

The Mt. SAC Paralegal/Legal Assistant Certificate and the Paralegal Degree are approved by the American Bar Association. The eDiscovery and Litigation Support Certificate is not approved by the ABA and it is not an approved program option of the paralegal degree or paralegal certificate. Please note that the ABA does not approve short-course certificates of 12 units.

Information on the Paralegal Profession

For further information on the paralegal profession, please visit the following web sites:

- [Career Information from the American Bar Association](https://americanbar.org/groups/paralegals/profession-information/career_information/) (americanbar.org/groups/paralegals/profession-information/career_information/)
- [Los Angeles Paralegal Association](https://lapa.org) (lapa.org)
- [Orange County Paralegal Association](https://ocparalegal.org) (ocparalegal.org)
- [Inland Counties Association of Paralegals](https://icaponline.org) (icaponline.org)

The Paralegal Profession

The Mt. SAC Paralegal Program prepares students for employment as paralegals in both private and public sectors following graduation. The paralegal program stresses practical applications and the development of job skills as well as teaching legal theory. The program is designed to enhance the ability of students to reason, and to understand and apply correct principles of law by teaching analytical and critical thinking skills as opposed to rote learning. Graduates of the program should qualify for entry-level employment and possess skills necessary for advancement.

The American Bar Association defines a paralegal as someone “qualified by education, training or work experience who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible.”

Paralegals/legal assistants must comply with the legal restrictions on the practice of law by nonlawyers. This includes restrictions prohibiting paralegals from working directly with members of the general public; all work must be performed under the direction and supervision of licensed California attorneys. *Obtaining a paralegal certificate from Mt. SAC does not entitle you to practice law or to hold yourself out to members of the public as being able to do so.* See California Business and Professions Code section 6450, *et seq.*, for further details. Restrictions on paralegal practice will be covered in PLGL 30 and PLGL 38, among other courses.

Career Resources

Information about drafting your resume or cover letter, interviewing, and internship opportunities are available through Dawn Finley, the Career Services Specialist in the Business Division. Ms. Finley’s email is dfinley@mtsac.edu.

Our Mission

To prepare students for successful careers in the Paralegal profession by providing them with quality training and skills.

Our Goals

The Paralegal Program has established the following goals:

1. To provide students with an adequate education in general studies, a core paralegal curriculum, and additional courses in specialty areas.
2. To maintain a sound, but flexible educational framework that is responsive to the dynamic nature of the legal profession.
3. To maintain a quality education program that stresses practical application and development of job skills as well as the teaching of legal theory.
4. To enhance the ability of students to reason, understand, and apply correct principles by teaching analytical and critical skills as opposed to rote learning.
5. To develop competency in paralegal students so graduates are occupationally prepared to work in the paralegal field in a variety of settings.
6. To provide students with the opportunity to participate in practical legal internship settings in order to improve their understanding and enhance their job abilities in the paralegal field.
7. To maintain a program that instills proper respect for the legal profession, its ethics, and its foundations.
8. To promote professional responsibility by teaching ethical legal principles and practice.
9. To meet the needs of the student population that is ethnically diverse, age variable, and comes from a variety of backgrounds.
10. To ensure that students have written and verbal communication skills, as well as reading skills, that will enable them to communicate effectively with both attorneys and clients.
11. To provide students with the technological skills necessary to enter the paralegal field without requiring additional technological training.
12. To assist students in the employment process.