

LAW AND PARALEGAL

A paralegal is a person qualified by education, training, or work experience who performs legal work under the supervision of a licensed attorney. Paralegals may not provide legal services directly to the public, except as permitted by law.

ECC's ABA-approved paralegal certificate program uses practical learning activities to prepare students to work in legal support positions. Students draft documents suitable for court and business transactions and use research databases to solve legal problems. If you love to research, read, and write, and you have an eye for details, a paralegal career may be the right fit for you. Strong social and communication skills are also necessary as paralegals frequently communicate with supervising attorneys, office staff, court personnel, and clients.

Any ECC student interested in law may take paralegal courses as elective credits toward their associate's degree if they meet the course prerequisites. Pre-law students are encouraged to consider taking paralegal courses as degree electives.

ABA-Approved Paralegal Certificate

There is no entrance requirement for the paralegal program. To register for paralegal courses, students should be enrolled at ECC and meet the course prerequisites. To add the paralegal certificate as a program of study, the student should meet with his or her academic advisor and make this request.

The paralegal certificate curriculum is designed for students who want to work as paralegals. The program is 23 semester hours and can be completed in a calendar year if a student is enrolled full-time and has a degree on file. Students who do not yet have a degree may simultaneously work on their associate's degree and a paralegal certificate. Those students should use their elective credit hours in the AA or AS program of study to complete the paralegal certificate courses. Students attending full-time and enrolled in both the associate's degree and the paralegal certificate can complete both credentials in two years.

Official Transcripts Required

Official transcripts of a completed bachelor's degree, Associate in Arts, or Associate in Science degree must be provided to the college before the paralegal certificate will be awarded. Students who have an AAS or have completed a substantial number of college credits (at least forty semester credit hours) may request a degree waiver by contacting the program coordinator. Degree waivers will only be reviewed when the student provides official transcripts of undergraduate coursework, and the completed courses meet ABA requirements as determined by the program coordinator.

Approval

The paralegal certificate is approved by the American Bar Association (ABA).

Program Requirements

Paralegal Internship

The paralegal certificate curriculum requires students to complete a paralegal internship. ECC continues to develop resources to assist students with acquiring an internship; however, opportunities are not automatic or guaranteed. Students are responsible for taking the necessary steps to ensure an internship placement. Students already employed in the legal field as legal assistants, paralegals, or in another position that requires legal knowledge and skill may request work credit in place of an internship. Interested students should contact the paralegal instructional coordinator.

Instructional Delivery Formats

In compliance with ABA Guidelines, the ECC paralegal certificate curriculum requires students to complete at least nine credit hours of paralegal courses through either traditional classroom instruction or synchronous online instruction. Students can complete the classroom coursework entirely online. The synchronous courses for online students are offered in the evenings. Six credit hours of daytime face-to-face courses are also available each semester as enrollment allows.

Capstone Portfolio

Students must collect and maintain samples of their work during their paralegal studies. Each student will present a final portfolio in the PAR 239 Paralegal Capstone.

Transfer Restriction on Paralegal Courses

Only coursework from an ABA-approved paralegal program will be considered for PAR course transfer. A maximum of nine, semester credits of paralegal coursework may be transferred to ECC. All requests for transfer credit of paralegal courses will be evaluated by the instructional coordinator for paralegal and are subject to denial for the following reasons:

1. no comparable paralegal course offered at ECC; or
2. failure to demonstrate the development of practical paralegal skills in the course as required by ABA Guidelines.

Graduates of the ECC paralegal program will demonstrate entry-level competency for employment in the local legal community by being able to:

Technology

1. Complete the Legal Technology Certificate from the National Society of Legal Technology.
2. Use word processing software to format professional legal documents.
3. Mark, incorporate, and uncover document changes using redlining or blacklining.

- Convert file formats, adjust file sizes, and prepare searchable PDF documents with bookmarking to comply with efilng requirements and judge preferences.
- eFile documents with courts and county records offices.
- Facilitate business video conferences.
- Manage workflow, communicate with team members, and update client matters using enterprise software.

Communication

- Use grammar rules and proofreading principles to meet attorney expectations in legal document preparation and written communication.
- Listen attentively to spoken information, without interrupting, and produce accurate, complete, and useful written summaries.
- Develop rapport with clients and peers through professional and friendly communication.
- Dress, speak, write, and act in a professional manner on the job, paying attention to details.
- Observe deadlines by calendaring due dates, setting advance reminders, and checking in with the legal team.
- Formulate questions for guidance on work-related projects and determine appropriate timing for asking those questions.

