

P R E F A C E

INTRODUCTION

The paralegal field continues its rapid growth, with the Department of Labor predicting that the profession is expected to grow through 2032. Moreover, the value of paralegals to the legal profession is universally recognized. Consider the following statement by the American Bar Association: “The utilization of paralegals improves the efficiency, economy, and availability of legal services.” Not only the American Bar Association but also a number of court decisions have endorsed the use of paralegals to make legal services more affordable and accessible.

With that growth and recognition come additional responsibilities. Today’s paralegals are expected to perform a wide variety of tasks, including legal research, legal writing, interviewing, and investigating. In addition, paralegals are expected to know substantive areas of law, such as civil procedure, litigation, and corporate law.

Graduates of paralegal programs are expected “to hit the ground running” when they get a job, yet there is a significant gap between what is learned in the classroom and the way to apply this knowledge in the real world of a law office environment. This fourth edition of *A Practical Introduction to Paralegal Studies: Strategies for Success* is meant to bridge this gap by combining a thorough grounding in the paralegal profession with a pragmatic overview of what paralegals are expected to know and do in the workplace.

The text is divided into three main sections: The first section begins with a review of study skills and then discusses the paralegal profession and the U.S. legal system; the second section covers the paralegal skills of research, analysis, writing, interviewing, and investigating; and the final section discusses the workplace, covering what paralegals do in “real life,” the various types of law practice, law office environments, career strategies, and techniques for success in the workplace.

Each chapter and section builds on the previous one. For example, once you read Chapter Four and understand the differences between trial and appellate courts, you will be ready for the discussion in Chapter Five about how to locate appellate court cases. Similarly, once you read Chapter Six’s information

about writing, you will understand how to prepare a memorandum or an executive summary setting forth the results of a client interview, which is discussed in Chapter Seven. Chapters Eight and Nine discuss the practice areas in which paralegals work. The text concludes with the most pragmatic information of all: how to get a job, keep a job, quit a job, and how to be successful in a law office environment.

CASEBOOK CONNECT

Remember that this text is available digitally through the publisher's learning solution Casebook Connect and is enhanced by a suite of online content and learning tools, allowing you to access the textbook anytime from any device, search the full text to find needed information, build outlines, and highlight and annotate the text with numerous color and underscoring options.

A REAL-WORLD APPROACH

The text provides pragmatic and realistic information covering situations that occur in the real world of a law office. For example, the following topics are covered:

- Effective ways to improve note taking and to study for exams;
- What to do if you observe ethical misconduct in the workplace;
- Using artificial intelligence responsibly to complete tasks efficiently and ethically;
- Using the Internet to impress clients;
- Common blunders when using email;
- Cultivating listening skills;
- Best practices for timekeeping and billing;
- Advocating for yourself in salary negotiations;
- How and when to quit a job;
- What to do when you receive an assignment at work;
- How to present a professional appearance on the job; and
- Time-management techniques to improve job performance.

FEATURES OF THE TEXT

The text includes several features to enhance learning. Each chapter includes the following features:

- **Chapter overview.** Each chapter begins with a preview of the material that will be presented in the chapter.
- **Key terms.** The key terms and concepts used in the chapter are presented in boldface type and are defined in the margin near where the material is

discussed. All of the key terms are listed at the end of each chapter so you can test your comprehension of these terms.

- **Tips.** Each chapter includes a pragmatic tip linking the substantive information in the chapter to “real life” job situations.
- **Net results.** Each chapter provides references to websites where you can locate additional information on the topics covered in the chapter.
- **Case illustration.** A case that illustrates one of the core concepts discussed in the chapter is presented at the end of each chapter.
- **Chapter summary.** Each chapter’s substantive discussion concludes with a review of the key presented in the Cornell Note-Taking System (as described in Chapter One).
- **Trivia.** The Trivia section provides fun and interesting facts about some of the topics covered in the chapter.
- **Discussion questions.** Questions to challenge comprehension of the text material and stimulate class or study group discussion are presented.
- **Closing arguments.** Each chapter includes a series of practical questions that require readers to locate information pertinent to the chapter by accessing well-known legal or general interest Internet sites that practicing paralegals will be expected to know and navigate on the job.

Each chapter also includes charts, graphs, sample forms, and other instructional aids, as needed. For example, Chapter Six includes ethical tips relating to legal writing, Chapter Eight provides samples of deposition summaries and privilege logs, and Chapter Ten includes suggestions on handling difficult interview questions and a sample resignation letter.

This fourth edition of the text introduces several new features, including the following:

- A new feature in each chapter, Tech Nexus, which explores various tech tools related to the material in that chapter.
- Another new feature in each chapter, AI Applications for Success, which connects material discussed in the chapter to new AI tools, strategies, and platforms.
- Significant discussion throughout the entire text of artificial intelligence topics, including the following new material:
 - New section on the effect of AI on the paralegal profession in Chapter Two;
 - Discussion of AI and its implications for legal ethics in Chapter Three;
 - The use of AI in legal research, including the use of Lexis+ AI and Westlaw Precision AI platforms in Chapter Five;
 - The use of AI in legal writing and specific AI tools that can be used to enhance legal writing in Chapter Six;
 - Section in Chapter Nine on the effect of AI on legal practice;
 - Discussion in Chapter Ten regarding the use of AI in job hunting, “beating the bots” in applicant tracking systems, and using AI to help write cover letters and résumés;
 - Discussion in Chapter Eleven on the increasing reliance on AI tools by law firms;
 - Final section in Chapter Twelve entitled “Are the Robots Coming for Your Job?”; and
 - Suggested format for citing to artificial intelligence sources in Appendix E.

- A revamped and significantly expanded discussion of regulation of the paralegal profession, including limited licensing programs in Chapter Two with specific discussion of innovative programs in Arizona, Colorado, Minnesota, and Utah.
- Chapters Two and Three provide an overview of alternative legal models such as virtual kiosks to close the access-to-justice gap and provide more affordable legal services to consumers.
- An overview of new trends in ethics (including alternative business structures, which are collaborations of attorneys and nonattorneys, such as accountants) is provided in Chapter Three.
- Expanded discussion in Chapter Three on the use of social media by legal professionals, including ethical issues related to such.
- Discussion throughout the text on new practices adopted in the wake of COVID-19, including targeted tips on communicating using virtual conferencing tools such as Zoom and the use of digital court reporters in depositions.
- Discussion in Chapter Ten on the effect of new technology on job hunting, including specific tips when interviewing via Zoom or similar platforms as well as a section on hot topics in employment, including pay transparency and the use of Mansfield Certification by law firms to promote diversity.
- Entirely new section in Chapter Eleven relating to flexible work arrangements and the new work-from-home movement, together with discussion of pros and cons of such arrangements.
- All new Case Illustrations, Discussion Questions, and Closing Arguments are included.
- New forms (for example, a sample privilege log by category) are provided throughout the text.
- Citations in the text comply with the twenty-first edition of *The Bluebook* released in mid-2020.

For those using the print edition, the appendices are available for download at the product page that accompanies this text, at www.aspenpublishing.com.

Although every effort has been made to refer to useful websites, those sites can change both their content and addresses without notice. References to websites are not endorsements of those sites.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Paralegals play a critical role in helping clients. Be excited about the challenges and opportunities that your new profession provides. Commit yourself to excellence both as a student and as a practicing paralegal. You will be rewarded not only monetarily but also by knowing that you have performed your job to the best of your abilities. Welcome!

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