

# PARALEGAL STUDIES

## Paralegal Studies

### Associate in Science Degree (CIP# 1722030200)

(Articulated A.S. to B.A/B.S. Career Path)

**Valencia's Paralegal Studies Program is approved by the American Bar Association.**

This program is designed to prepare students to work in the legal field for law firms, banks, corporations, and government agencies in the performance of delegated, substantive legal services under the supervision of a licensed attorney. Students receive instruction in the substantive and procedural law necessary to function in the legal environment under the direction and supervision of attorneys in areas such as civil litigation, real property, legal research and writing, business organizations, and legal technology. Students will understand the ethical framework within which they will work and will be able to analyze and communicate effectively in these areas. Instruction stresses practical applications.

The services paralegals provide include assisting in trial preparation, drafting court pleadings and related documents, performing legal research and informal investigations, preparing real estate documents and assisting in real estate closings, drafting contracts, and maintaining corporate books. Paralegals cannot give legal advice, accept a case, set a fee, or present a case in court and may not provide legal services directly to the public, except as permitted by law.

This program is designed for students who seek immediate employment in the legal environment and who may also decide to transfer as a junior to complete a Bachelor's degree in Legal Studies at one of the two Florida public universities to which this degree will transfer. Students may transfer through a statewide agreement to Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) or through a specific program agreement to the University of Central Florida (UCF). Additional general education and legal specialty courses will be required in the university program.

This program is approved by the American Bar Association (<https://www.americanbar.org/>) (<https://www.americanbar.org/>).

Per American Bar Association (ABA) requirements for approved paralegal studies programs, students must take at least nine (9) semester credits or the equivalent of legal specialty courses through synchronous instruction. Synchronous instruction includes traditional face-to-face courses as well as RTV (Real Time Virtual) courses. Valencia College has identified PLA 1104 LEGAL RESEARCH AND THEORY I, PLA 1114 LEGAL RESEARCH AND THEORY II, and PLA 2192C LEGAL RESEARCH AND THEORY III CAPSTONE which will be offered in these formats every semester. Students will be required to take these three classes synchronously and at Valencia College. These three courses will not be accepted as transfer or transient courses from any other institution.

In addition, per ABA Guidelines Valencia College will allow its students to transfer up to 6 credits of "legal specialty" (PLA) courses completed with a "C" or higher at other institutions. Before this credit is accepted at Valencia College, the program director or qualified faculty member (in consultation with the Dean) will evaluate the transferring course to ensure its academic equivalency to a Valencia College Paralegal Studies A.S. course.

Although scheduling may not always provide for the following progression of courses, students should use the foundation, intermediate and specialization course sequence as a guide in program planning. This is found at <https://valenciacollege.edu/paralegal-studies/>.

Students are strongly encouraged to consult a Student Success Coach in the department office for assistance in determining the best education plan for their career goals.

All degree-seeking students must satisfy entry testing requirements and satisfactorily complete all mandatory courses in reading, student success, mathematics, English, and English for Academic Purposes in which the student is placed.

### Start Right

Degree-seeking students enrolling at Valencia for the first time will have a limited range of courses from which to choose for their first 18 college-level credits. Within the first 18 college credit hours, you will be required to take ENC1101 (3 credits), and if applicable, SLS 1122 (3 credits) and a mathematics course appropriate to your selected meta-major (3 credits). The remaining courses will be chosen from the General Education Core Courses in humanities (3 credits), science (3 credits), or social science (3 credits), and/or the introductory courses within the A.S. degree programs. For specific courses see the *Foundation Courses* on the "Program Requirements" tab. For course sequencing recommendations, see your Student Success Coach or create an education plan by logging into MyVC, clicking on the LifeMap tab and clicking My Education Plan.

### Potential Careers

- Paralegal
- Legal Assistant

### Salary & Earnings Information

For career information related to this program, please visit **O\*Net OnLine** (<https://www.onetonline.org/>).

### Contacts

#### Future Students

To learn more about this program, contact Enrollment Services at [enrollment@valenciacollege.edu](mailto:enrollment@valenciacollege.edu) or 407-582-1507 or visit [valenciacollege.edu/paralegal-studies/](https://valenciacollege.edu/paralegal-studies/) (<https://valenciacollege.edu/paralegal-studies/>).

#### Current Students

Your Student Success Coach contact information can be found in MyVC. Log into MyVC, click on the Courses tab, and check your Academic Profile information to find a link to your Coach.

