

ADULT LEARNER ICAP FOR ARAPAHOE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARALEGAL PROGRAM

The following Individual Career and Academic Planning (ICAP) components are completed by ACC paralegal students throughout their progression in the ACC Paralegal Program:

CAREER AWARENESS

Labor market information

ACC paralegal students discuss in classes current job opportunities, new employment opportunities in the legal field and beyond, and the current qualifications sought by employers in the local market. Students are also encouraged to look at labor market information, including salary guides for legal professionals, available on a variety of employment websites.

Cover letter and resume introduction and/or development

Each ACC paralegal student is required to create a legal resume while in the program, and resumes are reviewed and discussed in class. The students have a class session with the ACC Career & Transfer Center to discuss resume preparation and are encouraged to seek further assistance through the Career & Transfer Center with resumes, cover letters, and interviewing skills. Students also review job postings in class to discover the current skills required and demanded by the local market for employment. They are then shown where and how to gain these skills while in the program to help improve their marketability and to strengthen their resumes.

Employment search tools

ACC paralegal students are highly encouraged to register with the ACC Career & Transfer Center to gain access to ACC Career Connect where employers advertise available paralegal positions and internships. Students registered on Career Connect receive weekly emails advertising newly posted paralegal positions and internships. These emails ensure that students receive up to date paralegal employment information. Local employment listings are also discussed in paralegal classes to review the desired skills and knowledge required by the local marketplace.

Professional organizations

ACC paralegal students are highly encouraged to join a professional organization to keep abreast of changes in the paralegal profession, to locate employment postings, and to identify opportunities for continued education for the paralegal professional. Students are introduced to many associations in the program, such as the National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA), the Association of Certified E-Discovery Specialists (ACEDS), and the Rocky Mountain Paralegal Association (RMPA) which is a sub-organization of the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA).

ACADEMIC AND PLANNING MANAGEMENT

A Plan of Study

The ACC Paralegal Program uses curriculum advising sheets for program and course information and suggested course sequencing for part-time and full-time students. Every new students must meet with

the Chair of the Paralegal Department or the Paralegal Program Coordinator prior to enrollment to review course sequencing and to develop an academic plan for successful completion of the program.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Cover letter and resume development

Each ACC paralegal student is required to create a legal resume while in the program, and students are encouraged to work with the ACC Career & Transfer Center to refine their resumes and cover letters and to practice interviewing skills. Throughout the course of the program, students may work with the Paralegal Department and faculty to further edit their resumes.

Job search skill development

ACC paralegal students work with the ACC Career & Transfer Center to gain exposure to all available paralegal jobs and internships, using Career Connect and other job search software. The ACC Career & Transfer Center staff provides additional resume assistance and offers practical job search strategies. The Career & Transfer Center also hosts a Career Fair annually where paralegal students are encouraged to participate and interview with employers and recruiters for available opportunities.

Informational interviewing of potential employers

The Paralegal Department, faculty, and the ACC Career & Transfer Center provide ACC paralegal students guidance on informational interviewing of potential paralegal employers.

Employment interview preparation

The ACC Career & Transfer Center provides paralegal students with the opportunity to engage in mock interviews to practice their interviewing skills, to receive feedback, and to make improvements to assist in successfully obtaining paralegal employment.

Job shadowing, internship, and apprenticeship opportunities

The Paralegal Department, faculty, and the ACC Career & Transfer Center all work together to ensure that paralegal students are aware of volunteer paralegal opportunities and available paralegal internships to gain hands-on experience. All paralegal students must complete an internship required to graduate from the ACC Paralegal Program.

Professionalism in the workplace and work ethic

Ethics and professionalism are taught throughout the entire program at ACC to prepare students for the demands of the legal profession and the expectations of the legal working environment. ACC paralegal students will review local laws and study case law pertaining to the unauthorized practice of law to help students learn the boundaries of what a paralegal can and cannot do while working in a legal setting.

Understanding of need for skills demonstration

ACC paralegal students complete extensive legal research and writing assignments that can be used to show employers their research, analysis, drafting, and editing skills. Practical assignments are used in many classes to give students the opportunity to showcase their understanding and ability to apply the skills taught throughout the program. The required internship is the ultimate opportunity for students to showcase and demonstrate the skills they have learned and apply them to a legal work setting.

Portfolio development

ACC paralegal students complete extensive classroom assignments, volunteering opportunities, and specialized training that can be used to show employers the skills they have developed, the outreach to the community they have fostered, and the special interests in the legal world that they have cultivated in the program. Students are encouraged to create a portfolio to show potential employers their well-rounded skills and knowledge to help them gain employment.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESS

Industry professional organizations

ACC paralegal students are highly encouraged to join a professional organization to keep abreast of changes in the paralegal profession, to locate employment postings, and to identify opportunities for continued education for the paralegal professional.

Professional social media (LinkedIn)

Paralegal students are encouraged to develop LinkedIn accounts to network with fellow paralegals, prospective employers, and other members of the local legal community.

Networking and professional community engagement

The ACC Paralegal Program has an active ACC Paralegal Club which hosts Paralegal Professional Day where paralegal students visit local law firms and other legal settings to speak with paralegals and attorneys about the paralegal profession. The Club also hosts networking events with alumni and local paralegals and attorneys. Lecture luncheons and panel discussions with local attorneys are also hosted by the Club to assist in obtaining information about the skills that paralegal employers seek when hiring.

Upskilling and retooling

The ACC Paralegal Program is preparing a new set of classes aimed at currently working paralegals (and graduates of the program) to update their skills and knowledge to match the desired skills of the current labor market.

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