

LAW and PARALEGAL

What can I do with this degree?

| AREAS | EMPLOYERS | PREPARATION |
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| PARALEGAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal Law • Employment Law • Medical and Health Law • Bankruptcy Law • Intellectual Property Law • Environmental Law | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist and do many of the same things as lawyers • Prepare reports for hearings, trials, and meetings • Research details about cases in law libraries and with computers • Write pleadings, motions, contracts, mortgages, separation agreements, and trust instruments • Work for private laws firms, the government, publicly funded legal service projects, banks, insurance companies, real estate companies, or themselves • Work with public records, court documents, research materials, titles, contracts, mortgages, other legal documents, court cases, computers, and clients | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Although most employers do not require certification, earning a voluntary certification from a professional society may offer advantages in the labor market. The National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA), for example, has established standards for certification requiring various combinations of education and experience. Paralegals who meet these standards are eligible to take a 2-day examination. Those who pass the exam may use the Certified Legal Assistant (CLA) or Certified Paralegal (CP) credential. The NALA also offers the Advanced Paralegal Certification for experienced paralegals who want to specialize. The Advanced Paralegal Certification program is a curriculum based program offered on the Internet. |
| CORPORATE PRACTICE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any large corporation (largest number of attorneys are at corporate headquarters) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Corporate office summer clerkships and entry level positions are rare. ❖ Usually only experienced lawyers are hired by corporations. ❖ Develop tolerance for bureaucratic procedure. ❖ An undergraduate major in business, particularly accounting or finance, is helpful. |
| FEDERAL GOVERNMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most government branches have legal counsel Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps for all branches of the military | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Get involved with an internship or co-op program with the federal government to get a foot in the door. ❖ New lawyers frequently go to court and litigate sooner; experience gained here can be valuable to private firms later. ❖ Government work offers a variety of practice opportunities from criminal to contracts. |
| JUDICIAL CLERKSHIPS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Court • State Court | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Courts of Appeal and District Court (trial) Judges and Magistrates, Bankruptcy and Administrative Law Judges. • State Courts of Appeal and Trial Level Judges. • Federal and State Court Clerkships for Collective Judges in a Court. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ High academic achievement is emphasized by State and Federal judges; Federal judges usually require top 10% or 15% class rank. ❖ Clerkships can be a stepping-stone to other legal areas and provide many benefits for future career opportunities. ❖ For U.S. Supreme Court, applicants must be top law graduates with one to two years clerking at lower Federal Court. ❖ Moot Court participation in regional and national competitions is helpful. ❖ Law review membership, as an indication of writing ability, is highly valued and emphasized at all court levels. |

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| POLITICS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying / Government Relations • Legislative Positions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporations • Trade and professional associations • Political Action Committees • Law firms • Public interest advocacy groups • Congressional representatives at national, state, and local government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ A service-oriented attitude is helpful. ❖ Learn to enlist the help of others. ❖ Clerkship or summer associate positions with law firms providing lobbying services provide good experience. ❖ Demonstrate an interest in politics through your undergraduate major, active campaigning, or research papers/articles. ❖ Obtain law firm experience. ❖ Acquire superior writing skills. ❖ Develop a pleasing personality, enthusiasm, and high energy level. ❖ Show ability to work with people and good communication and organizational skills. ❖ Consider earning a Master's of Public Administration. |
| PRIVATE PRACTICE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large multi-office firms • Medium-size firms • Small firms • Legal clinics • Other private legal services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Acquire excellent research and writing skills. ❖ Obtain clerkships or internships. ❖ Large and medium-size firms frequently emphasize grades and class rank and value law review and moot court experience. |
| PUBLIC INTEREST LAW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Aid Services • Public Defender Offices • Public Interest Groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Services Corporation • Legal Aid Society • Federal, state & local government • Private groups contract • Nonprofit and public interest organizations • Law firms practicing public interest law | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Gain supervised work experience in an area through summer internships. ❖ Demonstrate a desire to help the economically disadvantaged and show an interest in law as a means of change. ❖ Volunteer for non-profit organizations that serve a wide range of people. |
| TEACHING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law schools • Business schools • Undergraduate departments of History and Political Science • Paralegal schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Obtain several years of experience in private practice or government agency. ❖ The LLM degree and an outstanding academic record are required for law school teaching. ❖ Teaching allows for more flexibility of time. ❖ Some lawyers teach on an adjunct basis. |

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| STRATEGIES | LINKS |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students interested in attending law school may choose any major of interest. Some undergraduate majors can help prepare students for a particular area of law, e.g., a B.S. in environmental science for a career in environmental law.• Develop strong research and writing skills. Enhance communication skills through public speaking courses, debate team, or Toast Masters (a public speaking organization).• Maintain a high G.P.A. to increase chances of gaining admission to law school.• Join Phi Alpha Delta professional association.• Find part-time jobs or internships in law firms or government agencies to reality test your interest in law and to gain relevant experience.• Prepare for the LSAT (Law School Admission Test) which is required by all law schools.• Secure strong personal recommendations from professors.• Participate in mock trial, student government, student judiciary boards and other related organizations.• Obtain information from the local chapter of the state paralegal association.• Try to locate an internship.• Volunteer at a legal aid or public defender's office.• Read trade journals to learn more about the field and find job or internship opportunities. | <p><u>National Association for Paralegal Associations, Inc.</u></p> <p><u>National Association for Law Placement</u></p> <p><u>Law School Admission Council</u></p> <p><u>"Do I Want to be a Lawyer?"</u></p> <p><u>Lawyers from the Occupational Outlook Handbook</u></p> <p><u>Paralegals and Legal Assistants from the Occupational Outlook Handbook</u></p> |