#### **Faculty Program Chair**

Cathy Mestre, Program Chair, 407-582-2514  
[cmestre@valenciacollege.edu](mailto:cmestre@valenciacollege.edu)

### Program Outcomes

- Research and analyze a legal issue under the supervision of a member of the Bar.
- Draft certain legal documents used in litigation and transactional matters under the supervision of a member of the Bar.
- Apply the appropriate ethics rules to hypothetical ethical scenarios that may arise in the legal setting under the supervision of a member of the Bar.

- Describe practices, traits, and technology required to work effectively under the supervision of a member of the Bar.

## Program Requirements

### Foundation Courses

ENC 1101	FRESHMAN COMPOSITION I <sup>++~</sup>	3
ENC 1102	FRESHMAN COMPOSITION II <sup>++~</sup>	3
POS 2041	U.S. GOVERNMENT <sup>+~</sup>	3
PLA 1003C	INTRODUCTION TO LEGAL PRACTICES AND ETHICS <sup>++</sup>	3
SPC 1017	INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION	3
Math	See Gen. Ed. Core Requirement <sup>++~GR</sup>	3
Humanities	See Gen. Ed. Core Requirement <sup>~</sup>	3

### Intermediate Courses

PLA 1104	LEGAL RESEARCH AND THEORY I <sup>++</sup>	3
PLA 1611	REAL PROPERTY FUNDAMENTALS <sup>++</sup>	3
PLA 1730C	COMPUTER-ASSISTED LEGAL RESEARCH <sup>++</sup>	1
PLA 1058	FOUNDATIONS OF LAW FOR PARALEGALS	3
PLA 2203	CIVIL LITIGATION FUNDAMENTALS <sup>++</sup>	3
PLA 2433	BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS <sup>++</sup>	3
PLA 2732C	LEGAL TECHNOLOGY <sup>++</sup>	3
PSY 2012	GENERAL PSYCHOLOGY <sup>~</sup>	3
APA 1111C	COLLEGE ACCOUNTING <sup>*</sup>	3
Science	See Gen. Ed. Core Requirement <sup>~</sup>	3

### Advanced Courses

PLA 2223	ADVANCED CIVIL LITIGATION <sup>++</sup>	3
PLA 1114	LEGAL RESEARCH AND THEORY II <sup>++</sup>	3
PLA 2192C	LEGAL RESEARCH AND THEORY III CAPSTONE <sup>*</sup>	3

Paralegal Studies Electives 6

**Total Credit Hours 64**

### Paralegal Studies Electives: Select two courses

PLA 2465C	DEBTOR-CREDITOR/BANKRUPTCY <sup>++</sup>	3
PLA 2560C	CASE MANAGEMENT FOR PARALEGALS <sup>++</sup>	3
PLA 2601C	FOUNDATIONS OF WILLS, TRUSTS, AND ESTATE ADMINISTRATION <sup>++</sup>	3
PLA 2612	ADVANCED REAL PROPERTY <sup>++</sup>	3
PLA 2800C	FAMILY LAW <sup>++</sup>	3
PLA 2841	IMMIGRATION LAW FOR PARALEGALS <sup>++</sup>	3
PLA 2930	SELECTED TOPICS IN PARALEGAL STUDIES <sup>++</sup>	3
PLA 2942	INTERNSHIP IN PARALEGAL STUDIES <sup>++</sup>	3

+ This course must be completed with a grade of C or better.

\* This course has a prerequisite; check description in Valencia catalog.

~ This is a general education course.

(GB) notes a Gordon Rule course.

### Notes:

Per American Bar Association requirements, students must take at least nine semester credits, or the equivalent, of legal specialty courses through synchronous instruction.

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In addition, per ABA Guidelines, Valencia College will allow its students to transfer up to 6 credits of "legal specialty" (PLA) courses completed with a "C" or higher at other institutions. Before this credit is accepted at Valencia College, the program director or qualified faculty member (in consultation with the Dean) will evaluate the transferring course to ensure its academic equivalency to a Valencia College Paralegal Studies A.S. course.

Specialized courses may not be offered every session or on every campus.

Expand your career opportunities with a Bachelor's Degree in Business and Organizational Leadership (BASBOL) from Valencia. This degree builds on your skills, and prepares you for a supervisory or management role within your respective field. For more information, go to: Bachelor's Degree in Business & Organizational Leadership (<http://catalog.valenciacollege.edu/degrees/bachelorofscience/bas/>). Students who wish to continue their education should consult with a Student Success Coach to determine the best education plan for their career goals.

Students wishing to transfer credits from this program to another institution must accept responsibility for securing approval from the transfer institution for acceptance of this degree.