

This page and its content were

December 20, 2001

How/Where to get training

The Paralegal Technology curriculum prepares individuals to work under the supervision of attorneys by performing routine legal tasks and assisting with substantive legal work. Course work includes substantive and procedural legal knowledge in the areas of civil litigation, legal research and writing, real estate, family law, wills, estates, trusts, and commercial law. Required courses also include subjects such as English, Mathematics and Computer Utilization. Graduates are trained to assist attorneys in probate work, investigations, public records search, drafting and filing legal documents, research, and office management. Upon completion, the Associate in Applied Science is awarded to students who complete the two-year technical education program. The

College also offers a Diploma Program for those who have a bachelor's

degree or equivalent and a Certificate in Principles of Title Searching

for working paralegals or real estate professionals who want further training in this area.

Scholarship Information

Scholarships at Johnston Community College are provided by a number of organizations and individuals. The College also cooperates with a number of agencies and organizations for other types of assistance, such as the Federal Pell Grant, Workforce Investment Act and Vocational Rehabilitation Financial Assistance. For more information on scholarships, contact the College's Office of Financial Aid at 919-209-2028.

Future job opportunities

There are ten major locations where paralegals work. Almost 75% of paralegals work for private law firms. Other job opportunities exist with the civil service departments of the federal or state government, legal service/legal aide offices, law departments of corporations, banks, insurance companies, and other businesses, special interest groups (such as unions, associations, citizen action groups, lobbyists, etc), federal or state prosecutors' offices, or as a self-employed professional who sells services directly to attorneys.



Want to know more?

Johnston Community College

919-934-3051

www.johnston.cc.nc.us



For more information on federal financial aid programs, call (800) 4-FEDAID

SCHOOL to career

FOCUS ON JOBS IN

Paralegal



Course instruction is key to learning the fundamentals of the legal profession

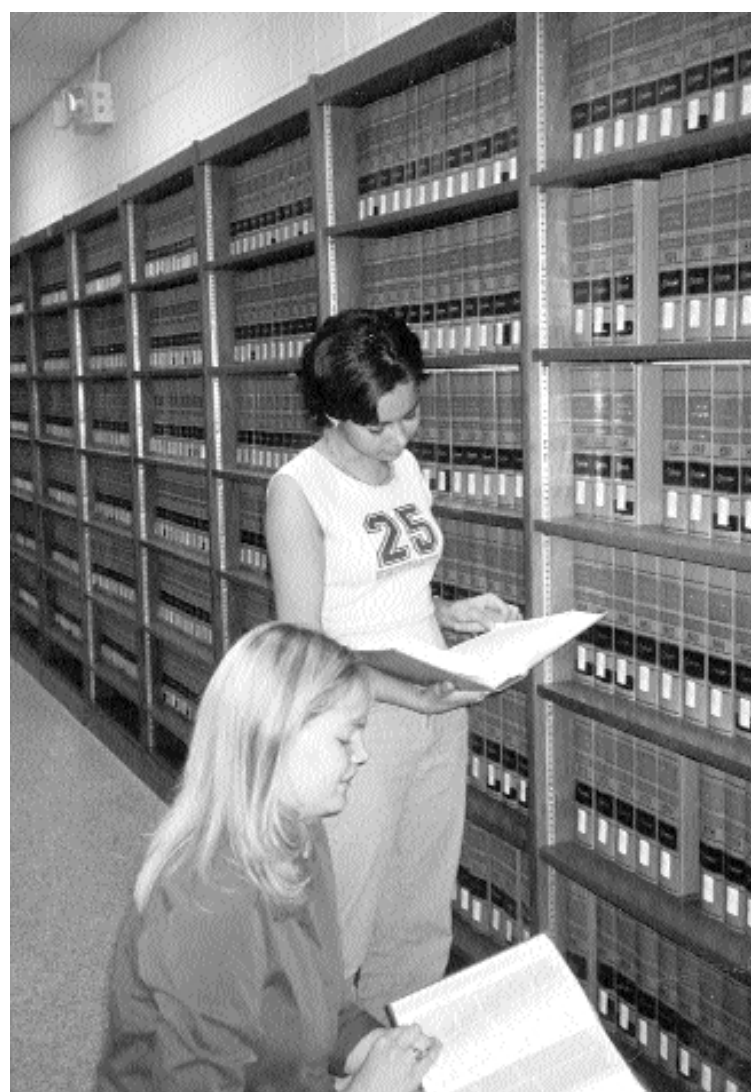
Paralegals generally work in law firms, assisting attorneys with all aspects of the legal profession. A paralegal/legal

