

Paralegal

Certificate of Proficiency

The Certificate of Proficiency program for paralegals generally includes only legal specialty and law related courses and is relatively short in duration. Individuals who do not already possess an associate or bachelor's degree are not eligible to enroll in the Certificate of Proficiency program. Proof of a prior associate or bachelor's degree is required and, if the associate degree is in science or applied science, students must have at least 18 credits of approved general education coursework in that prior degree.

The Paralegal Certificate prepares students for various positions as paralegals. Employment is obtained primarily in private law offices with additional opportunities in government agencies, private corporations, banks, title companies, and insurance companies. Internship opportunities are available, and students must successfully complete an internship in the final semester prior to graduation. The program is approved by the American Bar Association.

Successful graduates of the program will be able to:

- understand the role of the paralegal;
- demonstrate practical skills in a wide range of substantive legal areas including wills and probate, family law, real estate, civil litigation and commercial law.

The specialized paralegal courses are offered in the evening; the remainder of the program is available through daytime and/or evening attendance and may be pursued either full-time or part-time. All legal specialty courses are taught by practicing attorneys. The college maintains an extensive collection of volumes related to New Jersey and federal law and offers instruction in computer-based legal research.

This program of study is career oriented and not designed specifically for students who plan to transfer to a four-year institution or attend law school. The Paralegal program is not for training lawyers or legal administrators. Paralegals (as nonlawyers) are prohibited from engaging in the practice of law or giving legal advice, setting legal fees, or representing clients in court.

Certificate Curriculum¹

Code	Course (lecture/lab hours)	Credits
*LEG 129	Role of the Paralegal (3/0)	3
*LEG 130	Civil Litigation I (3/0)	3
*LEG 133	Legal Research and Writing (3/0) ²	3
LEG 132	Civil Litigation II (3/0)	3
LEG 232	Civil Litigation III (2/2)	3
OST 219	Word Processing Concepts and Applications (2/2) ³	3
LEG 212	Field Experience/Paralegal (1/0/210 work hours)	3
LEG/BUS	Electives ⁴	9
		30

* **Must be first three courses taken.**

¹ Prior to enrolling in this Certificate, students must present proof of award of an associate or bachelor's degree and must have successfully completed (C grade or better) a basic English composition course and at least one other General Education course.

² ENG 101 or its equivalent is a prerequisite for LEG 133; consequently, the student's prior degree must include an English composition course equivalent to Mercer's ENG 101 with a C grade or better.

³ Students who cannot type at a rate of at least 35 words per minute must enroll in OST 111 which is a prerequisite for OST 219.

⁴ **Approved LEG/BUS electives (select any three courses):**

LEG 143	Family Law
LEG 201	Commercial Law
LEG 206	New Jersey Real Estate Transactions
LEG 208	Wills and Probate
BUS 107	Business Law I
BUS 108	Business Law II

