

Oregon State Bar Licensed Paralegal Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Licensed Paralegal (LP) Program Application Process

What are the requirements to become a Licensed Paralegal (LP)?

An applicant for the Licensed Paralegal (LP) program is required to demonstrate minimum competence to practice within the scope of their license, and the requisite character and fitness to practice law. The knowledge, education and competency requirements depend in part on the applicant's prior experience. Most requirements fall into one of the following categories:

- **Foundational Education or Experience**

Applicants must at least have one of the following: an associate degree in paralegal studies, a bachelor's degree in another discipline, a juris doctorate (J.D.) law degree, a paralegal certification, extensive experience as a paralegal, or an approved education waiver.

- **Pre-Licensure Education Requirements**

In addition, the applicant must complete 20 hours of specifically designated professional education during the 18 months prior to licensure. For those applicants who took the LP exams in December 2023, this requirement may be fulfilled after the exams but before licensure. For more information on the breakdown of the required 20 hours, please see [here](#).

- **Recent Substantive Paralegal Experience**

Applicants must complete 1,500 hours of substantive paralegal experience during the 18 months prior to licensure. (750 hours for applicants with J.D.)

- **Examination**

For at least the first group of applicants, there will be two examinations (scheduled on the same day): one focused on legal ethics, and one on the scope of the LP license (Rule 11 of Rules for Licensing Paralegals). If multiple colleges offer an approved ethics course, or the NCBE allows applicants to take the MPRE, the bar will stop offering the ethics exam.

Where can I find more detailed information on the Licensed Paralegal (LP) program?

- A detailed overview of the Requirements for Licensure can be found [here](#).
- A helpful flow-chart showing admissions processes is available [here](#).
- The complete Rules for Licensing Paralegals can be found [here](#).

- The full application packet can be found [here](#). Please note that upon completion of your application, you must upload the completed application and all related documents into the SmartSheet page located [here](#). Your application packet includes instructions for using SmartSheet.

What is the timeline for Licensed Paralegal (LP) applications?

The Oregon State Bar began accepting applications in July of 2023. The bar will begin licensing this first group in January 2024. The entire process from application to licensure is expected to take between four and six months. Beginning in 2024, the exam will be offered at least four times per year (twice in each subject matter).

How much will it cost to become a Licensed Paralegal (LP)?

The Licensed Paralegal (LP) application fee is \$750. The annual license fee for LPs is \$350.

Oregon State Bar members, including LPs, are required to carry malpractice insurance through the Professional Liability Fund, with an annual assessment of \$3,500, discounted by 40% in the new admittee's first year of coverage with the PLF and by 20% in years two and three. Additional information on the Professional Liability Fund (PLF) is available on its website www.osbplf.org.

When can an applicant take the exam?

The multiple-choice subject matter Entry Exams will each be held twice a year – once in early Spring/Summer and again at the end of the year. Family Law and Landlord Tenant will be tested on separate days. See below for more details on what the exam will entail.

For applicants that have not completed their RLP 6.2 requirements (demonstration of knowledge of the Oregon Rules of Professional Conduct for Licensed Paralegals (ORPC-LP)), a multiple-choice Ethics Exam will be held on the morning of the subject matter Entry Exam.

What will the exams entail?

The Licensed Paralegal (LP) entry exam will be a multiple-choice exam that will be 60 or 90 minutes in length, which will test an applicant's knowledge of Rule 11 of the Rules for Licensing Paralegals, which defines the limited scope in which LPs may practice under their license. While substantive knowledge of the underlying endorsed practice area (family law or landlord-tenant law) will be included in the test, this exam will only test the substantive knowledge needed for the correct analysis of a fact pattern intended to create issues under Rule 11.

The OSB will also offer an LP Ethics Exam to help applicants comply with RLP 6.2 (demonstration of knowledge of the Oregon Rules of Professional Conduct for Licensed Paralegals (ORPC-LP)). This exam will be approximately 60 to 90 minutes as well and will be held the morning before the subject matter Entry Exams.

Are there other options for a Licensed Paralegal (LP) applicant to demonstrate their knowledge of the ORPCLP besides the above referenced ethics exam?

