

PARALEGAL INSTITUTE

ACADEMIC BULLETIN



THOMAS R. KLINE
SCHOOL OF LAW

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Mission Statements

Paralegal Institute Mission Statement

To prepare students for careers as professional paralegals by providing a well-balanced education that includes the delivery of substantive knowledge and practical skills that will enable graduates to perform effectively in a variety of legal settings.

Thomas R. Kline School of Law Mission Statement

Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University is a Catholic law school that educates lawyers to excel in the ethical practice of law, to preserve the highest ideals of our profession, and to promote equal justice and democratic discourse through leadership, service, and civic engagement. We do so inspired by our Catholic Spiritan tradition and law school motto, "Salus populi suprema lex"-"The welfare of the people is the highest law."

Duquesne University Mission Statement

Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit is a Catholic university founded by members of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, the Spiritans, and sustained through a partnership of laity and religious. Duquesne serves God by serving students –through commitment to excellence in liberal and professional education, through profound concern for moral and spiritual values, through the maintenance of an ecumenical atmosphere open to diversity, and through service to the Church, the community, the nation, and the world.

Equality of Opportunity

The Paralegal Institute is motivated by its Catholic identity and values equality of opportunity, human dignity, racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity. Accordingly, the Paralegal Institute prohibits and does not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of a person's race, color, gender, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, genetic history, Veteran status, or disability.

More about the Mission of Duquesne University is online at: [Mission and Spiritan Values](#)

Program Requirements

The Paralegal Institute offers a fully online certificate program in paralegal studies. Courses cover a variety of legal topics, with the goal of preparing students to work in the legal field.

Program Learning Objectives

- Teach students the fundamentals of foundational legal theories and principles in various areas of the law.
- Require students to develop critical thinking and analytical skills necessary to adapt in a variety of legal environments and to generate, support and complete intended client outcomes
- Introduce students to the ethical standards and obligations imposed on all legal professionals, with specific emphasis on the standards and obligations imposed on paralegals and legal assistants.
- Familiarize students with information about the most current legal resources and law-related technology available to legal professionals.
- Prepare students to professionally communicate with strong written and verbal skills necessary to effectively convey to or obtain information from a host of audiences including attorneys, clients, and courts.
- Enhance professional development opportunities for students during the program through networking events, workshops, and individual career-planning sessions.

Requirements for Receiving the Certificate

1. Students must successfully complete ten (10) courses to earn their Paralegal Certificate, consisting of 5 required core courses and 5 elective courses. The five required core courses are: 1) Introduction to Legal System/Paralegalism, 2) Professional Responsibility, 3) Legal Research Methods, 4) Legal Writing & Case Analysis, and 5) Technology in the Law Office. Students must complete at least nine credits through synchronous instruction.
2. Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least a 2.5, as outlined in more detail below.
3. Upon successful completion of all required coursework, complete a program evaluation survey and employment questionnaire. Graduation materials will not be processed or released until these have been completed.
4. No student may be graduated from the Institute, have the program completion confirmed to any entity, receive an official transcript, or be able to participate in any student or graduation programs or awards until all financial obligations to the University have been satisfied.

Essentials in Online Learning

Students are required to complete the University training titled “Essentials in Online Learning” before beginning their coursework. This informative orientation experience is designed to help prepare students to be effective online learners. Students are automatically enrolled in this self-guided course. The course can be found through the Duquesne Portal under “Canvas,” then by choosing the “Essentials in Online Learning” course.

Academic Policies

Grade Point Average Requirement

All students must maintain a cumulative quality point average of 2.5 in course work in order to be eligible for graduation. If a student's cumulative quality index falls below 2.5 after the completion of a minimum of two courses, the student will be placed on academic probation. A student on probation is expected to achieve at least an overall 2.5 average after the next term of enrollment. The student's failure to achieve the required GPA will result in the student being dismissed from the Program.

The grading system at the Paralegal Institute is as follows:

A (4.00) 94 – 100	B (3.00) 83 – 86	C (2.00) 70 – 74
A- (3.75) 90 – 93	B- (2.75) 80 – 82	D (1.00) 60 – 69
B+ (3.25) 87 – 89	C+ (2.25) 75 – 79	F (0.00)

Courses graded "I" (Incomplete) or "W" (Withdrawal) do not earn CEUs, and if required for program completion, must be repeated and passed.

