

Membership Application for Paralegal Programs

Institution Name:

Program Name:

Address:

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Telephone Number: () - - **Fax Number:** () - -

Institution Website URL:

Program Website URL:

Program Director:

E-Mail Address of Program Director:

AAfPE will send all information and communication related to the application and membership via email only to the Program Director. It is the responsibility of the Director to coordinate resources and personnel within the institution to provide the information.

This form must be completed electronically in its entirety and submitted as an attachment with all required supporting documentation to: membership@aafpe.org

Category of membership applied for – select only one

Institutional* Associate Affiliate

Voting category* applied for – select only one: Bachelors Associate Certificate

* The program option for the voting category applied for must have been in operation for at least two years and have graduates in order to qualify for *Institutional* membership.

Please complete the following:

Date students first admitted to program option of voting category applied for	Number of graduates for program option	Number of students currently enrolled

Accreditation, Approval and General Information

1. **Accreditation.** Which one of the following agencies accredits the institution?

- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges
- Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology
- Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools
- Council on Occupational Education
- New York State Board of Regents

A. In what year was the institution last reaccredited?

B. Is the institution's accreditation status anything other than fully-accredited?

If other than fully-accredited, state the accrediting status and time-frame under which the institution must respond to the accrediting body.

C. Is your institution independently accredited as a separate school, college, or university or is your institution part of a multi-campus/multi-site system for which the system as a whole is accredited? If part of a multi-campus/multi-site system, is any campus/site within that system already a member of AAFPE?

2. **ABA Approval.** Is the program approved by the American Bar Association?

A. Date of approval or most recent re-approval:

B. Is the program currently under any deferment of re-approval, Warning, Probation, or Order to Show Cause with the ABA?

3. **Admissions.** What are the admission requirements for the program option under which you are seeking institutional membership? (e.g., high-school diploma/GED, Associate Degree, other – explain).

4. **General Education – Certificate Programs.** For programs applying for membership under the Certificate voting category, describe the means by which you ensure graduates have successfully completed a minimum of 18 semester credits, or equivalent*, of general education courses as a condition of being awarded the certificate. This requirement can be met by either requiring evidence of a prior degree, requiring completion of general education courses in conjunction with the paralegal-specific courses, or by verifying successful completion of the required general education courses at another institution.

*18 semester credits, 27 quarter credits, 27 continuing education credits, or 225 contact/classroom/clock hours.

5. **Non-discrimination/Disability Policies.**
 - A. Does the institution have a non-discrimination policy or affirmative action plan relating to students and personnel?
 - B. Does the institution have a policy for the accommodation of students and personnel with disabilities?

Program Administration

1. **Program goals.** **Include as an attachment** to this application a scanned/PDF version of the printed or online material that contains the goals and describe where this information is available to students.
2. **Advisory committee.** Programs must have an advisory committee dedicated to that program. Advisory committees must include public and private attorneys (which can include judges) and paralegals. A majority of the advisory committee members for the program must be from outside the institution. The advisory committee must meet at least once per year and the substance of those meetings must relate to planning, maintaining, and assessing how the program meets its goals and needs of the legal community.
 - A. List the non-institutional members of the advisory committee and identify their role (public/private, attorney/paralegal). Add rows to the table, as needed.

Name	Role (Attorney/Paralegal/Other)	Public/Private

- B. List the meeting dates of the advisory committee for the last two years prior to this application.

Advisory Committee Meeting Dates

- C. **Include as an attachment** the minutes of those advisory committee meetings. The minutes must include the dates of the meetings, the names of non-institutional members that attended, and a record of the discussions related to the paralegal program.