Research

- Locate and request medical, corporate, and other non-governmental records, using proper releases and forms.
- Evaluate records for relevancy to a particular fact pattern and accurately summarize record information.
- Plan and conduct interviews to develop case facts.
- Obtain reliable information through internet-based factual searches.
- Find primary sources of law and secondary legal materials that, when considered together, inform answers to specific legal issues.
- Correctly read, interpret, and cite primary sources of law and secondary legal materials.

Legal Ethics

- Avoid claims of unauthorized practice of law by working under the supervision of a licensed attorney and not giving legal advice.
- Protect confidential client information and preserve attorney-client privilege in all communications.
- Recognize and report a potential conflict of interest to a supervising attorney.
- Demonstrate integrity and candor in all interactions.
- Safeguard client property through proper client trust account procedures.

Paralegal

| Course | Title | Credit Hours |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| First Semester | | |
| PAR 101 | Introduction to Law | 3 |
| PAR 201 | Civil Litigation | 3 |
| PAR 204 | Legal Research | 3 |
| PAR 106 | Law Office Technology | 3 |
| Total | | 12 |
| Second Semester | | |
| PAR 206 | Legal Writing | 3 |
| PAR 235 | Internship | 1 |
| PAR 239 | Paralegal Capstone | 1 |
| Paralegal Electives | | 6 |
| Total | | 11 |
| Program Total | | 23 |

Paralegal Electives

| Course | Title | Credits |
|---------|---------------------------|---------|
| PAR 108 | Family Law | 3 |
| PAR 203 | Real Property Law | 3 |
| PAR 205 | Wills, Trusts and Probate | 3 |
| PAR 207 | Criminal Law Procedure | 3 |
| PAR 223 | Business Entity Formation | 3 |
| PAR 237 | Paralegal Special Topics | 3 |

Paralegal Courses

All PAR courses numbered 100 and above may be applied to the major field and elective requirement for the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees.

PAR 101 Introduction to Law (3) 3,0

This course introduces students to the skills they need to perform substantive legal work under the direction of a licensed attorney. Students will locate and interpret cases and statutes and learn the basic structure of legal analysis. This course includes legal terminology, core grammar skills, legal citation, ethics, investigation skills, and a thorough discussion of the structure of both the federal and state judicial systems. Students will be introduced to legal technologies, including legal research databases, court databases, and case management software. (1.2) Proficiency Credit Available (2T) Pass/No Credit Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$444 (effective 2026/27 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: Reading: Grade of C or better in RDG 091 or LTC 099, or satisfaction of other placement criteria. Writing: Grade of C or better in ENG 098 or LTC 099 or satisfaction of other placement criteria.

Semester(s) Offered: Fall and Spring

PAR 106 Law Office Technology (3) 3,0

Achieve hands-on familiarity with law office case management software for document management, time tracking, billing, calendaring, practice management, trial management, and presentations. Earn a Legal Technology Certificate from the National Society for Legal Technology as you learn how these software programs are used by attorneys and paralegals. (1.2) Proficiency Credit: Available (2 S) Pass/No Credit: Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$469 (effective 2026/27 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: Reading: Grade of C or better in RDG 091 or LTC 099, or satisfaction of other placement criteria. Writing: Grade of C or better in ENG 098 or LTC 099 or satisfaction of other placement criteria.

Semester(s) Offered: Fall and Spring

PAR 108 Family Law (3) 3,0

This course examines Illinois domestic relations law. Students are required to analyze the relevant statutes, identify tax consequences, and draft pleadings for dissolution of marriage and other family law matters. (1.2) Proficiency Credit Not Available Pass/No Credit Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$444 (effective 2026/27 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: PAR 101 or concurrent Enrollment in PAR 101.

Semester(s) Offered: Fall

PAR 201 Civil Litigation (3) 3,0

This course explores civil procedure and pleading, from interviewing a client through post-trial proceedings, including discovery and file management. Students are required to prepare several written assignments. (1.2) Proficiency Credit Not Available Pass/No Credit Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$444 (effective 2026/27 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: PAR 101 or concurrent Enrollment in PAR 101.

Semester(s) Offered: Fall and Spring

PAR 203 Real Property Law (3) 3,0

This course includes study of the law, procedures, and documents related to the sale and lease of real estate. The focus is on functions normally performed by a law office, lender, or title company, rather than the responsibilities of a broker or sales agent. (1.2) Proficiency Credit Not Available Pass/No Credit Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$444 (effective 2026/27 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: PAR 101 or concurrent Enrollment in PAR 101.

