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Certified Paralegal Examination FAQs

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Certified Paralegal Examination FAQs

What are the eligibility requirements to apply for the Certified Paralegal (CP) Exam?

- **Category 1:** Graduation from, completion of, or current enrollment in the last semester or quarter of a paralegal program that meets one of the criteria listed in sections (a) through (e) below.
 - **(a)** a paralegal program approved by the American Bar Association; or
 - **(b)** an associate degree program in paralegal studies; or
 - **(c)** a post-baccalaureate certificate program in paralegal studies; or
(In addition to the official school transcript, candidates must submit an original course catalog or an original letter from the school registrar or program director attesting that the program is a post-baccalaureate certificate program requiring a bachelor's degree as a prerequisite.)
 - **(d)** a bachelor's degree program in paralegal studies; or
 - **(e)** a paralegal program which consists of a minimum of 60 semester hours (or equivalent quarter hours) of which at least 15 semester hours (or equivalent quarter hours) are substantive legal courses.
(Candidates applying under Category 1(e) may combine college hours from more than one institution. The candidate must have graduated from a paralegal program consisting of a minimum of 15 semester hours [or 225 clock hours or equivalent quarter hours]. Evidence of the minimum hours required under Category 1(e) must be provided with the application form.)
- **Category 2:** A bachelor's degree in any field plus one year of experience as a paralegal or successful completion of at least 15 semester hours (or equivalent quarter hours) of substantive paralegal courses.
 - (Those applying under the provision allowing for additional course work in lieu of the one-year work experience must submit an official school transcript showing completed course work.)
- **Category 3:** A high school diploma, or equivalent, plus seven (7) years of experience as a paralegal plus a minimum of twenty (20) hours of continuing legal education completed within the two-year period prior to application for the examination.
 - (Evidence of continuing legal education credit is documented by the attorney/employer attestation that must be signed as part of the application form or by submitting certificates of completions for CLEs taken.)

When will the Certified Paralegal Examination be administered?

- The Knowledge Exam is administered year-round, on-demand with the exception of holidays.
- The Skills Exam is administered during the months of: **February, April, July, and October**

How long is the application process?

- **48 hours** - If the application, fee, and supporting documentation are submitted and it meets the eligibility requirement, the approval process - including both the approval acknowledgment and the authorization to test notification - takes approximately 48 hours.
- **TBD** - If any portion of the application is incomplete, a notification will be sent requesting the additional information. The deadline to submit additional information is 60 days from the notification date.
 - **If the additional information is not received by the 60-day deadline**, the application is voided and a \$75 processing fee is required.

What is the application process?

- Submit the application, fee, and supporting documentation via online, email, fax, or mail. Depending on your application pathway, supporting documents are as follows:
 - Official transcript, letter of completion, or diploma showing proof of graduation for **Category 1** and **Category 2**. *Foreign degrees must be evaluated to show U.S. equivalency.*
 - Employer attestation for **Category 2** ([page 5](#))
 - Employer attestation for **Category 3** ([page 6](#))
 - Student applicants are required to submit both:
 - [Student waiver form](#)
 - Program director signature ([page 4](#))
 - [ADA form](#) if accommodations are being requested
 - Personal statement describing your disability and its impact on your daily life
 - Documentation from a qualified medical professional certifying to your disability or qualifying medical condition, with specific identification of the requested accommodation and the medical basis for the request
- NALA staff reviews the application and supporting documentation.
 - If the eligibility requirement is met, the application is approved.
 - An official application approval acknowledgment is sent via email within 48 hours of receipt.
 - An Authorization to Test is sent via email within 48 hours after the application approval notification.
 - The Authorization to Test provides the link to schedule your exam using the PSI portal.
 - If the eligibility requirement is **not** met, the application is in pending status and a notification requesting additional information is sent via email. A 60-day deadline is provided to submit the requested information.
 - If the additional information is not received by the deadline, the application is voided and a \$75 processing fee is required.

What are the Exam application fees?

- First time candidates:
 - Standard (not military, not student)
 - \$250 - NALA members
 - \$275 - Non-NALA members
 - Paralegal Student (*The Paralegal student fee is for paralegal students currently in the last semester or quarter of the Paralegal program and who do **not** currently qualify under category 1, 2, or 3.*)
 - \$125 - NALA members
 - \$150 - Non-NALA members
 - Military (active-duty, veterans, guardsmen, reservists, and their spouses)
 - \$200 – NALA members
 - \$220 – Non-NALA members
 - Includes one attempt for the Knowledge Exam and one attempt for the Skills Exam.
- Candidates who do not pass the first attempt of the Knowledge or Skills examination:
 - Candidates are not eligible to apply for a subsequent attempt until 90 days from the previous attempt
 - \$60 (per subsequent attempt for the Knowledge and Skills Exam)
 - A maximum of three attempts are available during the 365-day eligibility period

How do I know what to study?

The Exam Format and Specifications on the last page provides the breakdown of subjects tested on the examination and is based on federal rules and procedures. The examination tests on general knowledge and concepts in each of the areas listed on the outline. Most areas are included in paralegal studies curricula or are areas commonly practiced by paralegals as evidenced by the responses to the 2016 Job Task Analysis Survey conducted in the Fall of 2016.

