

## Comparison of National Level Paralegal Certification Programs<sup>1</sup>

NFPA®	NFPA®	NALA	NALA	NALS	NALS	NALS <sup>2</sup>	AACP <sup>3</sup>
<b>Paralegal Core Competency Exam® (PCCE®)</b>	<b>Paralegal Advanced Competency Exam® (PACE®)</b>	<b>Certified Paralegal Exam<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Advanced Certified Paralegal</b>	<b>Professional Paralegal Exam</b>	<b>Accredited Legal Professional Exam</b>	<b>Certified Legal Professional Exam</b>	<b>American Alliance Certified Paralegal Exam</b>
<b>Credential</b>							
Core Registered Paralegal® (CRP®)	PACE Registered Paralegal® (RP®)	Certified Paralegal® (CP®)	Advanced Certified Paralegal (ACP)	Professional Paralegal (PP)	Accredited Legal Professional (ALP)	Certified Legal Professional (CLP)	AACP
<b>Exam Required?</b>							
Yes 2.5 hours – 125 multiple choice questions	Yes 4 hours – 200 multiple choice questions	Yes 2 required sections; Section 1 – 3 hour multiple choice exam, Section 2 – 2 hour written assignment	No ACP awarded upon completion of a course of study	Yes 4 hour, 4 part multiple choice exam	Yes 4 hour, 3 part multiple choice exam	Yes 4 hour, 4 part multiple choice exam	No
<b>Year Established</b>							
2011	1996	1976	2006	2004	-	-	-
NFPA®	NFPA®	NALA	NALA	NALS	NALS	NALS	AACP

<sup>1</sup> The content of the information is verified only as to the information about the NFPA® Paralegal Advanced Competency Exam® (PACE®) and the Paralegal Core Competency Exam® (PCCE®). The information regarding the NALA, NALS and AACP Certification programs are unverified and provided for informational and comparison purposes only. The NALA, NALS and AACPinformation was obtained from publicly available sources and publications. Please contact NALA, NALS and AACP directly for the exact details regarding their credentialing programs.

<sup>2</sup> NALS Certification Exams Resource Manual <https://www.canva.com/design/DADVii1nEU8/PjhH90k-fvAlwmOMqtbRIA/view>

<sup>3</sup> <https://aapipara.org/>

<sup>4</sup> \*Note CLA and CLAS designations were discontinued Fall 2018

**Eligibility (Education<sup>5</sup> and/or Experience<sup>6</sup> Pathways)**

High School Diploma OR GED AND 4 years substantive paralegal experience AND 12 hours CLE, including 1 ethics, in the 2 years before application; or	Minimum 4 years substantive paralegal experience before 12/31/2000; or	Graduation from paralegal program that is: *ABA approved *Associate Degree program * Post baccalaureate certification program in paralegal studies * Bachelor Degree in paralegal studies * Paralegal program that consists of 60 semester hours with at least 15 semester hours in substantive legal courses; or	Completion of all Chapters and Chapter Exams AND Submission of Statement of Completion for each course of study.	Minimum of 5 years of experience performing paralegal/legal assistant duties; or	Completion of an accredited business/legal course; or	Minimum of 3 years of experience in the legal field.	Must be presently working as a paralegal; AND
Service Member in the US Armed Forces in a paralegal rate AND 1 hour of ethics in year of application; or	E6 or above in a Paralegal rate in any branch US Armed Forces AND 12 hours of CLE, including 1 ethics, within 2 yrs of application; or	Bachelor Degree in any field of study AND 1 year of paralegal experience <sup>7</sup> ; or		Hold a bachelor's degree in paralegal studies; or	Completion of a NALS Legal Training Course; or	Students of an accredited or ABA-approved paralegal studies program who are near graduation may sit for the CLP exam provided that NALS receives a copy of their college transcript and a letter, on official university letterhead and signed by the program director, confirming the student's graduation date ( <i>must be within a three-month window</i> ). If the student does not	Have at least 5 years of substantive paralegal experience; AND

<sup>5</sup> NFPA requires that degrees obtained outside of the United States be submitted by the applicant for evaluation for a professional evaluation of the US degree equivalence and a copy of the analysis provided to NFPA as part of the application.

