

PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP HANDBOOK

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**UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE
LEGAL STUDIES PROGRAM**

PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

OBJECTIVES AND OUTLINE OF THE PROGRAM

Objectives

Because experience is a vital component of the learning process and is necessary for preparation of the student for the paralegal field, the La Verne Legal Studies Program has instituted an Internship designed to provide the Paralegal student the opportunity to learn through experience in a professional setting. The Internship should provide the intern an opportunity to relate those principles discussed in textbooks and classroom settings to real-life legal problems, in a legal environment, under responsible supervision.

Contact Information

The Internship Coordinator is Stephanie Clemens. Her email is sclemens@laverne.edu.

The Department Chair is Patricia Adongo. Her email is padongo@lavern.edu.

Department telephone: (909) 448-4428. Fax: (909) 392-2707

Address: 1950 Third Street, La Verne, CA 91750

Types of Placements and Tasks

The paralegal intern should work in a legal setting, performing work which would normally be done by a paralegal. Most commonly, the setting would be a law firm, legal aid, a corporate legal department, or a governmental office. The work which should be assigned to the paralegal would be substantive legal work, work which an attorney normally performs (except appearance in court or handling a deposition), and might include some of the following tasks:

- Preparing pleadings
- Preparing discovery, responding to discovery
- Controlling and organizing documents, information
- Preparing trial notebooks
- Preparing motions
- Contacting and responding to clients, witnesses, courts

It is also acceptable for the intern to shadow the attorney and go to court or depositions, but this should not be the majority of the assignment. Students can also benefit by learning to answer phone calls, prepare files, and other clerical tasks, but these also should not comprise the majority of the assignments.

Time Commitment

The paralegal intern is to work 90 hours during a 16-week semester. Those hours should be spread evenly over the time period, so that the intern works six to ten hours per week, preferably on two different days per week.

Outline of Responsibilities

THE PLACEMENT

The placement agency could be a law firm, non-profit organization, corporation, or governmental agency. It is to:

- a. Designate an individual who will supervise the student and communicate with the Internship Coordinator.
- b. When contacted by a student, determine if the student is appropriate for the placement, meet with the student and sign the Placement Agreement.
- c. Orient the student to the work environment and explain policies and appropriate employment behavior.
- d. Assign work to the student appropriate for a Paralegal which will require knowledge of the law and of legal procedures and expose the student to various aspects of the legal environment.
- e. Provide information, support, direction, and constructive criticism for the intern on a regular basis and verify the hours and work performed by the student.
- f. Communicate any problems, concerns or suggestions to the Internship Coordinator and respond to inquiries of the Coordinator.
- g. Complete the evaluation of the student which will be provided by the Coordinator.
- h. Students are to maintain time sheets and copies of work performed as long as confidentiality is protected. Placements need to verify those records.

THE STUDENT

The student is to:

- a. Contact a law firm, corporation, non-profit agency or governmental agency. Set a time for an interview to determine if the student and the firm are both agreeable to this placement. Obtain the firm's signature on the Placement Agreement. Give the Placement Agreement to the Internship Coordinator.
- c. Work 6 to 10 hours per week at the Internship, for a total for the semester of 90 hours. This is best if done two or more days per week, or varying days of the week. Hours must be completed one week before the date of the final exam.

- d. Attend class as assigned, engage in discussion and sharing.
- e. Maintain a weekly log of your hours spent in the internship and a daily journal of work done and the student's reactions and reflections. Obtain copies of work performed, as approved by the placement.
- f. Prepare coursework as assigned.
- h. Exhibit responsible behavior in regard to personal appearance, reliability, confidentiality, rules and regulations, and associations with clients, supervisor, staff, and others.

THE INTERNSHIP COORDINATOR

The Internship Coordinator is to:

- a. Develop a list of law firms, non-profit organizations, corporations and governmental agencies which are willing to have an intern placed with them. Maintain the list, taking into account past experiences with the placements and ability to meet the students' needs.
- b. Assist students in finding placements suitable for them and direct them in making the contact.
- c. Explain to the students and the placements their respective responsibilities.
- d. Meet with the students regularly and assign written work as appropriate.
- e. Resolve any problems of either students or placements.
- g. Evaluate their work and performance.

**UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE
LEGAL STUDIES PROGRAM**

PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

TIPS FOR ORIENTATION OF THE STUDENT TO THE PLACEMENT

TO THE ON-SITE SUPERVISOR:

Thank you so much for allowing our student this unique and important opportunity. We know it takes time and energy, and are very grateful. As an internship supervisor, you have the ability to offer our student the opportunity to apply and integrate knowledge already gained in the classroom within a structured work setting. Here are some tips to help orient the student:

1. Review the purpose, philosophy, and objectives of your firm or organization with the student – this alleviates potential misunderstandings. It is also useful to familiarize the student with the overall operation. Allowing the student to observe office procedures or accompany an experienced staff person for a short period of time may assist in this process.
2. Always be sure the student is assigned substantive legal work, which an attorney would do if there were no paralegal. While some clerical work may be inevitable, we ask that you keep this to a minimum.
3. Go over the student's goals, objectives and expectations for the internship. This will help to assure a mutually satisfying experience for both you and the student.
4. Make the student aware of your policies and procedures regarding:
 - a. Records and files.
 - b. Ethics and confidentiality.
 - c. Work hours and breaks.
 - d. Appropriate dress.
 - e. Illness and lateness.
5. Clarify the student's relationship to other personnel. Smoother cooperation and less confusion should result if both student and your personnel are made aware of the student's role and relationship to other employees.
6. Schedule periodic meetings with the student to discuss progress, problems, and accomplishments.
7. You will be asked to complete a written final evaluation for the student's file. Forms will be provided near the end of the placement term.
8. Contact the Internship Coordinator or Departmental Chair with any questions or problems.

