

## **FULFILLING THE PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENT**

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Highline's paralegal program has many unique qualities, including a mandatory internship component.

### **Co-Op Requirements**

The paralegal internship is performed under the umbrella of the Co-Op Department ("Co-op"), the department responsible for administering all internships at Highline. Meeting Co-op's requirements is the responsibility of the student and the paralegal department. Co-op requires that several forms be completed by the student-intern and the intern employer. All of those forms can be obtained from Co-op in the infamous "yellow notebook" it distributes to students.

The most important of these forms is the Co-op Work Experience Learning Plan. Students and employers must agree to learning objectives that the student will complete (the number of objectives correlates with to the number of credits taken by the student with a maximum of three objectives). It is very important that the learning objectives be specific and measurable. This is not only a requirement of Co-op, but goes a long way in helping the Paralegal Department maintain its American Bar Association accreditation.

Co-op also requires that there be at least one internship site visit during the quarter by the Faculty Supervisor.

### **Paralegal Requirements**

The Paralegal Department has three basic internship requirements.

*1. Legal 139*

First, all students must take Legal 139, the internship orientation seminar. The introductory class explains both the Co-op requirements and the Paralegal Department requirements. There are other practical components to this one day seminar including discussion with former student-interns and with practicing attorneys and paralegals. There are also sessions on resume writing, self-evaluation, and internship search planning. Legal 139 can be taken at any time after the student has completed 15 paralegal credits at Highline.

*2. Legal 140*

Second, the Paralegal Department requires completion of a minimum of 3 internship credits for graduation from the program. 30 hours of work is equal to 1 credit. Students can take from 3-5 internship credits by registering for Legal 140. Students can register for internship credits anytime after completing Legal 139; however, I recommend that students complete Legal 101 (Ethics), Legal 102 (Civil Procedures I) and Legal 199 (Legal Research and Writing I) before procuring an internship.

*3. Legal 141*

Third, Legal 141 must be taken contemporaneously with Legal 140. Legal 141 is a once-a-week seminar that facilitates the successful completion of the internship. The seminar requirements include a term paper, small group meetings with other students, and **mandatory attendance!** The seminar is also the conduit for the Co-op required site visit.

## **Procuring an Internship**

It is the responsibility of the student to procure an internship. Both Co-op and the Paralegal Department maintain a database of former, current and prospective internships for review by students. It is also advisable to network with other students as well as friends, family, and professional connections.

## **Miscellaneous Issues**

- Paralegal students should know that up to 50% of their credit hours for an internship can be earned prior to the quarter in which they register for internship credits.
- Students should also know that, while only 3 credits are required for graduation, a student can perform a “second round” of internship credits by registering for Legal 240 and Legal 241. This can help the student gain valuable hands-on experience.
- Students may perform their internship at their current full-time job **only** upon approval from the faculty supervisor and only upon agreement by the employer to assign job duties and learning objectives that are outside the normal scope of the student’s work with that employer.