<sup>6</sup> NFPA defines substantive paralegal experience for these purposes as a full time (minimum of 37.5 hours per week) position with an attorney, law firm, corporation or government agency with at least 80% of the work performed being substantive paralegal work that would otherwise be performed by an attorney for the number of years of experience required. Part time employment is prorated accordingly. The experience must be verified and confirmed pursuant to NFPA's procedures

<sup>7</sup> NALA considers 15 semester hours (or 225 clock hours or 22.5 Quarter hours) of substantive paralegal courses equivalent to one year of experience as a paralegal.

						successfully graduate from his/her program, the results of the CLP exam will become null and void and the exam fee forfeited.	
PCCE Assurance of Learning Program Partner <sup>8</sup> students within 2 months of graduating AND registered through the AoL program. Affiliate program students register themselves after graduation; or	Associate's Degree <sup>9</sup> in paralegal studies AND 6 yrs substantive paralegal experience; or	High school diploma or equivalent AND 7 years of experience AND 20 hours of CLE within 2 yrs of application.		Have graduated from an ABA-approved paralegal program; or	One year of general office experience.		A Bachelor Degree in any discipline from an accredited institution; or
Paralegal Certificate <sup>10</sup> AND 1 year experience AND 6 hours of CLE, including 1 ethics, in the year of application; or	Associate's Degree in any subject AND 7 years of substantive paralegal experience; or			Have graduated from another accredited paralegal program which consisted of a minimum of 60 semester hours and/or 900 clock hours, of which at least 15 semester hours and/or 225 clock hours were in substantive law; or			An Associate Degree in paralegal studies from an ABA approved paralegal program or a program which is a voting institutional member of the American Association for Paralegal Education ("AAfPE"); or
Associate's Degree in any subject AND 1 year of substantive paralegal experience AND 6 hours of CLE, including 1 ethics, in	Associate's Degree in any subject, passing the PCCE®, and completing 2 renewals of the CRP® credential; or			Hold a bachelor's degree in an unrelated field and have a minimum of one year of experience			A Certificate from an ABA approved paralegal program or a program which is a voting institutional member of AAfPE.

<sup>8</sup> Information on how to participate in NFPA's Assurance of Learning Program information can be found on NFPA's website at [www.paralegals.org](http://www.paralegals.org)

<sup>9</sup> Associate Degrees are accepted from institutionally accredited and/or ABA approved paralegal programs.

<sup>10</sup> Paralegal Certificate programs must meet requirements as outlined in [NFPA's Short Term Paralegal Program Position Statement](#). A visual checklist can be found [here](#). As defined in the position statement, "A semester hour is equivalent to 15 classroom hours of at least 50 minutes in duration." If the certificate program requires the 60 semester-hours as a prerequisite (so the students only need to complete their 18 semester hours of substantive paralegal courses), that comes to the equivalent of 225 classroom hours. If the certificate program includes the 60 semester hours as part of the program, that comes to 750 hours, or a total of 975 classroom hours including the above 225 paralegal course classroom hours.

the year of application; or				performing paralegal/legal assistant duties.			
Associate's Degree in paralegal or legal studies; or	Bachelor's Degree in any subject AND 3 yrs substantive paralegal experience; or						
Bachelor's Degree in paralegal or legal studies; or	Bachelor's Degree in paralegal studies AND 2 yrs substantive paralegal experience.						
Bachelor's Degree in any subject AND paralegal certificate.							

**Exam Fees**

Members \$215 +\$25 Processing Fee  Non-Members \$250 +\$25 Processing Fee  Effective January 1, 2020, the PCCE Exam Fee will increase to:  Members/AoL Participants \$300  Non-Members \$325  *Non-Refundable	Members \$325  Non-Members \$350  *Non-Refundable	NALA Members \$250  Non-Members \$275  for both the Knowledge and Skills Exams  Note "The PSI appointment fees are separate from the examination fees and paid directly to PSI.  Payment is required in advance. <sup>11</sup>  *Non-Refundable	Each course runs around 20 CLE hours.  Members \$250  Non-Members \$300  *Non-Refundable	Initial Fees:  NALS Members \$225  Non-Members \$275  Student/Military \$225  Individuals with PLS/CLP \$175  Proctoring Fee: \$45, paid directly to service provider.  *The entire fee, less a 25% processing fee, may be refunded if requested 30 days	Initial Fees:  Full-Time Student \$75  NALS Members \$100  Non-Members \$125  Military \$75  Proctoring Fee: \$45, paid directly to service provider.  *The entire fee, less a 25% processing fee, may be refunded if requested 30 days or more before the	Initial Fees:  NALS Members \$175  Non-Members \$225  Military \$175  Proctoring Fee: \$45, paid directly to service provider.  *The entire fee, less a 25% processing fee, may be refunded if requested 30 days or more before the	\$75  Membership Required:  Voting Member \$35/year  Associate Member \$35/year (non-voting)  Sustaining member \$50/year (non-voting)  Sponsor/Vendor \$200/year (non-voting)
--	--	--	--	---	--	--	--