SAMPLE TASKS A PARALEGAL MAY PERFORM

The following is a list of various tasks that the paralegal intern may be qualified to handle under your supervision:

LEGAL RESEARCH

- Research case and statutory law
- Brief cases
- Shepardize
- Prepare memorandums and Points of Authorities

DRAFTING DOCUMENTS

- Completion of legal forms
- Draft pleadings
- Draft contracts, wills, and other documents
- Draft interrogatories and answers to interrogatories

LITIGATION

- Summarize depositions
- Collect documents in response to motions to produce
- Serve documents
- Make deposition arrangements
- Prepare jury instructions
- Prepare trial notebooks

GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS

- Phone work
- Client contact
- Witness interviews
- Negotiations
- Correspondence

LAW OFFICE MANAGEMENT

- File documents
- Organize and index legal documents and files
- Review and summarize documents
- Calendaring

INVESTIGATIVE RESEARCH

- Examine public records and dockets
- Take notes during client interviews or conferences
- Collect information from government agencies, clients, insurance companies
- Obtain police and fire report

**UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE LEGAL STUDIES PROGRAM
PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

PLACEMENT AGREEMENT

Date _____

Internship for what semester _____

Name of student _____

Name of placement _____

Address of placement _____

Name of supervisor of intern _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

General description of work to be performed:

Days and hours: _____

We have each read the Objectives and Outline of the Legal Studies Internship Program. We agree that the above student shall perform an internship with the above placement according to the terms of the Objectives and Outline.

Student's signature

Placement Supervisor's signature

PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP

DAILY LOG

Internship Student: Think of this as a type of diary. You are to keep track of the type of duties that you perform. Please elaborate as much as possible on the type of task, whether you felt you were prepared to complete this task, the level of difficulty, what you learned from performing this task, and any other thoughts, ideas or suggestions on how you might have been better prepared to complete this task.

Feel free to use more than one line and add any other comments you wish. Timekeeping does not have to be exact, but an estimate of the time spent. You must fill out this log daily, and turn it in at the mid-semester and at the end of your internship. Failure to complete will result in a failing grade. This is part of your course work. **(Below is an example of the type of information we are looking for).**

Intern's Name: Suzanne Storm Page One

Firm's Name: Dewey Law Firm, 800 Nicollet Mall, Ontario, CA 91765

Supervisor's Name: Joseph L. Dewey, Esq.

Law Firm phone number: (909) 861-2000 Fax Number: _____

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Time</u> <i>List an approximate length of time that it took to complete the task</i> | <u>Task</u> <i>List the type of task you are to perform, whether it be observation or actually performing the task</i> | <u>Description/Comments</u> <i>Student: Please elaborate as much as possible on the type of task, whether you felt you were prepared to complete this task, the level of difficulty, what you learned from performing this task, and any other thoughts, ideas or suggestions on how better _____ might have prepared you to complete this task.</i> |
|----------------|--|--|---|
| Example | 4 hours | Prepared extensive medical chronology from client medical records. | I had not done this before. I found it difficult. We had worked with medical records in class, but I had never put them into a chronology. I did learn how to read medical records and how to put them in chronological order. This would have been a good task to learn in my Litigation class. |
| | 4.5 hours | Summarized the Q. and A. from a deposition, selecting the facts that the attorney would want to highlight in this case. The attorney and I discussed what areas he wanted to focus on before I summarized. | We had done this exercise in class, and I felt this helped me, although I still am not comfortable with this type of exercise. This was difficult. I think just doing more of these will help me. |
| | ½ hour | Prepared letters for retaining clients. | This was easy and I had done this exercise in my Litigation class. I feel very comfortable doing more and was well prepared by _____ to do this. |
| | 1 hour | Observed the attorney interview a new client in an intake interview. | This was very fun and interesting. I got a good idea of the type of questions to ask during an intake interview. I was able to see firsthand the client discuss the facts of the case and was able to see how the retainer and authorization forms are used. I now see why it is important to order medial records right away. I hope to do this again. |

Intern's Name: _____ Page One

Firm's Name/ Address: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Law Firm phone number: _____ Fax Number: _____

[illegible]

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**UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE
LEGAL STUDIES PROGRAM**

**PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
SUPERVISOR'S EVALUATION**

Name of Intern _____

Name of Supervisor _____

Name of Law Office _____

Evaluation Dates from _____ to _____ Total Number of Hours _____

Please rate the performance of your intern in the following categories and include clarifying comments as appropriate.

