

Tulane University
School of Continuing Studies
Paralegal Practicum, UPAR 590-81
3.0 Credit Hours
Elmwood Campus
(Part 1)
(Updated May 2007)

Instructor: Norma B. Broussard, Esq. Telephone: (504) 251-7576
nbroussa@tulane.edu Fax: (504) 463-0939
Office hours: By appointment, before or after class

Text: There is no text for this class. Students will be provided with supplemental materials and handouts.

Reference Material: Louisiana Code of Evidence
Louisiana Civil Code
Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure

Course Description: This course is intended to give paralegals an overview of the practical role of the paralegal in assisting the attorney. Students will learn the basic skills involved in paralegal work including legal research and writing, document preparation, investigation and interviewing, client relations, file management, time-keeping and litigation support. Students will also learn career expectations and how to explore employment opportunities.

This course will concentrate on providing students with a good working knowledge of the practical role of paralegals as an integral part of the modern law office. Special consideration will be given to the ethical issues confronting the paralegal profession.

The practicum (internship) gives students experience by requiring them to work, under the supervision of an attorney, for 100 hours in an approved legal setting. Students also meet in a classroom component throughout the semester in which they review ethics, professionalism, regulation, and job search skills. Upon completion of the practicum, students submit a paper outlining the duties undertaken during the practicum and an evaluation from their practicing attorney.

Course Objectives:

1. To assist students to develop the organizational skills necessary for successful law office functioning, including categorizing and organizing documents, managing time and using forms.
2. To introduce students to legal research.
3. To develop critical thinking, writing and legal analysis skills.
4. To provide students with an understanding of the ethical issues confronting paralegals in the workplace
5. To assist students to develop investigation and interviewing skills.
6. To develop communication and client relation skills.
7. To assist students in entering the paralegal profession.

Instructional Method: The legal principles and concepts will be presented in lectures. However, since this is a course on the practical application of what you have learned, students will sharpen their skills by completing projects in class and small group break-out sessions.

Assignments should be typed and should include the student's name, the date and the instructor's name.

Evaluation of Student Performance:

Case File	10%
Petition/Answer	10%
Records Deposition	10%
Letter to Client	10%
Research Memo	10%
Client Interview	10%
Case briefs	10%
Time Sheets	20%
Attendance	10%

Grading Scale:

94-100	A	77-79	C+
90-93	A-	73-76	C-
87-89	B+	70-72	C
83-86	B-	67-69	D
80-82	B	64-66	D-
		00-63	F

Final Grade: A student with a grade of C- or better will receive a Satisfactory and a student with a grade of D or worse will receive an Unsatisfactory.

Attendance: Regular attendance is essential to successful academic progress. Supplemental material will be regularly distributed during class and students will be responsible for the material covered in those handouts during class. Students are expected to attend each and every class period and sign the roll during class. If you are prevented from attending class by exceptional circumstances or illness, please contact me to discuss your individual situation. Excessive absences will be reflected in your final grade.

Academic Dishonesty: In all work submitted for academic credit, you are expected to represent yourself honestly. All work is to be performed pursuant to the Tulane University Honor Code. Work must be your individual effort. Since this course is writing intensive, you should pay particular attention to the bans articulated in the following sections:

Plagiarism

The use of the ideas, data or specific passages of others that are unacknowledged, with the purpose of influencing a grade. Any paraphrasing or quotation must be appropriately acknowledged.

Falsification of research

The fraudulent or deceptive generation of data or the knowing use of data gathered in such a manner.

You may view the entirety of Tulane's Honor Code at:

http://www.tulane.edu/~uc/rules_requirements/honor_code.htm

Disability Accommodations: The University makes available reasonable accommodations in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Any student with questions about Office of Disability Services (ODS) procedures and policies should contact the Director of ODS for additional information or view the ODS website at <http://erc.tulane.edu/disability>.

COURSE OUTLINE

Class #1 – 3 Hours

Case management

Conflicts check

Setting up case file

Timekeeping

Assignment: Set up case file

Class #2 – 3 Hours

Legal Ethics

Confidentiality

Conflict of Interest

Unauthorized Practice of Law

Assignment: Prepare a petition. Answer

Class #3 – 3 Hours

Factual Investigation

Communication

Client Interview

Interviewing witnesses

Formal Discovery

Assignment: Prepare a Notice of Records Deposition

Class #4 - 3 Hours

Effective Writing Skills

Assignment: Draft an update letter to Client

Class #5 – 3 Hours

Legal Research

Assignment: research whether a contract is valid and write a one page memorandum.

Class #6 – 3 Hours

Effective Interpersonal Skills

Assignment: Mock Client Interview

Class #7 – 3 Hours

Summarizing Depositions

Summarizing Medical Records

Case Briefs

Assignment: Read case and prepare case brief.

