

SYLLABUS LAS 399 PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP

Course Instructor Contact Information

Prof. Lynnette Noblitt, Esq.
E-mail: lynnette.noblitt@eku.edu
Phone: 859-622-5931
Office: Beckham 100

Course Description and Prerequisites

LAS 399 Paralegal Internship (4): Supervised work experience as paralegal in a law office, requiring periodic progress reports and a final paper. The prerequisites for this course include: completion of 18 hours of major (LAS) courses, including LAS 300, prior written application, and director approval of the internship site.

Required Text and Materials

No text is required for this course.

Learning Objectives

The Paralegal Internship meets the following learning objectives adopted by the Department of Government pursuant to the strategic plans of the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences and Eastern Kentucky University for the undergraduate paralegal major:

1. **Professional (career) Competence:** Students will demonstrate the knowledge and practice skills to perform competently as paralegals. Students will perform actual paralegal assignments in a working law office and gain understanding of the role and specific tasks of paralegals and various other facets of the law office environment.

Specific Theory and Content Objectives

The Goals identified above are achieved through performing assigned paralegal tasks in a law office environment. In this course, students will demonstrate the ability:

1. To gain understanding of the structure and functions of the law office environment.
2. To gain insight into professional interpersonal relationships and the paralegal profession.
3. To apply the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to actual paralegal tasks in a law office.
4. To exercise the ethical responsibilities of a paralegal as set forth under the Code of Professional Responsibility and applicable laws.
5. To reflect upon and personally evaluate the internship experience so that the student is better informed when choosing future employment.

Measurements

Students will demonstrate learning through the following: written assignments (including a daily journal and bi-weekly and final reports), an on-site visit and/or telephone interview, and the internship supervisor review.

Course Policies

Written Assignments

All written assignments, including daily journals, will be graded on the basis of their organization, quality of analysis, accuracy, thoroughness, grammar, and evidence of careful proofreading.

Late Assignments

All assignments must be turned in on time. The instructor reserves the right to fail any student for consistent failure to adhere to assignment deadlines.

Class Attendance

A total of **280 hours of on-the-job work is required** for completion of the internship. The student is responsible for accurately tracking and recording time worked.

Plagiarism/Accessibility Accommodation/Discrimination Statements

Please see BlackBoard statement on these university policies.

Student Assignments

1. Daily Journal: You must keep a Daily Journal that discusses the topics below.
 - a. Information on the activities assigned, the specific tasks involved in completing the assignment, the degree of difficulty of the assignment, the time required to complete the assignment (please use the time-keeping / billing system used by others in your legal office), and whether this task was previously discussed in your other LAS coursework.
 - b. Personal analysis of your assignments and your overall work experience to date, including whether you liked or disliked a particular assignment, your personal feelings about the internship and specific tasks (feelings of inadequacy, apprehension, confidence, etc.).
 - c. Analysis of your preparation in the ECU Paralegal Program for the law office environment and ways the Program might better prepare you.
 - d. Please also discuss any specific problems you confront and how you dealt with the situation, including any insights gained.

You must turn in the journal with your Final Report. Please note that the Daily Journal may be typed or handwritten, but it must be updated on a daily basis.

2. Biweekly Reports: You must submit Biweekly reports every two weeks you are enrolled in LAS 399 fulfilling the requirements below:
 - a. In narrative form, summarize and analyze your experiences, including pivotal assignments or situations that occurred during the reporting period. For ideas on what to include, see topics for journal entries above. Summarize the reporting period. Do not set up your report on a day-to-day basis.
 - b. Reports should be well-organized and approximately two typewritten pages.
 - c. Each report should include the name of the intern, the name of the supervising attorney, the name, address, phone number of the law office or entity, number of hours earned to date, and the dates this report covers.

The first report is due in the Director's office by Tuesday after the second week of the internship. Unless you have been given permission to do otherwise, students must submit such reports even if they have worked very few or no hours during the pertinent time period. Repeated failure to submit reports in a timely fashion may result in failure in the course.