Semester(s) Offered: Spring

PAR 204 Legal Research (3) 3,0

This hybrid course requires extensive independent legal research and analysis using federal and multi-state materials. Students will utilize the internet and computerized legal research subscription services supplied by the college. Instruction will focus on locating relevant, current, and authoritative legal sources. Students will use primary sources to analyze fact patterns and reach logical, well-supported conclusions. (1.2) Proficiency Credit Not Available Pass/No Credit Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$519 (effective 2026/27 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: Prerequisite: PAR 101 or concurrent enrollment in PAR 101.

Semester(s) Offered: Fall and Spring

PAR 205 Wills, Trusts and Probate (3) 3,0

This course teaches students to prepare estate planning documents, handle probate estates, transfer assets without probate, and administer trusts, under the supervision of an attorney. (1.2) Proficiency Credit Not Available Pass/No Credit Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$444 (effective 2026/27 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: PAR 101 or concurrent Enrollment in PAR 101.

Semester(s) Offered: Fall

PAR 206 Legal Writing (3) 3,0

Students will learn advanced concepts related to legal writing, research, and analysis. Assignments may include client letters, objective memoranda, or drafting transactional documents. The class is designed to teach students to write and edit for the legal profession. (1.2) Proficiency Credit Not Available Pass/No Credit Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$444 (effective 2026/27 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: PAR 101, PAR 201, and PAR 204

Semester(s) Offered: Fall and Spring

PAR 207 Criminal Law Procedure (3) 3,0

This course focuses on the Illinois criminal law statute and Constitutional rights applicable to criminal prosecutions. Students are introduced to procedures relating to arrest, investigation, and trial, and to the corrections system. (1.2) Proficiency Credit Not Available Pass/No Credit Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$444 (effective 2026/27 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: Reading: Grade of C or better in RDG 091 or LTC 099, or satisfaction of other placement criteria. Writing: Grade of C or better in ENG 098 or LTC 099 or satisfaction of other placement criteria.

Semester(s) Offered: Spring

PAR 223 Business Entity Formation (3) 3,0

This course focuses on the various business formation structures available under Illinois law. Students will learn about the law of agency and how it relates to business partners and formation structure. Students will research the facts and forms relevant to business entity formation and limited liability maintenance. (1.2) Proficiency Credit Not Available Pass/No Credit Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$444 (effective 2026/27 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: Reading: Grade of C or better in RDG 091 or LTC 099, or satisfaction of other placement criteria. Writing: Grade of C or better in ENG 098 or LTC 099 or satisfaction of other placement criteria.

Semester(s) Offered: Varies

PAR 235 Internship (1-2) 0,0

Students working in a law-related position may be eligible for internship proficiency credit. Contact the program coordinator for proficiency assistance. Students who do not qualify for proficiency credit must complete a paralegal internship. The college does not place students in internship positions. Students must find an internship position. The process usually takes at least two months. The program coordinator will provide students with an internship search checklist and an official inquiry letter to assist students in locating an internship. Once students have secured an internship, they must provide their internship supervisor's information to the course instructor and enroll in the course for the semester in which they will complete their internship. 80 hours of internship is necessary for the full class credit. Students are responsible for keeping a journal detailing the work they have done. All internship hours must be completed under the supervision of an attorney or legal staff member. There is no class meeting time. However, students must stay in touch with the ECC instructor and complete the assignments and discussion boards in the Learning Management System while enrolled in the course. This course is repeatable 2 times. Most students only need to complete 1 credit hour of internship to complete the paralegal certificate. However, there may be students under an older catalog who need 2 credit hours. (1.2) Proficiency Credit Available (2E) Pass/No Credit Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$296 (effective 2026/27 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: Prerequisite: PAR 101, PAR 201, PAR 204, and consent of instructor.

Semester(s) Offered: Fall, Spring and Summer

PAR 237 Paralegal Special Topics (3) 3,0

Application of paralegal principles to specific problems through case studies, simulation, special projects, or problem solving procedures. No topics/problem will be offered more than twice in three years. A special topic may only be taken once. (1.2) Proficiency Credit Not Available Pass/No Credit Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$444 (effective 2026/27 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: PAR 101 or concurrent Enrollment in PAR 101.

Semester(s) Offered: Varies

PAR 239 Paralegal Capstone (1) 1,0

This course prepares students for their first paralegal job. Students will create a final portfolio and paralegal resume. The class will focus on preparing students to enter the job force with the knowledge, attitude, and skills required to exceed the expectations of their employers. The course will challenge students to apply their knowledge in client-specific situations that require integrative thinking about legal services and ethics. (1.2) Proficiency Credit Not Available Pass/No Credit Not Available.

In-District Tuition/Fees: \$148 (effective 2026/27 academic year)

In-district tuition rates are subject to change based on Board approval.

Prerequisite: PAR 101, PAR 201, and PAR 204.

Semester(s) Offered: Fall and Spring