"Incomplete" Grade Policy

Students receiving an incomplete ("I") grade have six weeks (part-time program) or three weeks (full-time program) from the original due date to complete course requirements. If the requirements are not met, the "I" grade will be changed to an "F."

Grading Classroom Performance

A student's classroom performance may be incorporated into a course grade only in the following quantifiable ways, fairly applied to all students in a course:

1. An instructor may reduce students' grades based upon class absences, no matter the reason for the absence, so long as the reduction is based upon policies announced at the start of a course and applied in a consistent manner to all students in the class during the term.
2. An instructor may grade students on the quality of their performance on assigned tasks, such as presentations, exercises, and being "on call" for class discussion, so long as all students in the class are assigned the same or comparable tasks during the term.
3. An instructor may reduce students' grades based upon their lack of preparation for classroom discussion, so long as all students are required in the same manner to be prepared to contribute to classroom discussion and a record is maintained of all

the students' contributions during the semester.

In courses in which grades are not based on anonymous examinations, the instructor shall make available to each student all the information above that was used to calculate a final grade.

Notification of Final Grades

Students can view all final grades in Self Service Banner using a Multipass account number. Students are responsible for changing and maintaining their Multipass, current local address, telephone, and other contact information in DORI. Accordingly, students should review their contact information each term for accuracy. If you need to make changes to your permanent address, please contact the Program Director at 412-396-6313. The Paralegal Institute will not provide students with information about grades, quality point averages, and related matters over the telephone.

Grade Correction Procedure

After grades in a course have been submitted, no grade may be changed except to correct an arithmetic or clerical error.

A student who wishes to challenge a final grade must discuss the grade with the course instructor no later than thirty (30) days after the grade was posted. The instructor must inform the student of his/her decision regarding the grade challenge no later than twenty (20) days after the discussion with the student.

An instructor who believes a grade correction is warranted must submit a grade correction request to the Program Director.

A student may appeal an instructor's refusal to change a grade by petitioning the Program Director and Associate Dean of Strategic Programs no later than sixty (60) days after notice to the student of the instructor's decision. An affirmance of the instructor's decision will be final. Students should contact the Program Director so that a meeting can be scheduled.

Student Course Evaluations

Teaching and learning are at the heart of Duquesne University. To assure quality and provide regular feedback to instructors, one method of teaching evaluation is by student evaluations. The Student Course Survey is the instructor evaluation instrument used by the Institute. Each term, the survey is made available to students in an effort to identify areas where instructors can improve in their teaching and student interaction. The Paralegal Institute takes the Student Course Surveys very seriously and asks that all

students complete one for each course in which the student is enrolled. The feedback provided is invaluable to the Institute and its pursuit of continuous improvement.

Two weeks prior to the end of the term, the survey becomes available to students. It is confidential and anonymous. Instructors are not able to see tabulated results, or the summary of the student comments, until after the term is complete and grades have been made official by the Institute.

Assignments and Examinations

Failure to take an examination or to submit any papers or projects on the time and date required for the course may constitute a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Final examinations, papers, or project schedules will not be altered except for compelling reasons, such as: serious illness or serious family emergencies. Make-up examinations, papers, or projects requests will not be granted based on personal schedule conflicts or a conflict with personal commitments, such as: weddings and vacations, except at the discretion of the instructor. In such instances, the student is responsible for scheduling any make-up work with the instructor.

Review of Graded Examinations/Assignments

Any student wishing to review a graded examination or assignment must contact the course instructor and arrange a time and place to review the student's examination or assignment.

Calendar

The Paralegal Institute has a separate calendar from that of the University. Individual copies of the Paralegal Institute calendar may be obtained from the Program Director via email. The Institute reserves the right to change or alter its calendar or courses at any time.

The part-time program runs in three terms: fall (September – December), winter (January – March) and spring (March – June) and each consist of 11 weeks of study. New students may begin the program at the beginning of one of these terms. Classes in the full-time day program typically run from early-June through the end of August.

