

**Common Course Outline**  
**PALG 230**  
**Advanced Legal Research for Paralegals**  
**3 Semester Hours**

**The Community College of Baltimore County**

**Description**

**PALG 230 – 3 credits – Advanced Legal Research for Paralegals** expands on the knowledge and skills acquired in PALG 103. This course focuses on utilization of advanced skills in researching, writing, and revising legal memoranda, client correspondence, and other operative legal documents. Students refine their analytical skills and critical thinking skills, as well as develop persuasive writing techniques.

**Prerequisite: PALG 103**

**Overall Course Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. effectively use primary and secondary sources of law to research and resolve legal issues;
2. prepare internal memoranda of law analyzing increasingly complex legal issues in a fictional client's scenario;
3. prepare law office correspondence of various levels of complexity, including demand letters, statutory letters and client letters;
4. utilize advanced research techniques using the Internet, Westlaw and in library research;
5. develop a procedure for the revision of legal writing, both memoranda and correspondence;
6. logically develop and present oral and written arguments;
7. cite primary and secondary legal sources according to the ALWD Citation Manual;
8. develop advanced citation techniques, such as use of signals, string citations and parentheticals; and
9. utilize advanced techniques for the validation of legal authority, including Key-Cite.

**Major Topics**

- I. Legal Correspondence
- II. Communication Skills
- III. Revision of Legal Writing
- IV. Legal Research -- Advanced Techniques

- A. Internet
- B. Westlaw
- C. Library Research
- V. Citation Form – Advanced Techniques
- VI. Legal Memoranda
- VII. Grammar
- VIII. Citation Validation and Updating - Advanced Techniques

### **Course Requirements**

Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member and specific assignments and procedures for evaluating student performance will be described in the individual class syllabus, but will include the following:

1. A minimum of three legal memoranda of increasing complexity combining objective and analytical/critical thinking components, such as inter-office memoranda analyzing a client's fictional case and applying the appropriate primary and secondary authority to reach a legal conclusion.
2. A minimum of three legal correspondence/letters of varying complexity and subject matter such as a client letter, demand letter and statutory form letter.
3. Revision and resubmission of a minimum of one legal memorandum and one legal correspondence project.
4. A minimum of one oral presentation or collaborative learning project conducted in groups, such as the research and presentation of a state's legislative and judicial website.
5. A minimum of two other written assignments to allow for both objective and analytical review of primary legal sources, including assignments based upon the class readings, and to review skills acquired and sources used in PALG 103, such as a review of Key-Citing skills; use of digests, encyclopedias; or case briefs.

### **Other Course Information**

This course is a Paralegal Studies required course. It is taught in the classroom using a variety of instructional techniques, which are intended to meet the varied learning styles of our diverse population.