

Indiana University South Bend Paralegal Studies Certificate Program Frequently Asked Questions

How long does it take to complete the program and what is the cost of the program?

The certificate is a part-time 25 credit hour evening classroom-based program which takes a minimum of two years to complete. See the current course schedule or check the website (www.iusb.edu) for the current tuition rate. In addition to the credit hour fees, a non-computer lab fee is assessed for each course. You will also be required to purchase a text for most courses.

In addition, the following fees are assessed each semester:

- ✓ Student Activity Fee
 - ✓ Technology Fee
 - ✓ Computer lab fee if class meets in computer lab
 - ✓ Parking (optional)
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What are the requirements for entry into the program?

You must be formally admitted to IU South Bend even if you have completed an associates or bachelors degree.

If I have been admitted to an Indiana University campus, must I reapply?

No, but you must submit the paralegal data sheet to Extended Learning Services.

When can I start the program and what do I need to take?

We accept new students each year to begin in the fall semester. Students must begin with V376 Law & Public Policy (for paralegals). Also, to qualify for registration in the second course, W233 Expository (Legal) Writing which meets in the spring semester, you must have completed W131 or an equivalent course. You may also wish to register for X102 Accounting and Finance for Paralegal in your first fall semester or you may elect to enroll in A201 Introduction to Financial Accounting in the spring or summer semesters. Summer sessions are concentrated and you would complete an entire semester (typically 15 weeks) in six weeks. Keep that in mind as you decide whether or not to register for summer sessions.

Do you accept transfer credits?

We accept up to nine credit hours of transfer credit (6 credit hours substantive law and 3 credit hours accounting) toward the paralegal certificate. Each course would be evaluated by the program manager, the appropriate faculty, and the curriculum advisor to determine transfer eligibility.

Is there a placement program?

IU South Bend has an excellent Office of Career Services (574.520-4425 or www.iusb.edu/~career). In addition, because the program has earned a solid reputation over the past nearly 25 years, we receive notifications of job openings from area attorneys and participate in the Michiana Paralegal Association job bank. You will also have contact with well-respected area attorneys who teach your classes.

Is financial aid available for the paralegal courses?

Yes, but only if you are also pursuing a degree and if you meet the eligibility requirements for financial aid.

IU South Bend Accreditation

Indiana University campuses are accredited by The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) which was founded in 1895. The NCA re-evaluates accredited institutions on a regular, periodic basis. NCA approved schools include: University of Chicago, University of Michigan, Ohio State University, University of Minnesota, University of Wisconsin, Valparaiso University, Ancilla College, University of Illinois and Michigan State University. The purpose of accreditation is to provide public assurance of educational quality and institutional integrity.

The program is also a member of the American Association for Paralegal Education (AAfPE) and a sustaining member of the local chapter of the National Federation of Paralegal Association (Michiana Paralegal Association).

Who teaches the paralegal courses?

Courses are taught by practicing attorneys or judges with expertise in the specialty area. Each substantive law course also includes a 3 - 6 hour paralegal methods seminar which is taught by a paralegal practicing in the subject area. These seminars are designed to define the roles of a paralegal, outline legal ethics and professionalism and provide practical applications in the general area of each substantive law class.

Why must I document computer proficiency?

According to a 1999 *Legal Assistant Today* technology survey, almost 99% of responding paralegals use computers on a daily basis. According to *Paralegal Careers* by Angela Schneeman, as a paralegal, you may need to use at least some of the following computer applications on the job: word processing, billing and timekeeping, Lexis or Westlaw legal research, internet legal and factual research, spreadsheet applications, E-mail communication, database creation and processing.

Why does the program include an accounting requirement?

As more firms continue to rely increasingly on paralegals as integral members of the law office team, there is an increased dependence on paralegals for the preparation of forms and documents that require a basic understanding of accounting and taxation. Your ability to understand basic financial issues makes you a more valuable member of the team. Internally, financial records including expenses billed to clients must be appropriated accurately to avoid sanctions.

In addition to the internal accounting needs of the firm, it is important to understand the accounting and financial affairs of clients. Understanding accounting and financial reports and documents is essential in many areas of law today. @ (*Accounting and Taxation for Paralegals*, Prentice Hall, Thomas F. Goldman, Esq, 2002)