



250 West Pender Street  
Vancouver, BC V7B 1S9

## **Planning a Paralegal Career**

Interested in a career as a Paralegal? Not sure how to start? Here are some pointers:

1. First, consider if a career in legal administration is really for you. A career as a legal secretary, legal assistant, or paralegal is about being a highly trained staff support person.

Just because you are interested in law, does not mean you might be a good legal support staff person. A legal support staff position is about following procedures and managing documents. If you prefer to make your own decisions, and do not like to take direction, you might want to consider other options instead.

The downtown VCC library keeps a number of up-to-date legal and career-related references. View the options and decide what would work best for you.

2. An understanding of the law is not as important, in the beginning stages, as solid and strong office administrative skills. You can obtain office administrative skills by spending at least a year in an office position, OR you may consider one of the VCC programs to gain these skills.
3. Computer skills are paramount. It is impossible to find work in the legal field without strong computer abilities.

Get yourself an email account and internet access. Learn basic, intermediate, and advanced word processing and file management skills. Take courses at VCC if you need to, or go to a local library or community centre for free and low-cost options.

4. You must have highly developed English language skills to advance as a legal support staff person. Whether or not English is your first language, polished vocabulary and grammar skills are paramount. Take courses if necessary to insure your language skills are strong, especially for the written word.

5. Legal administrative skills are the next building block, after office skills. You may earn these with at least one year in a legal office, or through one of the VCC programs.
6. After acquiring solid office skills, plus solid legal administrative skills, you may proceed to the Paralegal level. The Paralegal program is for people already in a legal position, or who are looking for legal work, after having completed a legal administrative program.
7. Consider education options at Vancouver Community College.

**For Office and Administrative Skills:**

Office Administration Certificate Program, Continuing Studies (Part time, evenings):  
<http://www.vcc.ca/programs-courses/details.cfm?div=2&area=CSOFFADMIN&prog=ADMSUPVR>

Administrative Assistant Program (full time, days):  
[http://business.vcc.ca/officemgt/parent.cfm?WLDI\\_LOCAL\\_DEPT\\_ID=540](http://business.vcc.ca/officemgt/parent.cfm?WLDI_LOCAL_DEPT_ID=540)

**For Business English Skills:**

Business English Skills courses, Office Administration Certificate Program, Continuing Studies (Part time, evenings):  
<http://www.vcc.ca/programs-courses/details.cfm?div=2&area=CSOFFADMIN&prog=COMMUCAT>

Advanced ESL courses for students wishing to upgrade for academic or professional reasons (part time or self-study):  
[http://www.vcc.ca/programs-courses/college-programs-area.cfm?DIV\\_ID=5](http://www.vcc.ca/programs-courses/college-programs-area.cfm?DIV_ID=5)

**For Legal Administration Skills, after office skills are completed:**

Legal skills courses, Office Administration Certificate Program, Continuing Studies (Part time, evenings):  
[http://www.vcc.ca/programs-courses/details.cfm?div=2&area=CSOFFADMIN&prog=LEGAL\\_OFF](http://www.vcc.ca/programs-courses/details.cfm?div=2&area=CSOFFADMIN&prog=LEGAL_OFF)

Online Legal Administrative Assistant Program (part time)  
[http://www.vcc.ca/programs-courses/detail.cfm?div\\_id=2&prog\\_id=188](http://www.vcc.ca/programs-courses/detail.cfm?div_id=2&prog_id=188)

Daytime Legal Administrative Assistant Program (full time, starts in September or January)  
[http://business.vcc.ca/officemgt/parent.cfm?WLDI\\_LOCAL\\_DEPT\\_ID=541](http://business.vcc.ca/officemgt/parent.cfm?WLDI_LOCAL_DEPT_ID=541)

**For Paralegal Skills**, after Legal Skills are completed:

Paralegal program (part time, Continuing studies, Online courses are available.):  
<http://continuinged.vcc.ca/legal>

Paralegal Program course schedules:  
<http://www.vcc.ca/programs-courses/details.cfm?div=2&area=CSPARLEGAL&prog=PARALEGAL>

Best wishes in your career journey,

***Christine Williams***  
Program Coordinator, Paralegal Program