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Interested in Becoming a Paralegal?

Paralegals have found the field satisfying, lucrative and replete with opportunity for growth. Would you like to be part of this paralegal community? If so, you might be asking some of the following questions.



Employment options for paralegals



What is a paralegal?

Why become a Paralegal?

Paralegals are becoming an essential part of every successful law firm. Law firms are increasingly hiring paralegals to do many things that attorneys have historically done (under the supervision of an attorney, of course), so they enjoy the respect of employers who recognize them as an asset to the organization. Many are interested in the legal field, but choose not to go through years of expensive education to become an attorney. Earning a paralegal certificate is the perfect entrance into this rewarding field!

How do I obtain the qualifications needed to succeed in the paralegal field?

Due to the high level of competition in the paralegal field, those with a formal paralegal education and experience are more likely to succeed in the paralegal profession. Prospective paralegal students have a wide variety of educational opportunities. USC's Paralegal Certificate Program brings a new and dynamic choice in paralegal education. Below is a description of several forms of formal paralegal education that can help you become a qualified paralegal.

Various Forms of Paralegal Education

4-Year Degree

A few schools offer Bachelor's Degree programs in the paralegal field. This is a good option for students considering going to law school. As with any 4-year degree, many courses are general requirements and only those within the paralegal "major" will concentrate on paralegal skills.

2-Year Degree

Many technical schools and community colleges offer Associate Degree programs in the paralegal field. As with Bachelor's programs, most required courses are general requirements for the degree. This is a good choice for candidates just out of high school, or with little workplace experience.

Paralegal Certificate Programs

Certificate programs have the advantage of focusing the entire educational experience on paralegal skills. Most certificate students already possess a college degree and prefer to complete a focused program rather than returning to a formal degree program. Many students have legal experience or other life experience that has helped to prepare them for the profession, but require more formal education or credentials to progress.

Certificate programs generally offer the most focused and highest quality education for the price.

What salary can I expect as a paralegal?

Legal Assistant Today Magazine publishes a salary survey that is conducted every two years by the National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA). In the 2004 survey, graduates of certificate programs, such as the one offered at USC, are compensated at a higher rate than any other form of paralegal education! Why? Attorneys know certificate program students are trained in one specialized area - paralegal skills. So, if you want to put yourself in a great position to succeed in the paralegal profession, consider the University of South Carolina's Paralegal Certificate Program.

* Note that these are national averages and do not reflect starting salaries. Also note that certificate salaries are for individuals also holding a four-year degree in another discipline.

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	Average Salary	Average Compensation	Responses
Legal Assistant Education			
Undergraduate Certificate	45,221	48,076	174
Post Baccalaureate Certificate	48,386	51,165	186
Associate Degree	43,171	45,521	422
Bachelor Degree	41,603	44,090	120
Master Degree	52,000	52,750	2
Other	44,933	47,386	153
None	43,778	46,284	218

Source: Legal Assistant Today Magazine, National Utilization and Compensation Survey Report, Copyright: October 2004.

What's your next step?

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Upcoming Programs

Online Program
Apr 16-Oct 1, 2012

- Meets Mon/Wed
- 6:30-8:30PM
- Tuition: \$4995 (includes E-textbooks)

Enroll Today!

Summer Accelerated Program
Jun 1-Aug 5, 2012

- Meets Mon/Wed/Fri
- 9:00am - 4:00pm
- Tuition: \$4995 (includes textbooks)

Enroll Today!