assistant may not practice law, give legal advice, or represent clients in a court of law, but will aid attorneys in these practices. Some of the tasks performed by paralegals include: drafting documents such as deeds or wills, supervising filing and recording of legal documents, preparing legal pleadings, gathering information or records, conducting interviews, reviewing "discovery" (discovery are items turned over by a party during litigation), meeting with clients or providing status reports to clients in some situations, performing



library or computer assisted legal research, accounting functions (limited normally to Estate/Probate and Tax practices), and responding to correspondence.

Students learn arbitration techniques to help prepare them for their future as paralegals



Computer classes are an important part of the Paralegal Technology curriculum

Paralegal students learn to research law books to aid attorneys in the writing of memoranda, briefs, and other case law and legal documents

Skills required

Paralegals must have an in-depth knowledge of English, grammar, and composition rules. The ability to communicate effectively, organize, research, analyze, investigate, and manage clients, cases, and workload are also paramount to this profession. Most importantly, the paralegal must combine these skills with knowledge and application of word processing skills in order to be an effective and efficient member of a legal team.

Activities

Scan the newspaper to see how many want ads specifically advertise for "paralegal" or "legal assistant" positions in Johnston and Wake Counties.

How many other advertisements could someone apply for that is educated and trained as a paralegal but the specific job title does not use the term "paralegal"?

What you wear



Your work attire will be very dependent on where you work. You may wear a business suit if working in the typical law office, courthouse, or government office. On the other hand, the dress code in the corporate arena may be dress casual.

Profile

Beverly J. Walker
Raleigh, NC



Beverly Walker has been a Paralegal since 1993 and is currently serving as Executive Administrative Assistant to Governor Mike Easley. As personal assistant to Governor Easley, she assists with the preparation of his daily schedule, works closely with his top aides and advisors, his legal department and various other departments of state government.

Mrs. Walker began her career with the North Carolina Department of Justice as a legal secretary in the Special Prosecutions Section of the Attorney General's Office. For seven years she assisted the attorneys with the preparation of legal documents, trial preparation and the trial of cases. She also worked fifteen years as a legal secretary and an administrative secretary in the Medicaid Investigations Unit of the Attorney General's Office. Although she had no formal legal training, Mrs. Walker's work experience afforded her the opportunity to get involved in the legal field and she began to search for ways to advance her career and improve her salary. She stated, "I was performing legal work but because I did not have a degree, the chances for advancement in the profession were not very great."

One day her brother, Jim Jackson, a teacher in the Business Department at Johnston Community College, told her about a new Paralegal program just starting at the College. Upon looking into the program, she found that the curriculum would expose her to other areas of the law and would give her an opportunity to expand the legal knowledge and skills she already possessed. Mrs. Walker enrolled in the program and continued to work a full time job while attending classes in the evenings. "I am happy I participated in the Paralegal Program at Johnston Community College. It gave me the confidence I needed to continue my education and complete my degree at Campbell University (BA in Paralegal Technology). I believe having my degree has opened many doors for me."

Jobs in the Field

Job Titles	Place of Work	Kind of Work	Average Salary*
Paralegal	Private law offices Government agencies Banks Insurance companies	Research, writing legal briefs, drafting documents, gathering information for attorneys	\$30,000 - 50,000
Legal Assistant	Private law offices Government agencies Banks Insurance companies	Research, writing legal briefs, drafting documents, gathering information for attorneys	\$24,000 - 45,000

*These are average starting salaries. Salaries may vary widely depending upon prior experience, specific position and size of employer.

Other jobs available

• Law Office Manager • Probate Specialist

Required classes

• Expository Writing • Argument-Based Research
• Word Processing • Business Communications

If you would like to make a statement about your business' commitment to education, call Mary Moxin at 829-4870 or email mmoxin@nando.com to find out how you can sponsor a School to Career Page.

This educational partnership sponsored by:



"School to Career" pages are archived online on the bizednetwork.org