3. Samples of Paralegal Work: You must submit three samples of the work that you complete during the internship. You should carefully redact the work to remove any confidential information. Your supervisor should review the work prior to you submitting it.
4. Final Report: You must submit a Final Report fulfilling the requirements below:

- a. In narrative form, summarize and analyze the entire internship experience. It should cover the office setting, most significant tasks assigned, any problems you encountered and how you solved them, how the ECU Paralegal Program curriculum helped, where the curriculum could be improved, what have you learned, and would you recommend this site for a future intern.
- b. This paper should be well-organized, thoughtful, meticulously proofread, and about 3-4 typewritten pages.

The Final Report is due the last day of classes or at another specifically agreed upon date.

5. Supervisor Interview & Evaluation: You are responsible for scheduling a phone exit interview between your attorney (or senior paralegal) supervisor and the instructor of the course after approximately 250 hours of internship work. This is an interview with the instructor and supervisor only; students should not participate. You should also confirm with your supervisor that s/he submitted your evaluation form directly to the course instructor. You will not be able to review this confidential form, but will receive confirmation that it was received.
6. Intern Exit Interview: You will need to complete an exit interview with the instructor. This interview can be done by phone, synchronous conferencing, or in person. The interview will take place after the Supervisor Interview.

Grading

This course is a *pass/fail* course. Failure to satisfactorily complete any of the above-listed written assignments or unsatisfactory reviews during the on-site visit and/or supervisor evaluation form can result in receipt of a failing grade. Please note that midterm grades will be based upon written assignments received by the midterm date and/or good faith understanding of future internship plans from the student.

Important Dates

The dates to enroll and withdraw from LAS 399 are the same as those for all other standard classes on campus for the semester. Students should strive to complete internship period during the normal University semester. Should a student need to start or complete the internship outside the semester of enrollment, please contact the faculty supervisor **prior to beginning** of the internship to agree upon alternate due dates.

Things to Remember

1. It is a rare student intern who is not anxious about starting an internship. Take some comfort from nearly all the previous interns who have reported that their anxieties subside quickly, and they find that they are capable of much more than their doubts warranted.
2. A thorough orientation conference with your supervising attorney in the first week of the internship can be worthwhile. Such a conference should address the expectations of both parties.
3. It is also important that you be very sensitive to the ethical standards expected of law office employees. These include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Client Confidentiality. It is of utmost importance that the names of the office's clients and the subject matter of their legal concerns be held in the strictest confidence. Do not discuss such matters with your friends, relatives, or others. A breach of such confidence could cause serious consequences for yourself and your supervising attorney. In this regard, screen the examples of work that you send with your report for any breaches of confidentiality.
 - b. Conflict of Interest. When a situation arises in the office where you are asked to perform a task, which creates for you either the appearance of or an actual conflict in personal allegiance to the client, you should immediately discuss this with your supervising attorney. The client expects and the law requires loyalty to the client's case.
 - c. Legal Advice. Under no circumstances are you to give legal advice of your own to clients or others. To do so is a criminal violation in Kentucky and the giving of such advice could place your supervising attorney in breach of significant ethical requirements. It is, however appropriate for a paralegal (intern) to convey legal advice specifically directed by the attorney if you make it clear that the advice comes from the attorney.
 - d. Attorney Supervision. Initially all legal documents and correspondence prepared by you should be reviewed by an attorney prior to mailing. Eventually your supervisor may authorize you to send out correspondence under your signature. However, all *legal documents* must be reviewed and signed by the attorney.
 - e. Your Title. While interning you should identify yourself to clients and others as student paralegal intern. It should be made clear that you are not an attorney.

4. Should any problems, either ethical or otherwise, arise to which the resolution is unclear, you should be very cautious and discuss the matter with an attorney in the office just as soon as possible.
5. If you have any questions or comments requiring immediate attention, please call or email the instructor.
6. The University in no way guarantees completion of the internship or the course. The University reserves the right to terminate the internship and the student will receive no credit if this occurs. Grounds for termination include insufficient performance by the intern, violation of the supervising attorney's or University's policies, or unprofessional behavior by the paralegal. In rare instances, it has been necessary to terminate an internship because of no fault of the intern. In these cases, other arrangements are sought to provide the intern with a meaningful opportunity to complete the internship.

GOOD LUCK AND ENJOY YOUR INTERNSHIP!!!