

# 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

Paralegals and legal assistants typically do the following:

- Investigate the facts of a case
- Conduct research on relevant laws, regulations, and legal articles
- Organize and maintain documents in a paper or electronic filing systems
- Gather and arrange evidence and other legal documents for attorney review and case preparation
- Write reports to help lawyers prepare for trials
- Draft correspondence and legal documents, such as contracts and mortgages
- Get affidavits and other formal statements that may be used as evidence in court
- Help lawyers during trials by handling exhibits, taking notes, or reviewing trial transcripts
- File exhibits, briefs, appeals and other legal documents with the court or opposing counsel
- Call clients, witnesses, lawyers, and outside vendors to schedule interviews, meetings, and depositions

## 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

- MGT221 Business Law (4 cr.)
- PS106 Intro to Paralegal Studies (4 cr.)
- PS109 Legal Research & Writing (4 cr.)
- PS215 Introduction to Law (4 cr.)
- PS490 Senior Seminal (2 cr.)
- PS491 Internship (4 cr.)

### Law Electives (16 credits)

Choose two courses from below:

- PS361 Contract Law for Paralegals (4 cr.)
- PS362 Real Estate & Property Law for Paralegals (4cr.)
- PS363 Probate Law for Paralegals (4 cr.)
- PS364 Discovery & E-Discovery for Paralegals (4 cr.)
- PS365 Family Law for Paralegals (4 cr.)
- PS434 Cannabis Law (4 cr.)

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

## Work Environment

Paralegals and legal assistants held about 277,000 jobs in 2012. Paralegals are found in all types of organizations, but most work for law firms, corporations, and government agencies.

## Additional Considerations

Some individuals pursue this degree as a precursor to Law School. This degree allows them to get a sense of what is involved in a legal career to better decide whether to invest the time and energy necessary for law school.

## 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. The median annual wage for paralegals and legal assistants was \$46,990 in May 2012.

## 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  
Municipal clerk  
Trial court coordinator

## 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



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The Academic & Career Advisement Center  
2021



What to do with  
a major in...

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