

# Paralegal

The mission of the Paralegal Studies program at Northern Michigan University is to provide students with a wide range of legal skills and knowledge essential to the legal profession including legal research, report writing, brief preparation, and case analysis and knowledge in specialized areas such as contracts, probate, real estate or criminal law. Paralegals or legal assistants help lawyers in their work. They perform some of the same tasks as lawyers. Paralegals investigate cases, do legal research, look up laws and cases, write reports, prepare contracts, and keep track of the documents.

## Skills and Competencies

The primary program goal is to educate students to become career paralegals who can perform effectively in a variety of legal settings and can adapt to changes in the legal environment and law practice. The overall program goal is to prepare students for careers as paralegals working under the supervision of lawyers in the public and private sector. The program is designed to provide students with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes they need to become competent and ethical professional paralegals working in the delivery of legal services

## Course Work

This degree includes the following courses as part of the program requirements, and specific major requirements along with general education courses and graduation requirements.

### Core

- CJ110 Introduction to Criminal Justice (4 cr.)
- MGT221 Business Law (4 cr.)
- PS106 Introduction to Paralegal studies (4 cr.)
- PS109 Legal Research & Writing (4 cr.)
- PS215 Introduction to Law (4 cr.)
- PS491 Internship in Public Policy or Law (2-12 cr.)

Choose two of the following:

- PS361 Contract Law for Paralegals (4 cr.)
- PS362 Real Estate & Property Law for Paralegals (4 cr.)
- PS363 Probate Law for Paralegals (4 cr.)

*Detailed course descriptions can be found at [www.nmu.edu/bulletin](http://www.nmu.edu/bulletin).*

## Work Environment

Paralegals are professionals who provide non-clerical services under the supervision of an attorney. Tasks that might be performed by paralegals include maintenance of important documents relating to lawsuits or business transactions, preparation of trial exhibits, legal research and investigation, drafting of court pleadings and legal documents, and completion of form documents. The actual practice of law is restricted to licensed attorneys. Work performed by paralegals allows attorneys to commit more time to activities that specifically require the expertise of a trained lawyer. Use of paralegals results in lower costs for legal services and greater efficiency and economy for all concerned

## Additional Considerations

The department offers three excellent paralegal education programs; a paralegal associates degree, a paralegal baccalaureate degree and a paralegal post-baccalaureate certificate. Both degree curricula consist of in-depth legal specialty classes along with a general basic education. Students in this curriculum may be in college for the first time or may have some previous college experience.

## Job Outlook

Employment of paralegals and legal assistants is projected to grow 17 percent from 2012 to 2022, faster than the average for all occupations. This occupation attracts many applicants, and competition for jobs will be strong. Experienced, formally trained paralegals with strong computer and database management skills should have the best job prospects.

# Potential Careers

NMU's Paralegal Program prepares students for employment in the following careers:

- Administrative Assistant
- Court clerk
- Court interpreter
- Court reporter
- Design/developer of trial visual aids
- Editor for a legal or business publisher
- Judicial assistant
- Law librarian
- Law clerk
- Legal analyst
- Legal secretary
- Legislative analyst
- Litigation Paralegal
- Municipal clerk
- Paralegal Associate

# Additional Resources and Information

For Career Planning and Opportunities:  
Academic & Career Advisement Center  
3302.1 C.B. Hedgcock  
906-227-2971  
103 Jacobetti Complex  
906-227-2283  
[www.nmu.edu/acac](http://www.nmu.edu/acac)

Political Science and Public Administration  
Department  
200A Gries Hall  
906-227-2220  
[www.nmu.edu/politicalscience](http://www.nmu.edu/politicalscience)

For Job Search, Resume and Career Information:  
Career Services  
3302.3 C.B. Hedgcock  
906-227-2800  
[www.nmu.edu/careers](http://www.nmu.edu/careers)

For Information about NMU Student Organizations Associated with this Major Contact:  
Center for Student Enrichment  
1206 University Center  
906-227-2439  
[www.nmu.edu/cse](http://www.nmu.edu/cse)

Internet Resource Links:  
[www.careers.org](http://www.careers.org)  
[www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)

For Career Information with National Organizations:  
[www.americanbar.org/groups/paralegals.html](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/paralegals.html) -American Bar Association Paralegal Section  
[www.michbar.org/paralegal/home.cfm](http://www.michbar.org/paralegal/home.cfm) -Paralegal Section of the Michigan Bar Association



**NORTHERN MICHIGAN  
UNIVERSITY**

MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN

The Academic & Career Advisement Center  
2021



What to do with  
a major in...

# Paralegal

Associate's Degree

