

**Community College of Rhode Island
Criminal Justice & Legal Studies Department**

**Student Assessment Portfolio
For
Paralegal Studies Majors**

Introduction: In order to assess the student learning outcomes developed for students matriculating in the Paralegal Studies Program at the Community College of Rhode Island, a portfolio of various pieces of course work as outlined below shall be submitted to the Criminal Justice & Legal Studies Department near the end of the student's course of study for evaluation.

Instructions: The portfolio shall be submitted in a hard cover three-ring binder. Students may also be required to submit their portfolio material electronically to an e-portfolio system established by the college. The portfolio shall contain:

- (1) a title page with the student's name, campus, semester and year submitted, and e-mail address;
- (2) a table of contents page listing the individual pieces of work included in the portfolio, together with a designation of the course name and number (including section number) for which each item was done, the name of the instructor for that particular course, and the semester and year the course was taken;
- (3) a selection of eight (8) samples of the student's work as detailed below placed into the three-ring binder with numbered index tabs separating the pieces of work included; and
- (4) a career reflection piece as outlined below regarding his or her college career at CCRI and his or her future plans, whether within or outside of the area of the course of study in which the student matriculated at the college.

Course Work to be included in the Portfolio: The heart of the portfolio shall consist of eight (8) samples of the student's work taken from course work done during the student's time at the Community College of Rhode Island. The eight items to be included in the portfolio shall come from the following six categories of course work:

- (1) The original research conducted for the class on Legal Research & Writing (Laws 2090) including copies of all statutes, court decisions, administrative regulations, and secondary legal materials located and actually used in completing the research project. The research materials in

- this section shall have a table of contents listing all of the items included with proper legal citations to the material.
- (2) The research memorandum written as part of the research project for the course on Legal Research and Writing (Laws 2090). The memorandum shall properly quote from and cite the statutes, courts decisions, and other materials used in the research project. It shall be a minimum of 1,000 words (four word processed pages, double spaced, with one inch margins and a font size between 10 and 12 points).
 - (3) The litigation documents (complaints, discovery documents, etc.) prepared as part of the drafting project completed for the course on Basic Civil Procedure for Paralegals (Laws 2020). Each document shall be in the proper court format including (where appropriate) the proper case caption, document designation, prayer for relief, signature clause, and certificate of service.
 - (4) Two case briefs (summaries of reported and published appellate court decisions) completed in a format prescribed by the Criminal Justice & Legal Studies Department that clearly identifies the legal issue or issues in the case, the legal holdings of the appellate court, and reasoning given by the court for its holding. The case briefs may have been prepared for any one or more of the following courses: Constitutional Law (Laws 2000); Law of Evidence (Laws 2010); Law of Torts (Laws 2100); or Legal Research & Writing (Laws 2090)
 - (5) One Critical Thinking Exercise using a template approved by the department on the eight elements of thought (question, purpose, information, concepts, assumptions, inferences, implications, and point of view) prepared for either Introduction to Paralegal Studies (Laws 1080) or Law of Contracts (Laws 2050)
 - (6) Two written assignments from other law courses in the curriculum including Administration of Justice (Laws 1010); Law of Property (Laws 2060); Law of Business Organizations (Laws 2070) or elective courses such as Criminal Law (Laws 1020) and Law & Society (Laws 2040). Each written assignment shall be a minimum of 500 words (two word processed pages, double spaced, with one inch margins, and a font size between 10 and 12 points).

Career Reflection Piece: Each student shall include a “reflection” piece in the portfolio. This reflection shall be a minimum of 750 words (three word processed pages, double spaced, with one inch margin, and a font size between 10 and 12 points). The student will reflect on their experiences and courses at CCRI in the Paralegal Studies major including (1) their reasons for choosing the major, (2) how their views of the major may have changed (or not changed) over their time in the program, (3) what their plans are for the future (whether those plans include further education or work or both), and (4) whether they plan to stay in this legal field of work or move to some other field along with the reason or reasons they have chosen their particular path.

Time of Submission: The student's portfolio shall be submitted at the end of the semester in which the student will have completed both of the skills courses in the paralegal program: Laws 2020 (Basic Civil Procedure) and Laws 2090 (Legal Research & Writing). The instructor of the last of these courses that the student takes will be the faculty member to whom the portfolio shall be submitted and who will evaluate the portfolio. The evaluation will be based upon the six student learning outcomes established for the program, and will be scored through a rubric established by the department. The rubric shall contain a scale of six points for each of the six program student learning outcomes with a maximum score of 36 points. Students receiving 24 or more points on the rubric shall be deemed to demonstrated competency in their major area of study. Students who receive fewer than 24 points on the portfolio will be given one semester to revise and re-submit the portfolio to the original instructor who evaluated it. Students completing the portfolio with a score of 24 or higher shall receive a Certificate of Portfolio Completion signed by the faculty evaluator attesting that the student has demonstrated "competency" in their field of study.

Although a low score on the portfolio shall not prevent the student from graduating once they have completed the required course work, students should know that the portfolio as developed can be a powerful tool to be used by the student in procuring employment in the field, that the portfolio will be basis for any recommendation that the faculty evaluator may be asked to provide for the student, and that that the Certificate of Portfolio Completion can enhance their resume in any employment search.

Students Required to Submit a Student Assessment Portfolio: All students who are in the Paralegal Program under the requirements of the Fall 2008 catalog will be required to submit the above portfolio as part of their course work in either Laws 2020 or Laws 2090, whichever of these courses is taken last. If these courses are taken in the same semester, then the portfolio will be a requirement of the Law 2090 course. As a course requirement, failure to complete the portfolio will result in an "incomplete" grade for the course until the portfolio requirement is completed.

Student already matriculating in the Paralegal Studies that are under the requirements of catalogs prior to the Fall 2008 catalog shall be encouraged to complete the portfolio beginning in the Fall 2008 semester, with the motivation that such a portfolio may be used as a tool for securing employment in the field and can be the basis for a recommendation given by the faculty evaluator. These students shall also be eligible to receive the Certificate of Portfolio Completion indicating competency in their field of study.

Questions Regarding Portfolio Requirements: All questions regarding the requirements for the Student Assessment Portfolio for Paralegal Studies Majors shall be directed to Professor Daniel J. Donovan through e-mail at ddonovan@ccri.edu