Email Policy

Students' Duquesne University personal email account is the official method of communication for Duquesne administrative matters. Students are required to check this account for time-critical notices such as billing notifications, important alerts, or administrative notices requiring a timely response. You may adjust your email account to forward to your non-Duquesne email account. Please contact the CTS Help Desk if you need assistance: help@duq.edu or 412-396-4357.

Notice will be considered received one day following the date the notice is posted to your Duquesne email account. Failure to check your email account does not excuse or exempt you from any actions required of you by the University.

Academic Support/Success

Students experiencing academic difficulties in any course are strongly encouraged to schedule an appointment with their **instructor(s)** as soon as possible. Once students have met with their instructor(s) and determine added assistance is necessary, students should contact the program director to assist, **if necessary**, with resources available at the University.

Class Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is mandatory, and the following policy shall apply to all courses at the Paralegal Institute. Students are expected to have their cameras on during class, unless allowed by the instructor to not have the camera on. Thus, at a minimum, in order to be considered in attendance for a class session, a student must have their camera on, unless the student has received prior permission from the faculty member not to have the camera on for a class session. Faculty members are not required to announce attendance rules at the start of the term in which the course begins, unless they are implementing a stricter attendance standard than that set forth below. A student who misses more than 20% (2 three-hour class sessions) of scheduled classes for a course in any term **without good cause**, as determined by the faculty member, will receive a grade of “F” in that course and receive no credit, regardless of whether the course grade is based on one or more quizzes, exams, papers, or projects. In the discretion of the instructor, student’s late arrival or lack of preparation for class may be counted by the instructor as an absence.

Students who are notified that they will fail a course due to excessive absences may petition the Program Director and the Associate Dean for Strategic Academic Programs for relief; however, the sole relief that may be granted is to convert the “F” to a withdrawal from the course. This relief will be granted only if good cause is provided by the student in advance of its consideration of the student’s petition, and only if the course instructor acquiesces.

Any absences for an extended period of time, due to illness or other circumstances, must be reported to the Program Director.

If a class is cancelled for any reason, the class session must be made-up. If an instructor is late for the scheduled start time of the class, students are expected to wait for 15 minutes before leaving unless prior notification by the instructor or Institute administration is provided to the class.

Accommodations

Any student with special needs who desires accommodations for examinations or other class-related needs must contact the Duquesne University Office of Disability Services at 412-396-6658 or email to disabilityservices@duq.edu to begin the process of documenting the condition that warrants accommodations. Students are encouraged to begin this process as soon as possible. Once a condition is formally documented, the Office of Disability Services will determine the accommodations that are appropriate for the student and will notify the Paralegal Institute's Program Director. Students must complete this process in order to be afforded accommodations at the Paralegal Institute. Duquesne University's policy with regard to accommodations for disabled students is available online at: <https://www.duq.edu/about/accessibility/index.php>

Students whose religious practices preclude them from taking exams on certain days of the week are strongly encouraged to check with their instructors as early as possible during each term and to contact the Paralegal Institute Program Director to request an individual re-scheduling of the course examination, if needed.

Student Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, including, but not limited to, ChatGPT, is prohibited on all work submitted for credit, including, but not limited to, assignments, projects, written papers, or exams, **unless specifically permitted** by your professor, and constitutes a violation of the Disciplinary Code.

Disciplinary Code

The Paralegal Institute embraces the missions of the University and the Thomas R. Kline School of Law. To that end, you are expected to abide by the policies in the University Code of Student Conduct. Student violations of the Code of Student Conduct will be handled pursuant to the University disciplinary code. duq.edu/documents/about/policies-initiatives/studenthandbook-adacompliant-2025-26.pdf.

Leave of Absence

Under certain circumstances, students may be permitted to take a temporary Leave of Absence. For Leaves of Absence, the Paralegal Institute follows the policies outlined in the University Undergraduate Catalog. Students considering a Leave of Absence should review the policy and contact the Program Director.

Registration

General Information

All new students are encouraged to contact the Program Director prior to registering for classes should they have any questions or concerns. During this advising discussion,

students can develop a course plan. Students may select courses of interest, but course selection must follow a reasonable sequence. With the exception of internships, as described in more detail below, there are no prerequisites required; however, developing a planned schedule is beneficial. For instance, students should plan on taking the required courses before or in conjunction with elective courses. For students in the part-time program, up to four courses per term may be taken.