Class #8 – 3 Hours

Paralegal Employment
Resumes
Cover Letter
Job Hunting Techniques
Assignment: Prepare your résumé

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES
PARALEGAL PRACTICUM - PARA 590
Tulane University Paralegal Studies Program**

(Part 2)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The Paralegal Practicum is designed to give student the opportunity to apply their formal education to actual work situations. The student intern will work either under the direct supervision of a practicing attorney or under the direct supervision of a practicing paralegal while under the overall supervision of a practicing attorney.

Specifically, the student will be able to:

- ✓ Develop a set of individual goals to be accomplished during the work experience.
- ✓ Describe, analyze, and evaluate the organizational structure of the cooperating law office
- ✓ Identify the role and responsibilities of the legal assistant with the cooperating law office.
- ✓ Develop a sensitivity for a mature approach to establishing an effective rapport with everyone in the cooperating law office, including lawyers, other paralegals, law clerks, legal secretaries and clients.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Work Experience

As a student, you must work a minimum of 100 hours in the cooperating law office to receive three (3) semester hours of college credit. You should immediately contact the attorney to whom you have been assigned to arrange for an initial “interview.” During the meeting, you should set up a definite work schedule, discuss the attorney’s practice, and develop an understanding of his or her expectations of you and your role as an intern.

You will be expected to notify the cooperating law office immediately if absence from work is necessary and note the absence of your daily log sheet. (NOTE: Absences occur only in extreme emergencies).

You will be expected to make a good faith effort to be sensitive to and maturely resolve any problems which may occur while working with the cooperating law office. Promptly notify the Internship Instructor of those problems so that they may be worked out as smoothly as possible.

The Internship Instructor must be advised of your work schedule as soon as possible.

Daily Log

A daily log, written neatly in ink, must be maintained by the Intern. It should be made available to the Intern Instructor at any time and will be turned in at the end of the intern work experience.

Please bring your log to each class meeting.

The daily log should include the following:

Date – This column should contain the date the task was performed.

Time – Indicate the number of hours (or fraction thereof) spend performing the specific task.

Type of Task – This item should very briefly state the task performed (e.g., research, memo writing, organizing, reviewing files, drafting forms, consultations with attorney, filing documents, interviewing witnesses, interviewing clients, etc.)

Description/Comments – Very brief description of task (e.g., interviewed witness in Smith case, researched automobile negligence, assembled abstract for Jones closing).

Brief closing on what was learned (e.g., witness hostile initially, but eventually gave account of accident that indicates contributory negligence of Smith).

The log should be kept on the forms provided in the first class.

Internship Paper

The requirement of a detailed paper is a vital part of the learning experience in the Paralegal Studies Program. Its purpose is to increase your awareness and command of material presented during the program and relevant application thereof in various law office situations. The paper must be a minimum of four pages, typed, doubled-spaced.

The paper must be more than a collection of tasks you performed in the cooperating law office. It should clearly demonstrate your understanding of the employment of the course objectives outlined on the first page of these instructions.

Format: The guidelines listed below should aid you in preparing your paper.

1. Statement of what skills were used, and an identification of where they were acquired (school or office).
2. Statement of sources used to accomplish the task (e.g., which books, investigations, interviews, etc).
3. In the context of course objective-an evaluation of each task as to the benefit you derived and coursework prepared you to handle the task.
4. If you do legal research, include for each project:
 - a. A brief narrative outlining the case and circumstances.

- b. The issue researched.
 - c. The information or data you searched for.
 - d. Your findings.
 - e. Your conclusion as the particular question involved and its relevance to the case.
5. If you observe or participate in a client interview, court room proceedings, attorney consultation or similar situation, include:
 - a. Narrative outlining the participants and their identities.
 - b. Summary of the purpose of the meeting.
 - c. The outcome or action that was taken.

From: Your internship paper (except Daily Log) must be typed. The entire project should be well organized and exemplify your best writing skills. Communicate your ideas, experiences, and reflections neatly and accurately, just as you would in any professional situation.

Your paper will be evaluated by the Internship Instructor. Its confidentiality will be respected.

In order to receive a satisfactory grade, you must complete the 100 hours, receive a satisfactory evaluation from the Internship Supervisor and submit the final paper, your time log a resume and a cover letter.

If at any time during your internship placement you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call and discuss them with me. I will make myself as available as possible. It is my hope that your internship experience is a valuable one, providing growth opportunities in your new profession. It is my hope that you find the class portion of your course worthwhile and stimulating. If you have concerns or comments on the class, please come to me to discuss them during the semester. I'm here to listen to the good as well as the bad.

Where to find me:

Paralegal Program University College, Elmwood Campus
862-8000, Ext. 1361

Appointments are available at my Elmwood office. Call 865-5333 to make an appointment.
Email: sdavis3@tulane.edu

Sallie Davis, J.D.
Internship Director