Paralegal Education Program

1. **Program assessment.** Regular, structured, and documented assessment of how well a program is meeting its stated goals is essential. The plan must include the method by which students evaluate the faculty and the courses, the method by which the program assesses student and graduate satisfaction with the program, graduates' perception of how well the program prepared them for work as an entry-level paralegal, and the employment community's satisfaction with the program's graduates. The plan must include the frequency with which each type of assessment is conducted, the date it was last conducted, a description of the analysis conducted of the assessment results, a summary of actions taken in response to the assessment results, and the method by which the results are shared with the faculty and Advisory Committee. **Include as an attachment** the program's written assessment plan. Do not include the assessment instruments or raw data.
2. **Paralegal-specific courses.** Programs must require successful completion of a minimum of 18 semester credits, or equivalent*, of **paralegal-specific** courses. List all of the **paralegal-specific** courses for the voting category you are seeking membership under and identify whether the course is required (R) or an elective (E), and the number of credits/units/clock hours for each course. Add rows to the table, as needed.

Paralegal-Specific Course Name	Required/Elective	Credits/Units/Hours

*18 semester credits, 27 quarter credits, 27 continuing education credits, or 225 contact/classroom/clock hours.

3. **Technology skills.** Programs must provide instruction in technology skills needed for employment as a paralegal. Identify the courses in which, and describe how, the program ensures students have technology skills (other than electronic legal research skills) that are appropriate for employment as a paralegal.
4. **Ethics & professional responsibility.** Programs must provide instruction in ethics and professional responsibility. Identify which course(s) provide instruction in ethics and professional responsibility and identify how many total units/clock hours are devoted to instruction in this area.
5. **Legal research.** Programs must provide instruction in both print-based and electronic legal research. Which course(s) provide instruction in print-based legal research and in electronic research?

6. **Course transfer policy.** Programs must have a written transfer policy for accepting from other institutions any paralegal-specific courses that will be substituted in lieu of paralegal-specific courses otherwise required in the program and taught at the program’s institution. The policy must include criteria for accepting courses in transfer, procedures to protect the academic quality and integrity of the program, and limits on the number of paralegal-specific courses that will be accepted in transfer. The criteria must also include procedures for ensuring that programs provide at least ten semester credits, or the equivalent*, of paralegal-specific courses through traditional (face-to-face) classroom instruction. State where the policy is published and available to students. **Include as an attachment** the written transfer policy.

*10 semester credits, 15 quarter credits, 10 continuing education credits, or 125 contact/classroom/clock hours.

7. **Credit by challenge.** State whether, for paralegal-specific courses, the program grants credit by challenge or examination or any other method other than successful completion of a course taken in residence at the program’s institution or accepted in transfer. If no such credit for paralegal-specific courses is granted, state “None granted.”

If such credit is granted, the program must have a written policy that governs the award of such credit. The policy must ensure the academic quality and integrity of the program as a whole is maintained, place limits on the number of paralegal-specific credits that may be earned through such means, and provide a means for evaluating and approving the award of such credit. The policy must include procedures for ensuring that programs provide at least ten semester credits, or the equivalent*, of paralegal-specific courses through traditional (face-to-face) classroom instruction. **Include as an attachment** the credit by examination policy, if applicable.

*10 semester credits, 15 quarter credits, 10 continuing education credits, or 125 contact/classroom/clock hours.

8. **Alternative-delivery courses.** Are any paralegal-specific courses offered through anything other than traditional (face-to-face) classroom instruction, such as hybrid* or fully online courses? If so, for each course, indicate the following, adding additional rows, as needed:

Course Name	Method of Delivery

* Hybrid courses include courses whose credit/contact hour requirements are satisfied partially through traditional (face-to-face) classroom instruction and partially through other means, such as partially-online courses.

For each **method** of delivery listed above:

- A. Explain how the program ensures that, when accounting for courses taken through alternative delivery, any transfer coursework accepted, and any course credits awarded through challenge, examination, or any other method other than successful completion of a course taken in residence at the institution, students take at least ten semester credits,

or the equivalent*, of paralegal-specific courses through traditional (face-to-face) classroom instruction.

*10 semester credits, 15 quarter credits, 10 continuing education credits, or 125 contact/classroom/clock hours.

- B. What means are used to ensure that there is interaction between faculty members and students and amongst students?
 - C. What technical support is provided to students and faculty during an alternative delivery course?
 - D. Describe the technical training and orientation to any online learning systems provided and required of faculty prior to their assignment as instructor for an alternative delivery course that uses such as system.
10. **UPL Statement.** Indicate where in the program's literature that it is explained that paralegals may not provide legal services directly to the public except as permitted by law. **Include as an attachment** a copy of that statement from the program's printed or online material.