For students in the part-time program, online registration is available during the Fall, Winter, and Spring paralegal term, and the dates for registration will be provided to all active students. Students self-register through the online registration portal. Additionally, electives will be offered during the summer, and students will be notified of the dates of registering for such courses. For the full-time program, the registration process is completed by the Program Director.

Absence unique circumstances, if a course has fewer than five registrants, the course will be cancelled. All other course cancellations are at the discretion of the Institute.

Statute of Limitations

Students in the Paralegal Institute have a maximum of five years from the date of matriculation to complete the certificate program. This limitation excludes any approved Leaves of Absences that may have been granted. Students who have voluntarily withdrawn or have not been enrolled in classes for one year since the last date of the term last attended must formally apply for readmission to the Paralegal Institute.

Registering for Courses Over Multiple Terms

Generally, students may take more than a year to complete the program. This allows students to disperse the tuition costs over time. Most evening students take an average of two courses per eleven-week term. The number of courses a student takes is an individual choice. Students are, however, required to complete the certificate within five years from the date of matriculation.

Internships

Students may be placed in a paralegal position with a private law firm, government agency, court office, corporation, insurance company, bank, real estate company, community service agency, health care facility or other appropriate office. The term of the internship is 10 hours per week for 11 weeks. Internships are offered during daytime hours. Students must create a project portfolio and submit to the Program Director. The student will learn the practical daily operation of the assigned office. Supervised by a licensed, practicing attorney and usually by a practicing paralegal, the student will be both an observer and a participant in the operation of the assigned office. Internship hosts are not required to compensate interns. An internship at a student's place of employment will be allowed only under restricted circumstances. (Prerequisites: 501, 505, 550, 551, 542)

Course Audit

Students may audit a course. However, students must register for the course to be audited and indicate on the registration form that the course is being audited. The same rate of tuition and fees apply to courses being audited. Students may not change to audit status after the first class meeting. Likewise, audited courses may not be changed to matriculated units.

Audited courses do not count toward the number of courses required to earn a certificate.

Admission and Tuition

In order to be considered for admission, students must have an Associate's Degree or apply for Provisional Admittance (see below). Additionally, students must complete an online application, which includes a letter of interest. Finally, students must submit their official transcripts to the Program Director and make a non-refundable deposit.

Non-refundable Deposit

To confirm a student's intent to enroll and to cover administrative costs, a \$250 non-refundable deposit is required upon acceptance into the program. The deposit will be credited towards program tuition. Should a student decide to withdraw from the program after the deposit has been made, the deposit is forfeited. By accepting the offer of admission, students agree to the terms of this policy.

Provisional Admittance

The Paralegal Institute occasionally admits students who have not earned an Associate's Degree. To be admitted provisionally, a student must have worked extensively in the legal field and performed paralegal/law-related tasks. Students must provide documentation from a supervisor that confirms the employment, a list of the tasks performed, and discusses the quality of the student's writing proficiency.

Under no circumstances will the Paralegal Institute admit more than 10% of its new student population in provisional status in any given calendar year.

Upon admission in provisional status, the student will be allowed to take only the 501 Introduction to the Legal System/Paralegalism during his/her first term. The provisional student must earn a grade of "B" or better in this course. Thereafter, the student will be allowed to proceed through the program at his/her own pace.

If the provisional student does not attain a "B" or better, the student may repeat the course only one time at his/her expense to earn a "B" or better grade before being admitted in regular status to the Paralegal Institute. If the student fails to earn the required grade after taking the course a second time, the student will be dismissed from the program.

International Students

For admission to the Paralegal Institute, international students must demonstrate English language ability that meets or exceeds a TOEFL examination score of 90, with a score in all subsections of 20 or higher for listening, writing, and reading. International applicants must successfully complete an admissions interview to establish fluency. In lieu of the TOEFL examination, an IELTS examination score of 7 or a Duolingo score of 125 will also be accepted.

