



The Boston University Certificate in

# PARALEGAL STUDIES



Paralegals provide an invaluable service to the legal profession. Despite the ups and downs of the economy, the paralegal profession has remained a strong source of job opportunities. In fact, it is predicted that in a new economy based on knowledge technology, there will always be a demand for qualified paralegals.

Knowledge technology, or the ability to store and retrieve information in an electronic format, is not a wave of the future—it is here to stay. That’s why at Boston University’s Metropolitan College, we’ve put a new twist on traditional paralegal training. Our Certificate in Paralegal Studies Program at the Center for Professional Education has a unique technology component that provides you with the computer expertise that will put you ahead of your competition in the knowledge-based environment.

In addition to the technology component, Boston University’s Certificate in Paralegal Studies Program provides relevant hands-on experience. You’ll be exposed to real-life cases brought to light by instructors who are practicing attorneys. After 14 weeks of study, you’ll be more than ready to dive into a rewarding new career.

At Boston University’s Center for Professional Education, you can prepare for a rewarding career as a paralegal in just 14 weeks of study. In this blended Saturday program, you will learn comprehensive legal theory and gain expertise in writing, research, and technology—core skills that are valued in all areas of law.

In addition, our unique Legal Technologies component will provide you with relevant, hands-on experience not offered in other paralegal training programs. You will be instructed on the technologies and legal software working paralegals use every day, all within a blended format that takes advantage of the benefits of both classroom and online learning.

## WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM A CERTIFICATE IN PARALEGAL STUDIES?

- Career-changers
- Recent college graduates considering law school
- Paralegals who want to update their skills
- Legal secretaries or legal assistants who want to become paralegals

## CURRICULUM

This blended program consists of seven modules that meet in the classroom for 7 Saturdays with the remaining coursework completed online. An accelerated program is offered each summer. Upon successful completion, students will receive a Certificate in Paralegal Studies from Boston University.

## LEGAL RESEARCH

The Legal Research module teaches the full range of legal research methodologies, from WestlawNext online to library archives. Students will learn to research each of the five primary sources of law: the Constitution, case law, statutory law, regulatory law, and executive orders. They learn the hierarchical court structures for federal and state systems and how to utilize each court’s respective reporter series, as well as the *Massachusetts Digest* and the *Federal Practice Digest*. Additionally, students are instructed on both federal and state statutory and regulatory law, and the respective legislative and administrative codes. Students will be challenged with hypothetical situations that require them to implement their newfound research tools by finding case, statutory, or regulatory law and systematically applying these laws to the issues presented.

## LEGAL WRITING AND REASONING

The most important aspect of legal writing is understanding the logic and rationale behind it. Through a series of writing assignments, students will be introduced to the manner in which lawyers reason. Students will learn: the distinction between a factual issue and a legal issue; how to write case briefs; and how to implement the IRAC (Issue, Rule, Application, Conclusion) style of writing legal analysis. In addition, students will be introduced to the concepts of precedential and persuasive authorities. In a final paper, students must synthesize the facts in a hypothetical situation with four case holdings and statutory law.

## LEGAL TECHNOLOGIES

An understanding of technology and how it is used in the modern law office is key to a successful paralegal career. This module covers both foundational and specialized software programs, including such cornerstones as Excel and Internet research, as well as advanced tools such as CaseMap, a leading litigation support software;

“The paralegal training I received at Boston University was all that I had hoped it would be and more. It laid the foundation for a career change from events planner to working paralegal in just 14 weeks! I found all of the seminars to be in-depth, well taught, and extremely informative. For me it was a wonderful experience. I walked away feeling confident in my choice of schools.”

— Jamie Jamieson, Paralegal



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e-Discovery, which involves the exchange of electronic information in lawsuits; and PACER, which allows for electronic filing of legal pleadings within the federal court system. Students will also have an opportunity to learn and explore Clio, a leading program used by firms for managing client relationships and other office management tasks. Additionally, we'll examine the duties of a paralegal in depth, as well as how technology is used on the front lines of the legal profession.