Faculty

1. **Program direction/administration.** If the program director is not a full-time employee of the institution, a full-time employee of the institution must be ultimately responsible for the program.
 - A. **Include as an attachment** the resume for the person designated as the program director. *If the program director is not full-time, also include as an attachment* the resume for the person who is employed full-time with the institution that has ultimate responsibility for the program. Resume(s) must include the dates of service with the institution and the program, relevant professional qualifications, and experience working with paralegals and/or as a paralegal.
 - B. If the program director is full-time, identify the percentage of time devoted during the year for each of the three areas below. If the program director is part-time, indicate actual clock hours per semester/quarter/term devoted to the three areas below.
 - i. Program-related administrative duties.
 - ii. Administrative or teaching duties not related to the paralegal program.
 - iii. Teaching within the program.
 - C. Indicate who, by name and title within the institution, has primary responsibility for each of the following activities:

Activity	Person responsible & their title within the institution
Defining program objectives	
Representing the program at the institution	
Developing and managing the program budget	
Recruiting and retaining qualified faculty	
Advising paralegal program students	
Organizing the advisory committee	
Maintaining professional relationships with the legal and paralegal communities	
Monitoring and responding to the paralegal educational needs of the community	
Evaluating the adequacy of the library/information resources available to program students	
Evaluating the program, including assessment of the legal community's utilization of and need for paralegals; students' and graduates' satisfaction with the program, and; employers' satisfaction with program's graduates	

2. **Instructor-related skill development.** It is assumed that attorney and paralegal faculty members engage in the requisite continuing education mandated by any applicable licensing or certification body. Explain how the program supports the professional growth of the program director and all faculty members in the paralegal program as *instructors* so that they are more effective educators. Describe any educational activities provided to faculty members to help them in their role as instructors, as distinct from their role as an attorney or paralegal.
3. **Faculty meetings.** Meetings that include all paralegal faculty members, including adjunct/part-time faculty, must be conducted at least once per year. List below the dates of each paralegal faculty meeting held during the past two years.

Faculty Meeting Dates

Include as an attachment copies of the minutes of these meetings. The minutes must include the dates of the meetings, the names of those in attendance, and a record of the discussions.

Library

1. **Library facility.** Which law library facilities does the program rely on to provide students with the resources needed to meet the educational requirements of the program? Check all that apply.

- Law school library.
 City, county, or bar library.
 Section of the institution's library.
 Other - describe

3. **Library accessibility.** Provide the following information about library use and accessibility for each library listed in above:

- A. What are the hours of library operation?
- B. Is instruction in legal research permitted within the library facility? Describe any Restrictions placed on providing legal research instruction within the library. \
- C. What kind of assistance is available to students when using the library outside of a scheduled class period?

4. **Library resources.** Indicate which of the following sources are available and *current* in hard-copy and/or electronic format at the libraries listed above?

1. State code(s): Hard-copy Electronic
2. State or regional reporter(s): Hard-copy Electronic
3. State or regional digest(s): Hard-copy Electronic
4. A resource for checking validity and currency of primary source materials, e.g., Shepard's, KeyCite: Hard-copy Electronic
5. Legal encyclopedia(s) and law dictionaries: Hard-copy Electronic
6. Texts, practice manuals, and form books for all paralegal-specific courses: Hard-copy Electronic
7. Local and state bar journals, legal newspapers, and periodicals devoted to the paralegal profession: Hard-copy Electronic

5. **Electronic research resources.** What access do students have outside of the libraries to research materials and resources in electronic formats? List and describe each electronic format (e.g., Westlaw, Lexis, LoisLaw, Internet access, etc). Indicate whether this access is available throughout the program to all students or only to students in specific courses, such as Legal Research.

This form must be completed in its entirety and submitted as an attachment with all required supporting documentation to: membership@aafpe.org