<sup>11</sup> Page 40 of the [CP Candidate Handbook](#)

				or more before the scheduled examination date. Cancellations after this period will forfeit full amount of registration.	scheduled examination date. Cancellations after this period will forfeit full amount of registration.	scheduled examination date. Cancellations after this period will forfeit full amount of registration.	
<b>Testing Dates and Locations</b>							
Most days <sup>12</sup> at any of the more than 750 Prometric Testing Centers located in the US and internationally <sup>13</sup>	Most days at any of the more than 750 Prometric Testing Centers located in the US and internationally <sup>14</sup>	Knowledge Exam administered on-demand year round at PSI Testing Facilities.		Offered monthly through RPNOW, third party remote proctoring.	Offered monthly through RPNOW third party remote proctoring.	Offered monthly through RPNOW third party remote proctoring.	
Must take exam within 90 days of authorization to test.	Must take exam within 90 days of authorization to test.	Must successfully complete Knowledge Exam to be eligible to take the Skills Exam (February, April, July, and October).					

<sup>12</sup> Except Sundays and Holidays.

<sup>13</sup> Prometric international testing facilities are only available to US Active Duty paralegals or their spouses.

<sup>14</sup> Prometric international testing facilities are only available to US Active Duty paralegals or their spouses.

Renewal Fees							
Members \$35	Members \$50	\$125 (recertification fee)		\$75	\$50	\$75	\$40
Non-Members \$50	Non-Members \$75						
*Effective 01/01/2020 <sup>15</sup> Members \$65	*Effective 01/01/2020 <sup>16</sup> Members \$75						
Non-Members \$110	Non-Members \$150						
*Non-refundable	*Non-refundable						
Renewal Requirements							
Complete 8 hours of approved CLE (including 1 ethics hour) every 2 years. *Effective January 1, 2021, complete 8 hours of approved CLE (including 2 ethics CLEs, one of which can be a diversity, inclusion and equity CLE)	Complete 12 hours of approved CLE (including 1 ethics hour) every 2 years. *Effective January 1, 2021, complete 12 hours of approved CLE (including 2 ethics CLEs, one of which can be a diversity, inclusion and equity CLE)	Complete 50 hours of CLE (including 5 ethics hours) every 5 years.		Accumulate 75 points in education credits (include 5 points on ethics) every 5 years.	Complete 50 hours of CLE. <sup>17</sup>	Accumulate 75 points in education credits (including 5 points on ethics) every 5 years.	Complete 18 hours of CLE (including 3 ethics hours) every 3 years.
Retake Fees							
Members \$215 +\$25 Processing Fee	Members \$325	\$60 per subsequent attempt for the Knowledge Exam		Members \$60/per part	Retake Fees – 1 part	Members \$50/per part	
Non- Members \$250 +\$25 Processing Fee	Non-Members \$350	AND		Non-Members \$70/per part	Full-Time Student \$40 (1 part) \$50 (2 parts)	Non-Members \$60/per part	
	*Non-Refundable	\$60 per subsequent attempt for the Skills Exam		Student/Military \$60/per part	Members \$40 (1 part) \$75 (2 parts)	Military \$50/per part	

<sup>15</sup> Approved by the NFPA Board at the July, 2019 Board Meeting

<sup>16</sup> Approved by the NFPA Board at the July, 2019 Board Meeting

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.nals.org/?page=recertification>

<p>Effective January 1, 2020<sup>18</sup>, the PCCE Exam Fee will increase to:</p> <p>Members/AoL Participants \$300</p> <p>Non-Members \$325</p> <p>*Non-Refundable</p> <p>If retake is within 2 years of initial application, do not need to resubmit supporting documentation with the reapplication</p>	<p>If retake is within 2 years of initial application, do not need to resubmit supporting documentation with the re-application</p>	<p>The PSI appointment fees are separate from the examination fees and paid directly to PSI.<sup>19</sup></p>		<p>Proctoring Fee: \$45, paid directly to service provider.</p>	<p>Non-Members \$50 (1 part) \$100 (2 parts)</p> <p>Military \$40 (1 part) \$50 (2 parts)</p> <p>Proctoring Fee: \$45, paid directly to service provider.</p>	<p>Proctoring Fee: \$45, paid directly to service provider.</p>	
---	---	---	--	---	---	---	--

<sup>18</sup> Approved by the NFPA Board September, 2018 Board Meeting

<sup>19</sup> Page 40 of the [CP Candidate Handbook](#)

