

## CP Examination Description

The CLA examination is divided into five sections. A minimum passing score of 70% is required on all five sections in order to earn the Certified Paralegal credential.

Examinees are asked to demonstrate knowledge by responding to true/false, multiple choice and matching questions requiring knowledge of the subject and reading comprehension skills. Analytical skills and writing abilities are further tested by essay questions. The sections of the examination are as follows:

### Communications

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- Word usage and vocabulary
- Grammar/punctuation
- Writing skills
- Nonverbal communications
- General communications related to interviewing and client communications
- General communications related to interoffice office situations

This section contains a writing exercise.

*The Elements of Style*, Strunk & White, has been adopted by the NALA Certifying Board as the authority for the Communications section.

### Ethics

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- Ethical responsibilities centering on performance of delegated work including confidentiality, unauthorized practice of law, legal advice, conflict of interest, billing and client communications
- Client/public contact including identification as a non-lawyer, advertising and initial client contact
- Professional Integrity/competence including knowledge of paralegal codes of ethics
- Relationships with co-workers and support staff
- Attorney codes/discipline
- Knowledge of the American Bar Association's *Rules of Professional Conduct* and the NALA Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility is required by this examination.

### Legal Research

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- Sources of law including primary authority, secondary authority; understanding how law is recorded
- Research skills including citing the law; shepardizing, updating decisions; procedural rules of citations
- Analysis of research problem including identification of relevant facts and legal issues

*A Uniform System of Citation*, Harvard Law Review Association, has been adopted by the NALA Certifying Board as the authority for the Legal Research section.

## Judgment and Analytical Ability

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- Comprehension of data – identifying and understanding a problem
- Application of knowledge – ability to link facts or legal issues from other cases to the problem at hand, recognizing similarities and differences by analogy
- Evaluating and categorizing data
- Organizing data and findings in a written document

This section contains an essay question which requires analysis of a research request, finding applicable law, and writing a responsive memo.

Examinees will be graded on the ability to:

- Identify which facts are relevant and state them concisely and accurately;
- Identify the threshold or main issue and any secondary issue(s);
- Identify the relevant legal authority and apply it to the facts; and
- Draw persuasive logical conclusions.

## Substantive Law

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The substantive law section of the examination is composed of five sub-sections. The first section, Substantive Law-General covers concepts of the American legal system. **All examinees are required to take this section.** Subjects covered within this section include:

- Court system including their structure and jurisdiction
- Branches of government, agencies, and concepts such as separation of powers
- Legal concepts and principles including sources of law, judicial decision making, appellate process
- Sources and classifications of law including the constitution, statutes, common law, civil law, statutory law and equity law

The other four sub-sections are selected by the applicants from a list of nine substantive areas of the law. These tests cover general knowledge of the following practice areas:

- Administrative Law
- Bankruptcy
- Business Organizations
- Civil Litigation
- Contracts
- Criminal Law and Procedure
- Estate Planning and Probate
- Family Law
- Real Estate

The skills required by these tests involve recall of facts and principles that form the basis of the specialty practice area. Examinees must also demonstrate an understanding of the structure of the law and procedures to be followed in each specialty practice area.