



Criminal Law Program Overview

Criminal law is the area of law that names behaviors and actions that are subject to prosecution and penalty by the government, and the process through which justice is administered within the legal system. Criminal law is one of the most interesting areas of law. Its predominance within the legal system has caused an increasingly high demand for the services of criminal law paralegals, which has, in turn, created a multitude of job opportunities for paralegals specializing in criminal law. The Criminal Law Paralegal course prepares students for entry-level positions within law firms, government offices, corporate legal departments, and various other agencies dealing with the prosecution of crime within the United States.

This course introduces students to the criminal justice system and its components as well as their multifaceted role as a paralegal. Students will become familiar with the principles of criminal law and the paralegal's role in criminal proceedings. The course explores the basic principles of criminal law, the types of offenses, and criminal procedure from the commission of the offense to trials and their aftermath. The prosecutor's role in initiating cases and the role of the defense attorney in defending the accused are discussed. The importance of pre-trial motions and plea bargaining is also covered.

Program Objectives

- To understand criminal law and the criminal legal system of the United States.
- To explain the paralegal's role in the prosecution of crimes and the administration of justice in criminal proceedings.
- To identify the components of and classification of various criminal acts.
- To explain the elements of crimes against property, public order and safety, and justice and administration, as well as inchoate and organized crimes.
- To explain different types of defenses and their elements.
- To identify the paralegal's role in the intake procedure in a prosecutor's office and in drafting a complaint.

- To understand the legal elements of search and seizure, including the legal use of warrants and the preparation of warrants.
- To discuss a defendant's rights concerning confession.
- To explain and understand the paralegal's role in pretrial procedures from initial appearance to pretrial conference.
- To describe the paralegal's duties and tasks during the trial procedure.
- To understand terms and forms of sentencing and punishment procedures.

Program Outline

Lesson 1: Introduction to Criminal Justice and Criminal Law

Chapter 1: The Criminal Justice System

Chapter 2: Basic Principles of Criminal Law

Lesson 2: Criminal Offenses and Investigation of Criminal Behavior

Chapter 3: Types of Offenses

Chapter 4: Investigation of Criminal Behavior

Lesson 3: Initiating Cases and Defending the Accused

Chapter 5: The Prosecutor's Role in Initiating Cases

Chapter 6: Defending the Accused

Lesson 4: Discovery, Defenses, and Pretrial Motions

Chapter 7: Discovery and Disclosure

Chapter 8: Legal Defenses

Chapter 9: Pretrial Motions and Plea Bargaining

Lesson 5: Criminal Trials

Chapter 10: The Nature of Criminal Trials

Chapter 11: Preparation for the Trial

Chapter 12: The Conduct of the Trial

Lesson 6: Sentencing and Appeals

Chapter 13: Sentencing

Chapter 14: Appeals