Personal Skills

| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Superior |
|--|------|------|---------|------|----------|
| Can formulate and set goals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Recognizes limitations and strengths of self | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Makes intelligent, logical decisions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Is prompt and regular in attendance, makes up absences | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Maintains appropriate demeanor and dress | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments:

Dependability:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Follows policies and procedures of this office | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Manages responsibilities effectively | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Maintains professional ethics (confidentiality) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Shows a willingness to take on new responsibilities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Is able to be relied on by other office staff | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Puts in extra time when needed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments:

Supervisory Relationship:

| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Superior |
|--|------|------|---------|------|----------|
| Meets regularly or as needed with supervisor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Accepts feedback from supervisor and coworkers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Requires minimal supervision | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Does not go beyond limitations on practice of law | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Shows insight into own performance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Raises questions and clarifies assignments appropriately | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Reports problems | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments:

Interaction Skills:

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shows interest and enthusiasm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Demonstrates good listening skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Develops and maintains good working relationships | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Demonstrates insight, maturity and common sense | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Appears confident and comfortable working with clients | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Is positive, responsive and encouraging with clients | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Can handle conflicts with or between clients | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments:

Work Product:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Works accurately, neatly, is thorough | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Works rapidly, completes assignments timely | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Finds extra work to do | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Learns quickly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Applies the knowledge learned to new situations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Manages time effectively | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Learns from mistakes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments:

Please identify specific Paralegal skills/office duties the intern performed.

Would you recommend this intern for employment opportunities in your firm or outside your firm? _____
Why or why not?

Do you have suggestions on ways the University of La Verne can enhance its curriculum to better prepare students to work as an intern or paralegal?

Do you have suggestions on ways the University of La Verne can improve its internship program?

Would you consider sponsoring another University of La Verne intern in the future? _____

If no, why not? _____

Please add any additional comments you have.

Date _____

SIGNATURE

**UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE
LEGAL STUDIES PROGRAM**

**PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
STUDENT'S SELF-EVALUATION**

Name _____

Name of Law Office _____

Semester _____

Please rate your performance as an intern in the following categories and include clarifying comments as appropriate.

Personal Skills

| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Superior |
|--|------|------|---------|------|----------|
| Can formulate and set goals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Recognizes limitations and strengths of self | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Makes intelligent, logical decisions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Is prompt and regular in attendance, makes up absences | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Maintains appropriate demeanor and dress | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments:

Dependability:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Follows policies and procedures of this office | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Manages responsibilities effectively | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Maintains professional ethics (confidentiality) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Shows a willingness to take on new responsibilities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Is able to be relied on by other office staff | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Puts in extra time when needed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments:

Supervisory Relationship:

| | Poor | Fair | Average | Good | Superior |
|--|------|------|---------|------|----------|
| Meets regularly or as needed with supervisor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Accepts feedback from supervisor and coworkers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Requires minimal supervision | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Does not go beyond limitations on practice of law | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Shows insight into own performance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Raises questions and clarifies assignments appropriately | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Reports problems | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments:

Interaction Skills:

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shows interest and enthusiasm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Demonstrates good listening skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Develops and maintains good working relationships | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Demonstrates insight, maturity and common sense | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Appears confident and comfortable working with clients | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Is positive, responsive and encouraging with clients | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Can handle conflicts with or between clients | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments:

Work Product:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Works accurately, neatly, is thorough | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Works rapidly, completes assignments timely | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Finds extra work to do | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Learns quickly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Applies the knowledge learned to new situations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Manages time effectively | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Learns from mistakes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments:

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| Do you feel this internship was a helpful learning experience? | YES | NO |
|--|-----|----|

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| Do you think the tasks you performed were comparable to those performed by other paralegals? | YES | NO |
|--|-----|----|

| | | |
|---|-----|----|
| Do you think that your skill level in performing those tasks was comparable to a competent paralegal? | YES | NO |
|---|-----|----|

How much time did the attorney spend supervising your work? _____

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| Did the attorney respect you professionally? | YES | NO |
|--|-----|----|

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|----|
| Did the office staff respect you? | YES | NO |
|-----------------------------------|-----|----|

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Did you experience any resentment? | YES | NO |
|------------------------------------|-----|----|

What did you want to do that you did not get to do?

How could the Paralegal Studies Program have better prepared you for the internship?

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| Do you recommend your site be used again? Please explain. | YES | NO |
|--|-----|----|

Allocate the amount of time (in percentage) you spent in each area to total 100% of your time:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Legal research | _____ |
| Preparing documents for litigation | _____ |
| Discovery tasks | _____ |
| Estate/Probate work | _____ |
| Family law | _____ |
| Criminal law | _____ |
| Real estate law | _____ |
| Writing letters, other simple docs. | _____ |
| Interviewing/investigation | _____ |
| Answering the telephone | _____ |
| Copying | _____ |
| Other (List) | _____ |

Your grade recommendation

A A- B+ B B- C+ C C- D

I have completed a minimum of 90 hours on the job in my internship. The information above is an accurate description of my performance.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Date _____

SIGNATURE