### Retake Restrictions

May reapply 4 weeks after last exam attempt;  AND  3 retake limit in any 2 year period (original, plus 2 retakes).	May reapply 4 weeks after last exam attempt;  AND  3 retake limit in any 2 year period (original, plus 2 retakes).			All failed parts must be retaken at the same time.  2 year limit in which to retest.	All failed parts must be retaken at the same time.  2 year limit in which to retest.	All failed parts must be retaken at the same time.  2 year limit in which to retest.	
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

### Study Manual and Fees

<p>PCCE Study Manual, 1st Edition \$75 (plus s/h)</p> <p>Effective January 1, 2020 PCCE Review Manual, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition</p> <p>Members \$125 (plus s/h)</p> <p>Non-Members \$150 (plus s/h)</p> <p><a href="https://www.paralegals.org/pccemanual">https://www.paralegals.org/pccemanual</a></p>	<p>PACE Study Manual, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition</p> <p>Members \$125 (plus s/h)</p> <p>Non-Members \$150 (plus s/h)</p> <p><a href="https://www.paralegals.org/pacemanual">https://www.paralegals.org/pacemanual</a></p>	<p>Members \$160 (plus s/h)</p> <p>Non-Member \$170 (plus s/h)</p> <p>Mock Exam Members \$45</p> <p>Mock Exam Non-Members \$55</p>		<p>Advanced Manual for the Legal Professional 14th Edition (ISBN 9780314644923)</p> <p>Gregg Reference Manual 11th Edition [including online Appendix C: Rules for Alphabetic Filing] (ISBN 9780073397108)</p> <p>The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citations 20th Edition</p> <p>Paralegal Today: The Legal Team at Work 7th Edition (ISBN 9781305506084)</p> <p>Instructors May Request a FREE Copy of Rotunda's Black Letter Outline</p>	<p>Basic Manual for the Legal Professional 14th Edition (ISBN 9780314631657)</p> <p>Gregg Reference Manual 11th Edition [including online Appendix C: Rules for Alphabetic Filing] (ISBN 9780073397108)</p> <p>Instructors May Request a FREE Copy of Rotunda's Black Letter Outline on Professional Responsibility 9th Edition (ISBN 9780314275530)</p>	<p>Advanced Manual for the Legal Professional 14th Edition (ISBN 9780314644923)</p> <p>Gregg Reference Manual 11th Edition [including online Appendix C: Rules for Alphabetic Filing] (ISBN 9780073397108)</p> <p>The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citations 20th Edition</p> <p>Instructors May Request a FREE Copy of Rotunda's Black Letter Outline on Professional Responsibility 9th Edition (ISBN 9780314275530)</p>	
--	---	--	--	---	--	---	--





				on Professional Responsibility 9th Edition (ISBN 9780314275530)			
<b>Number of Current Individual Credentialed Paralegals<sup>20</sup></b>							
446 (07/19)	636 (07/19)	5300 <sup>21</sup> (03/19)	2100 (03/19)	580 (05/19) <sup>22</sup>	1141 (05/19) <sup>23</sup>	778 (05/19) <sup>24</sup>	86 (05/19) <sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Rounded up to the nearest tenth.

<sup>21</sup> NALA notes in their CP Handbook that they have over “19,000 (active and inactive) Certified Paralegals and over 3,900 Advanced Certified Paralegals” however public records list 7,822 currently credentialed individuals; roughly 5,295 CPs, 2,100 ACPs and 487 inactive or retired combined CPs/ACPs. <https://www.nala.org/certification/certified-paralegal-cp-program>  
<https://www.nala.org/sites/default/files/files/users/CP%20Program%20Candidate%20Handbook.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Per the published list of PPs on the NALS website as of 052919; may include Emeritus <https://www.nals.org/page/exampasslist>

<sup>23</sup> Per the list of ALPs on the NALS website as of 052919; may include Emeritus <https://www.nals.org/page/exampasslist>

<sup>24</sup> Per the list of CLPs on the NALS website as of 052919; may include Emeritus <https://www.nals.org/page/exampasslist>

<sup>25</sup> Per the AACP website [https://aapipara.org/content.php?page=https\\_\\_\\_aapipara.starchapter.com\\_images\\_downloads\\_AACP\\_Certification\\_aacp\\_certification\\_program\\_08\\_2\\_2018\\_rev.pdf](https://aapipara.org/content.php?page=https___aapipara.starchapter.com_images_downloads_AACP_Certification_aacp_certification_program_08_2_2018_rev.pdf)