

# Important Information for All AUM Legal Studies Students

## Disclaimer:

- The Outreach Program paralegal certificate courses offered at Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama, are not ABA-approved.

## Please Note:

- Paralegals may not provide legal services directly to the public, except as permitted by law.
- Alabama law prohibits the practice of law by non-lawyers, including paralegals/legal assistants.
- A program graduate is not a certified paralegal. Paralegal certification is administered by professional paralegal organizations.
- Program requires a minimum of nine (9) semester hours of synchronous instruction in courses designated as legal specialty courses.

## American Bar Association Official Definition of a Paralegal:

A paralegal is a person, qualified by education, training or work experience who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible.

## A Paralegal Cannot:

- Give legal advice
- Sign legal documents as a legal representative
- Represent clients in a court of law
- Set legal fees
- Establish an attorney-client relationship

## A Paralegal Can, Under the Direction of a Licensed Attorney:

- Research factual and legal issues
- Interview clients and witnesses
- Prepare pleadings, subpoenas, wills, contracts, and other legal documents
- Draft and review contracts, deeds, mortgages, leases, and other legal forms
- Prepare for and attend real estate closings
- Prepare documents concerning corporations, partnerships, businesses, and family law matters
- Gather information in preparation for lawsuits
- Digest and index information obtained prior to trial
- Maintain complex dockets and files, both manually and digitally

## **Legal Studies Program Goals and Objectives:**

**Legal Studies Program Goal:** The goal of the Legal Studies program is to produce extremely competent and well-rounded individuals who have advanced preparation for career as paralegals/legal assistants. Legal Studies Program Objectives:

- To prepare students for a variety of careers and enhance their prospects for employment and promotion by providing them with functional law-related knowledge
- To provide students with theoretical and practical education to fulfill the duties of a paralegal in both the private and public sectors
- To ensure that students understand the standards of legal ethics and restrictions on the practice of law by paralegals and other lay persons.

### **Minor in Legal Studies Program Goal:**

The goal of the Legal Studies Minor in Legal Studies, an ABA-approved program, is to produce an individual who will be able to competently and ethically assist an attorney in various areas of law as a professional paralegal.

### **Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice, Legal Studies Concentration Program Goal:**

The goal of the Legal Studies Bachelor of Science program, an ABA-approved program, is to produce an individual who is knowledgeable in a number of areas of law, and who will be able to competently and ethically assist an attorney in various areas of law as a professional paralegal.

### **Upon completion of the Legal Studies programs,**

- 1) Students will demonstrate that they are skilled in using law office technology.
- 2) Students will demonstrate their ability to perform legal research.
- 3) Students will demonstrate their ability to perform legal writing.
- 4) Students will demonstrate their understanding of the principles of legal ethics.
- 5) Students will demonstrate their ability to work as legal team members.

## **Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice, Legal Studies Concentration Students and Minor in Legal Studies Students:**

### **Transfer Credit Policy for Legal Specialty Designated Courses:**

A legal specialty course is one that (1) covers substantive law or legal procedures or process, (2) has been developed for paralegals, and (3) emphasizes practical paralegal skills. Transfer credit specific criteria follows:

- Each legal specialty course submitted for consideration for AUM Legal Studies transfer credit is evaluated by the program director. Determination of transferability is based upon course content, hours of instruction, method of course delivery, the grade earned in the course by the student, and whether the course was completed at an ABA-approved program as a legal specialty designated course. For all courses considered, director will review the student's transcript, the catalog descriptions of the courses, the program's website materials, and ABA status. Additionally, for courses completed at a program not ABA-approved, course materials, a written examination, or an oral examination may be required in order to determine whether the student is competent in the area of study and whether the courses considered are deemed appropriate for transfer credit as legal specialty courses.

- Credit from non-regionally-accredited institutions will not be considered for transfer to Legal Studies programs for legal specialty credit.
- No legal specialty course credit is awarded for experience and examination.
- The maximum number of legal specialty credits allowed for legal specialty course transfer credit to the program shall not exceed six semester hours from programs not ABA-approved.
- Legal specialty credit from ABA-approved programs will be evaluated by the program director for acceptance for credit. Students transferring from ABA-approved programs must earn a minimum of nine (9) semester hours of legal specialty credit at AUM.