Suggested sources for study are listed on the NALA website. These sources are provided for information only; candidates are not required to purchase any of these materials. Successful completion of the Certified Paralegal Examination depends on many factors, including educational background and experience. It may be helpful to determine the most familiar areas and focus on areas that may require additional study.

The function of the NALA Certifying Board (“Certifying Board”) is to test knowledge, rather than teach the test. In accordance with the NCCA accreditation requirements, the Certifying Board is not involved in the development or delivery of any CP exam study materials, preparation materials, or products; and the developers of those materials and products do not have access to any CP Exam content. The Certifying Board does not require, approve, endorse, or recommend any specific study materials or methods to be used by examinees. The Certifying Board has no involvement with the NALA online study group nor does the Certifying Board provide any information, answers, or responses to questions posed by the online study group.

Where can I take the Exam?

- **PSI Testing Centers** – The Knowledge and Skills Exams are administered at a PSI testing center. You will create an account in PSI’s system when you receive the Authorization to Test from NALA. [Click here](#) to watch an informative video about the test center experience.
- **PSI Online Testing (Remote Proctoring)** – Only the Knowledge Exam is administered via online (remote proctoring). The Knowledge Exam may be taken at your home. [Click here](#) to watch an informative video about the online testing experience.
- **Partner Testing Center** – To review the current Partner testing center options, type or click <https://nala.org/certification/examinee-information/> and scroll to the Partner Testing Centers section.
 - If your employer, college, or military base is eligible to administer the Exam for you, the required forms are located on <https://nala.org/certification/> under the Partner Testing Forms (in the Quick Links section):
 - Qualifying as a Testing Center
 - Testing Center Application
 - Proctor Application
 - Proctor Confidentiality Agreement

Will I receive my score at the testing center?

- **Yes.** The results for the **Knowledge Exam** will be available at the testing center. NALA will upload the official score to your NALA account and send you an email within 48 hours of your exam completion.
- **No.** The score for the **Skills Exam** is not available at the testing center. The score for the Skills Exam will be released after the post-administration analysis, scoring, and standard setting has been completed. Results are expected to be released 6-8 weeks after the testing window closes.

I passed my Knowledge Exam. When may I take the Skills Exam?

- Candidates who pass the Knowledge Exam will receive official scores within 48 hours of completing the exam.
- Within the next 48 hours, an Authorization to Test for the Skills Exam will be sent via email.
 - 365 days will be provided for completion after receiving notice of eligibility from NALA.
 - Candidates who do not pass the Skills Exam must wait 90 days before re-taking it and are provided a total of three attempts to successfully complete the Skills Exam in the 365-day period.
 - If the Skills Exam is not successfully completed in the 365-day period, candidates will start over by submitting a new application, fee, and retake the Knowledge Exam.

I passed my Skills Exam. What happens next?

- Candidates who pass the Skills Exam will receive official scores within 6-8 weeks after the closing of the testing window.

- NALA will mail the new Certified Paralegal a certificate along with important information on how to maintain your certification within three weeks of releasing scores.

I didn't pass my Exam. What happens next?

- Candidates who do not pass the Knowledge or Skills Exam must wait 90 days after the initial attempt before applying for the next attempt.
- Candidates must purchase another attempt for the Knowledge or Skills exam by submitting a Retake Application. The \$60 fee is nonrefundable.
- Candidates filing a Retake Application for the Knowledge or Skills Exam will receive a **Testing Ticket** from NALA after the application is processed. The Testing Ticket provides the link to schedule your exam using the PSI portal.
- Candidates who do not pass the Knowledge or Skills Exam on the **third attempt** are required to submit a new application and fee.

Note: Please allow additional processing hours for weekends and holidays.

Exam Format and Specifications

Knowledge Exam		100 points
1	United States Legal System	15
1.A	Sources of Law	
1.B	Judicial System	
1.C	Remedies	
1.D	Administrative Law	
2	Civil Litigation	15
2.A	Jurisdiction	
2.B	Federal Rules of Civil Procedure	
3	Contracts	15
3.A	Formation, Rights, and Duties	
3.B	Enforcement and Defenses	
4	Corporate/Commercial Law	10
4.A	Business Organizations	
4.B	Rights and Responsibilities	
4.C	Transactions	
5	Criminal Law and Procedure	5
5.A	Criminal Law	
5.B	Criminal Procedure	
6	Estate Planning and Probate	5
6.A	Estate and Trusts	
6.B	Wills	
7	Real Estate and Property	10
7.A	Property Rights and Ownership	
7.B	Transactions	
8	Torts	10
8.A	Intentional Torts	
8.B	Negligence	
8.C	Strict Liability	
9	Professional and Ethical Responsibility	15
9.A	American Bar Association (ABA) Model Rules of Professional Conduct	
9.B	Unauthorized Practice of Law	
Skills Exam		30 points
1	Writing	12
1.A	Grammar, Spelling, and Punctuation	6
1.B	Clarity of Expression	6
2	Critical Thinking	18
2.A	Reading Comprehension	6
2.B	Analysis of Information	6
2.C	Decision Making	6