### **BUSINESS LAW**

The Business Law module will provide students with an introduction to the substantive area of business law and the practical skills necessary to serve as a corporate paralegal. Students will learn about the legal formation and functioning of various business entities—including business corporations, partnerships, and limited liability companies—and learn to distinguish the structure, management control, liability, and taxation attributes of different business entities. Students will also receive a comprehensive introduction to corporate finance and securities regulation, an overview of Article 9 of the Uniform Commercial Code, and a summary understanding of the basics of intellectual property law—including a discussion of trade secrets, copyrights, trademarks, service marks, and patents. An analysis of business law transactions and current business law policies will enable students to gain the requisite legal knowledge and practical skills necessary to assist attorneys with various corporate transactions.

### **LITIGATION**

Students in the Litigation module will learn the most frequently employed civil discovery devices and some strategic aspects of discovery. This session begins with an overview of the litigation process from investigation to filing a lawsuit, including: Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (with related references to the Massachusetts Rules of Civil Procedure) and various common law and statutory privileges against disclosure, including marital privilege, the work product doctrine, and the attorney-client privilege. The course will place an emphasis on the use of interrogatories, requests for production of documents, depositions, and independent medical examinations. Students will also be given an overview of summary judgment

and the role of experts in preparing a case for trial. Students will review the rules and then read and analyze case law interpreting discovery issues. Students will be given various discovery materials and a hypothetical fact pattern. They will then be asked to prepare responsive documents. The instructor will provide technical education as well as “practice pointers” and strategic aspects of the discovery process.

### **REAL ESTATE LAW**

This module provides substantive information in real estate transactions and the role that the paralegal plays. Upon completing the module, you will have an understanding of basic real estate law: how property is held and transferred; the rights and responsibilities of property owners; how real property may be used; examples of Offers to Purchase and Purchase and Sale Agreements, due diligence, title examinations, certifications of title, title insurance, and recording requirements; and the roles and responsibilities of each party in a real estate transaction. Closing documents will be covered with particular attention to: Deeds, Promissory Notes, Mortgages, Declarations of Homestead, and Closing Disclosure. You will learn about conveyancing software and prepare a Closing Disclosure based upon a hypothetical residential purchase transaction. Additional topics in this course include zoning and other restrictions on land use, environmental due diligence, easements, and leases.

### **PROBATE AND FAMILY LAW**

In this module, students will study probate, estate planning, and family law. In the probate section, students learn about wills and what happens if one dies without a will. A case study will illustrate a typical chain of legal events that may unfold after a death. The estate planning section will explore wills, trusts, and advance directives which provide the ability to legally express client desires if he/she is incapacitated in the future. The basics of divorce law are also covered, including child custody, alimony, and division of marital estates. Finally, the class will undertake an exploration of the complex and rapidly changing area of same-sex marriage. Throughout the class, students will be exposed to the forms used in the Massachusetts Probate and Family Law Court, which are similar to those in other jurisdictions.

### **PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

#### **JOSEPH P. SPADA, JD**

Attorney Joseph Spada has been the director of the Certificate in Paralegal Studies Program since 2001. Prior to that, he taught legal research and legal writing at Metropolitan College for five years. He graduated from Boston College cum laude, and he attended the Catholic University Columbus School of Law, where he worked for a year in the Justice Department. Early in his career, Spada worked as a law clerk with the Connecticut Trial Courts, the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, and the Suffolk County's Sheriff's Department. He also spent 20 years as a Federal Staff Attorney with The Honorable Lawrence P. Cohen at the United States District Court, District of Massachusetts.

### **STUDY ONLINE OR IN CLASS**

The Boston University Paralegal Studies Program is offered in two formats to accommodate the various schedules and learning styles of our students: blended on-campus Saturday courses, and online. Both programs follow the same respected curriculum, and both are led by faculty with distinguished legal experience and expertise. Those who prefer face-to-face interaction with classmates and instructors will thrive in on-campus courses, while those who prefer to study at the time and location of their choosing will benefit from the flexibility of the online program, which delivers input and guidance from instructors in an interactive, multimedia environment.

### **LEARN MORE**

Phone: 617-353-4497

Fax: 617-353-4494

Email: [cpe@bu.edu](mailto:cpe@bu.edu)

**For a complete schedule, please visit [bu.edu/professional](http://bu.edu/professional).**