Some higher education institutions within Oregon are supporting the Licensed Paralegal (LP) program by developing and offering ethics courses that cover the new and amended ORPC-LP. If an applicant takes such a course and achieves a final grade of a B+, the applicant will have demonstrated their knowledge of the ORPCLP and will not be required to pass the MPRE or sit for the OSB ethics exam. Here is the information on the current available qualifying courses in Oregon:

Institution	Course Catalogue ID	Course Description	Course Outcomes	Prerequisites Required? Hybrid or Remote	Link to sign up for the Course
Portland Community College	PL 103	<p>The course is offered every quarter. Covers ethics and professional responsibility for legal professionals. Focuses on the meaning and application of the Oregon Rules of Professional Conduct and the Oregon State Bar's Statement of Professionalism.</p> <p><i>Prerequisites: PL 101. Audit available.</i></p> <p>Covers ethics and professional responsibility for legal professionals. Focuses on the meaning and application of the Oregon Rules of Professional Conduct and the Oregon State Bar's Statement of Professionalism. Also relates the Oregon Rules of Professional Conduct to the ABA Model Guidelines For the Utilization of Legal Assistant Services, the NALA Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility, and the NFPA Affirmation of Responsibility.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and evaluate potential or current legal ethics issues. 2. Identify, locate, and apply the law applicable to potential or current legal ethics issues and recommend appropriate resolution. 3. Identify and describe tools and procedures to avoid ethical problems and resources for assistance to resolve legal ethical issues that arise. 4. Prepare cogent and grammatically correct written materials in response to assignments. 	<p>PL 101 – Introduction to the US Legal System is a prerequisite for this course, but the prerequisite may be waived by the program. This course is offered every term.</p>	<p>Registration Link to be a Student at PCC</p> <p>PCC – Paralegal Studies Page</p> <p>PCC – Course Calendar Page (Search for “PL 103” to register for course).</p>

Institution	Course Catalogue ID	Course Description	Course Outcomes	Prerequisites Required? Hybrid or Remote	Link to sign up for the Course
Umpqua Community College	LA132	This course covers the study of ethics as it relates to the legal profession. Students will study the concepts of ethics and being ethical, explore the differences between morality and rules of ethics, and study the rules of professional responsibility as they pertain to legal support staff (and lawyers). Discussions and opinions of ethical issues in real world situations will help facilitate the learning process on this topic. Students will study the Oregon Rules of Professional Conduct, ABA Rules, and Oregon State Bar’s Statement of Professionalism and their practical application. Scope of practice for Oregon licensed paralegals and regular paralegals will be discussed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze ethical situations and apply ethical rules following the ABA Model Rules, Oregon Rules of Professional Conduct, and other ethical guidelines for paralegals. Discuss scope of practice for licensed and regular paralegals in Oregon. Explain the relationship of ethics to confidentiality, competence, fees, billing, conflicts of interest, and Unauthorized Practice of Law (UPL). 	<p>No prerequisites required. The Program is 100% Remote.</p> <p>Remote office hours are offered every week via zoom meeting as well. It is offered every Spring</p>	<p>Registration link to become a student at UCC</p> <p>Link to Paralegal Studies at UCC</p> <p>Link to Course Search at UCC (Search for LA 132).</p>

What is a “character and fitness” review?

The nature of legal work requires a high degree of public trust. Legal professionals work with sensitive client information, hold client money, and uphold the laws of Oregon and the United States. For this reason, the admissions process for both lawyers and Licensed Paralegals (LPs) includes a review of applicants’ character and fitness to practice law. At its most basic, this includes a background check and review of applicant history – criminal, financial, educational, regulatory, etc. It is anticipated that most applications will progress through this review and move forward.

If the review raises concerns, the applicant will be asked for a further explanation of any past conduct raised in review. If concerns remain, the OSB Regulatory Counsel can request the appointment of a special investigator, who will report findings to the Committee of Paralegal Assessors (CoPA). If the CoPA’s determination is to

recommend against admission, and the applicant wishes to continue toward admission, the matter would be referred to the OSB Adjudicator for a hearing subject to Rule 9 of the [Rules for Licensing Paralegals](#). Throughout this review, the applicant is afforded due process and the opportunity to present their case and demonstrate eligibility.

Are there limits on the number of Licensed Paralegal (LP) applicants or licensees?

No. The Oregon State Bar has no plans to limit the number of LPs.

If I have additional questions, who should I contact?

Questions about the Oregon State Bar's Licensed Paralegal (LP) program should be directed to LP@osbar.org.