International students must also contact the Duquesne University Center for Global Engagement upon acceptance to the Paralegal Program. Information on International Admissions is available at <http://www.duq.edu/admission-and-aid/how-to-apply/international/index.php>. The Center for Global Engagement may be reached at 412-396-6113 or [intl admissions@duq.edu](mailto:intladmissions@duq.edu).

Readmission

Students not on an approved Leave of Absence and who have voluntarily withdrawn or have not been enrolled in classes for one year since the final date of the last term attended or longer must formally apply for re-admission to the Paralegal Institute. To be considered for re-admission, students should include in the Letter of Interest:

1. Full name at the time of their previous enrollment
2. Dates of attendance
3. Reasons for absence
4. Timetable for completing the certificate, including the expected date of graduation.

Acceptance upon readmission is not automatic. Prior acceptance does not guarantee acceptance, and admission will be subject to current entrance requirements and program availability. If readmitted, the student is subject to the original statute of limitations for completion of the program and is obliged to follow policies and academic regulations and meet the degree requirements in effect at the time of readmission. Additionally, prior to being readmitted, all outstanding financial obligations to the University must be met, and any judicial issues must be resolved. Students whose absences are due to an approved Leave of Absence are not required to reapply for admission in order to return if the student was in good standing when the leave was granted. Military service women and men or their spouses called to active duty are not required to reapply for admission in order to return to the University.

Tuition and Billing Policies

Arrangements must be made with the Student Accounts office for payment of tuition and fees. Once students register, Student Accounts will electronically bill students using student university email accounts. Tuition payment options are available through Student Accounts. Duquesne University does not mail out paper bills or statements. Students

should review the information about tuition requirements, ebills, and payment options by going to <https://www.duq.edu/admission-and-aid/billing-and-payments/index.php>.

Any student who is in debt to the University at the end of any term will not be eligible to register for the next term until the balance is below acceptable indebtedness, as determined by the Student Accounts office. No student may be graduated from the Institute, have the program completion confirmed to any entity, receive an official transcript, or be able to participate in any student or graduation programs or awards until all financial obligations to the University have been satisfied.

Students desiring payment of their tuition and other charges for the term by installments should contact the Student Account Office in the University Administration Building. The Paralegal Institute does not administer loan programs. Students who wish to apply for loans should contact the University Financial Aid Office <https://www.duq.edu/admission-and-aid/financial-aid-and-scholarships/contact-us.php>.

Funding

Funding can take many forms. The Paralegal Institute suggests several options to students for funding the program. The Institute does not provide funding but encourages students and prospective students to explore all options. Non-credit certificate programs and courses are not eligible for federal financial aid. However, there are other sources for funding that should be considered.

Options:

- Private Education Loans
- Veterans Benefits/ GI Bill – potential funding for Military/veterans and
- Dependents
- Employer Education Assistance/Training Budgets

Private Education Loans

Students may choose to finance the program through the Pennsylvania Private Loan Marketplace. Information is available through the University's Financial Aid website: [Financial Aid 101 \(duq.edu\)](#). To use this option, students should contact lenders directly to verify they make available loans for non-credit professional certificate programs. The University recommends that students apply with co-signers to secure the best possible interest rates. Students can find private loan information using the Private Student Loan Marketplace (Alternative Education Loans).

Veterans Benefits/GI Bill

The Department of Veterans Affairs has various programs available. Please go to the Veterans website for more information and instructions. Once the Department of Veterans

Affairs approves benefits, please contact Kathleen Scheer at 412-396-6211 or scheer@duq.edu.

Chris Boissonnault, Director of the Office for Military & Veteran Students, is an excellent resource for military and veteran benefits. He can be contacted at boissonnaultc@duq.edu.

Employee Education Assistance

Some employers offer tuition assistance for employee training and education. Information about creating a tuition reimbursement account with an employer is available through the University's Student Accounts Office, 412-396-6585. Students should explore with employers the availability of funds through employee training budgets for professional development.

Course Withdrawal

If a student finds it necessary to withdraw from the Paralegal Institute or an Institute course, the student **must notify the Paralegal Institute in writing**. By withdrawing from the Institute or from a course, students are subject to the following tuition refund policy:

- 100% - Through the first week of class
- 80% - Through the second week of class
- 40% - Through the end of the third week of class
- 20% - Through the end of the fourth week of class
- 0 – After the end of the fourth week of class

Students who withdraw after the fourth week of class are not eligible for any refund.

