

From Start to OSBA Paralegal Certification:

My Personal Journey

(Originally published by PACO Citator – Summer 2010)

(Revitalized June 21, 2021 for PACO)

In September 2009, I made the decision to sit for the 2010 OSBA Paralegal Certification exam the following May. With eight short months before the exam, a game plan for studying and preparing for the exam was critical to ensure I covered the required areas of the exam. Since my best friend, Erica Smith-Ford (a fellow paralegal in Dayton), was also sitting for the exam, we formed our own mini study group. Erica and I started by splitting up and summarizing the various Rules such as Civil Procedure, Evidence, Criminal Procedure and Professional Conduct.

On top of summarizing the Rules, I also spoke with several OSBA Certified Paralegals about the application process and actual exam. The criteria for eligibility were very straightforward and, in my opinion, encompassing enough to allow any paralegal regardless of educational and experience to sit. In the electronic time we live in, the application process was fast and straightforward. I am sure most of those who took the exam at least once during this process spoke to or emailed Melissa Quick, the OSBA Paralegal Certification guru. Whether questions about references or computer hick-ups, Melissa is a wonderful help through this process.

After three months of studying the Rules, the time came for the Capital University Law School paralegal refresher course in April 2010. The hipper Brandy Merryman had a great breakfast spread for all the paralegals to enjoy as a start to a very long day of presenters. Brandy made the refresher course process easy and stress free.

Several Paralegal Association of Central Ohio (PACO) members who were also sitting for the exam participated in the day long refresher course. During this event, our PACO President Nell Chambers came up with a great idea: Columbus paralegal study group. Six members strong, we met twice a week for the last two weeks leading up to the exam at Panera Bread in Grandview. From sharing work experiences in our various fields to reviewing the packet of information from the refresher course, we studied together for several hours each night of the study group.

When May 1 rolled around, the tension was building because the unknown of the exam was about to be revealed. The clock struck 10 a.m. and the exam began. With three hours to complete the exam, I am sure everyone had a strategy on where to start whether with their respective specialty areas or the general exam. Personally, I started with my specialty area of torts and personal injury and criminal. With a background in litigation, I was fairly confident about the general section of the exam.

After an hour and half, I was complete and knowing myself it was not wise to review my answers. I truly believe in going with my gut. The relief of the exam being over soon set in and the “after party” at Spagio with my study group was a great ending to a long morning.

While I knew it would take several weeks to get my results, the wait was agonizing. You go over and over the questions and your responses. Did I pick the right answer? Should I have chosen A, not B? One definitely begins to second guess. One night after my workout at the gym, I picked up my Blackberry to find a frantic, all caps email from Nell telling me and our fellow study group members to check the OSBA website to find our results as they had posted a day earlier than we

had thought initially. Of course, I instantly tried to reach Nell who manages to not be picking up her phone. Since I could not remember my OSBA website password, I drove back downtown, ran (literally) to my office, frightened the cleaning crew, and pulled up my account. I will admit, at first, I could not figure out whether or not I passed. After I managed to calm down and simply scroll down the page, I saw the word “passed” and was completely thrilled.

Of course, then the phone calls and emails started flying back and forth with fellow study group members, friends, co-workers, and my attorneys. I was so excited I almost forgot that I had left the gym looking like a mess! Because I fully believe one must celebrate their accomplishments, I printed my results page, taped it to my office door, and decorated the rest of the door with bright yellow streamers.

Author:



Mindi L. Schaefer, M.S., RP, OSBA, AACP
Administrative & Paralegal Support Director at Poling
Public Relations Representative for PACO

And now today ... June 21, 2021 ... it is funny to look back on this time. So many things have changed ... Panera is now something else, Spagio is changing to something new, and my Blackberry ... I do miss her but she has gone too. The one thing that has not changed is my decision on whether to pursue my OSBA Paralegal Certification or not. It was one of the best decisions I have made and I would do it again in a heartbeat.

Now to the exciting news for PACO, we are bringing back the OSBA Paralegal Certification Exam Study Group!

Be sure to check out the PACO News blast below for all the details!

PACO - Announcing the OSBA Certification Paralegal Exam Study Group - Coming September 21, 2021 - Register today!

Coming in September... PACO is bringing back the OSBA Certification Paralegal Exam Study Group!

Are you interested in launching your personal and professional growth? Have you been reflecting on where you are in your career? Do you want to foster upward mobility in your career and stand out as an exceptional paralegal? Do you want your law firm or legal department to be able to market you as an OSBA Certified Paralegal to their clients which exhibits a commitment to excellence?

If you said yes to any of the above questions then it is time to expand the skills you already have by boosting your personal and professional development by joining the OSBA Certification Paralegal Exam Study Group to take the 2022 OSBA Paralegal Certification Exam.

Prepare now...As paralegals we know how to be prepared. It is time to invest and prioritize yourself and prepare now for the 2022 OSBA Paralegal Certification Exam by reviewing the requirements, [click here](#) to review the standards and eligibility requirements. There are also CLE requirements which you can earn through PACO including Ethics and Professionalism credits which are coming in PACO's Programming throughout 2021.

Kickoff meeting...Go to the Calendar of Events and register for the kickoff meeting scheduled for September 21, 2021 from Noon to 1:00 p.m. with special guest Melissa Quick from the OSBA who will provide an overview of the OSBA paralegal certification and member benefits for certification.

Join now...Support knowledge sharing within a free study group environment which can hold you accountable for your preparations for the exam! Deepen your knowledge and skills through a collaborative approach and join the study group by emailing Laura Albert at Laura@tyacklaw.com. This study group is open to any paralegals in Ohio who are interested in becoming an OSBA Certified Paralegal.

Already an OSBA Certified Paralegal....Are you already an OSBA Certified Paralegal and would like to get involved with giving back to other paralegals? If so reach out to Laura Albert who is PACO's OSBA Certified Paralegal Study Group Coordinator to assist her in the study group endeavor for PACO by emailing Laura at Laura@tyacklaw.com.