Withdrawals through the last day of class for the term will receive a "W" on their transcript. If the Paralegal Institute is not officially notified of the withdrawal, students are held accountable to class attendance policies.

Medical withdrawals require withdrawal from all classes for the term and require a signed statement from a physician stating that the student is medically unable to attend class(es). Fees are not refundable. More information can be found at: [Withdrawals/Refunds \(duq.edu\)](http://duq.edu/Withdrawals/Refunds).

Transfer Policy

Although transfer credits are typically not accepted into the paralegal program, each request will be evaluated on an individual basis. Courses being considered for transfer must have been taken within the past three years from an ABA approved paralegal program. Only course grades of "B" or better will be considered for possible transfer, and no more than three courses will be considered for transfer. Under no circumstances will

an ethics or professional responsibility course be considered for transfer and must be taken at the Paralegal Institute.

Employment

While the Institute cannot guarantee employment, every effort is made to equip students with the skills needed to find law-related positions. Law firms, businesses, and government agencies contact the Institute seeking candidates for vacancies. Current position openings will be posted on the Paralegal Institute's Canvas site. Alumni interested in access to this list can email paralegal@duq.edu to request password.

Students and graduates are also encouraged to work with off-campus placement firms, as well as with Duquesne University's Center for Career Development, careerdevelopment@duq.edu or 412-396-6644. The office uses a platform called [Handshake](#) which allows students to search for a variety of opportunities.

Student Services

Directory

Law Library Duquesne University Thomas R. Kline School of Law 600 Forbes Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15282 Telephone: 412-396-5017 Duquesne Kline Law Library	Center for Career Development 614 Duquesne Union Phone: 412-396-6644 Email: careerdevelopment@duq.edu Planning for a Successful Career
Spiritan Campus Ministry Administration Building First Floor Telephone: 412-396-6020 Spiritan Campus Ministry	Student Accounts Administration Building Telephone: 412-396-6585 Email: studentsaccounts@duq.edu
Canvas Support/Education Technology Telephone: 412-396-5625 Email: edtech@duq.edu	Computer Technology Services (CTS) Telephone: 412-396-4357 (Help) Email: help@duq.edu
Duquesne University Bookstore Phone: 412-434-6626 Email: DUbookstore@duq.edu Online Bookstore: Official Duquesne University Bookstore Apparel, Merchandise & Gifts	Counseling Center Gumberg Library 3 rd Floor Phone: 412-396-6204 Email: counselingservices@duq.edu University Counseling Services (326 Gumberg Library)
Writing Center 216 College Hall Phone: 412-396-5209 Email: writingcenter@duq.edu Writing Center	Office of Special Student Services Phone: 412-396-6658 Email: disabilityservices@duq.edu

Calendar

FALL TERM

September 15, 2025	Monday	Classes Begin
November 24-27, 2025	Monday – Thursday	Thanksgiving Break (No Classes)
December 1-4, 2025	Monday – Thursday	Course Surveys
December 4, 2025	Thursday	Fall Term Ends

WINTER TERM

January 12, 2026	Monday	Classes Begin
January 19, 2026	Monday	MLK Day (Classes Will Be Held) – Office Closed
March 23-26, 2026	Monday – Thursday	Course Surveys
March 26, 2026	Thursday	Winter Term Ends

SPRING TERM

March 30, 2026	Monday	Classes Begin
April 2, 2026	Thursday	Holy Thursday (Classes Will Be Held) – Office Closed
April 3, 2026	Friday	Good Friday – Office Closed
May 25, 2026	Monday	Memorial Day – No Classes, Office Closed
June 8 – 11, 2026	Monday – Thursday	Course Surveys
June 11, 2026	Thursday	Spring Term Ends

SUMMER TERM

June 15, 2026	Monday	Classes Begin
August 24-28, 2026	Monday – Thursday	Course Surveys
August 28, 2026	Friday	Summer Day Program Ends
August 27, 2026	Thursday	Summer Evening Program Ends

Date of most recent revision: September 9, 2025.