



Frequently Asked Questions

1. When is the next bencher election?

The next bencher election for both lawyer and paralegal benchers is April 30, 2019.

2. What procedures govern the bencher election?

The election is conducted in accordance with the [Law Society Act](#) and [By-Law 3](#) made pursuant to the *Law Society Act*.

3. Who can run for bencher?

Every **lawyer** licensee who on June 1, 2019 would not have held the office of elected bencher for 12 or more years and whose business address, or, where the licensee has no business address, home address, as indicated on the records of the Law Society, is within Ontario, and whose licence is not suspended at the time of signing the nomination form, can run for bencher.

Every **paralegal** licensee who on June 1, 2019 would not have held the office of bencher, whether elected or appointed, and/or the office of an appointed or elected member of the Paralegal Standing Committee for a total of 12 or more years and whose business address, or, where the licensee has no business address, home address, as indicated on the records of the Law Society, is within Ontario, and whose licence is not suspended at the time of signing the nomination form, can run for bencher.

4. What is the deadline for candidate nominations?

Nomination forms must be received in the Office of the Elections Officer at the Law Society, 130 Queen Street West, Osgoode Hall, Toronto, **by 5:00 p.m. on February 8, 2019.**

Original, signed nominations forms should be delivered or mailed. Electronic (scanned and emailed) and faxed nomination forms will be accepted. If the nomination form is faxed or emailed, the Elections Officer may request the original completed and signed nomination form.

5. How can I get a nomination form?

Nomination forms are available on the Law Society website at www.lso.ca/bencher-election-2019

6. Who can nominate me?

A **lawyer candidate** for bencher must be nominated by at least five (5) lawyer licensees whose licences are not suspended when they sign the candidate's nomination form.

A **paralegal candidate** for bencher must be nominated by at least five (5) paralegal licensees whose licences are not suspended when they sign the candidate's nomination form.

7. Do I have to file anything in addition to my nomination form?

The Law Society will prepare a Voting Guide - one for lawyers and one for paralegals - that includes a photograph, brief biography, and election statement of each candidate. The Voting Guide will be available to voters online throughout the election. To be included in the Voting Guide, you must submit the following material in addition to the nomination form:

- a colour photograph showing your head and shoulders. The image size must be as follows:
 - Width: minimum 1500 pixels [5 inches]
 - Height: minimum 2100 pixels [7 inches]
 - Horizontal/vertical resolution: 300 pixels
 - The image must be in jpg, tif or eps file format.
 - Biographical information not exceeding 120 words, including headings.
 - An election statement not exceeding 350 words, including headings.
- This material can be submitted to the Law Society as follows:
 - Submission of the completed Candidate Page Template that replicates the layout of the candidate page in the Voting Guide ([see the sample candidate page](#)). This can be used for the biographical information and election statement. The Template is available at www.iso.ca/bencher-election-2019. The photograph must be submitted with this Template as a separate file.
 - Submission of Individual Files for the biographical information, election statement and photograph, which the Law Society will use to format the candidate page. If you submit individual files, please **do not** format the page in accordance with the sample.

All candidate pages will be formatted identically, in accordance with [the sample candidate page](#). Candidates are encouraged to use the Candidate Page Template available for download at www.iso.ca/bencher-election-2019

Biographical information and election statements must be submitted electronically using the Candidate Page Template or in individual files in MSWord format. Material in PDF format is not acceptable. Ensure that your name appears in all file names (surname – first name – doc), including the photograph (surname – first name – jpg), as follows:

- **Smithjohnbio**
- **Smithjohnstatement**
- **Smithjohnphoto**

The photograph, biographical information and election statement must be sent by email to bencherelection@iso.ca or delivered by USB memory stick. This material must be received by the Office of the Elections Officer **by 5:00 p.m. on February 8, 2019.**

8. What if I change my mind? Can I withdraw my nomination?

A candidate may withdraw from the bencher election by so notifying the Elections Officer in writing **by 5:00 p.m. on February 15, 2019.** The names of candidates who withdraw after 5:00 p.m. on February 15, 2019 may appear on the ballot.

9. Are there any rules governing my campaign for bencher?

All election material and statements must be in good taste and comply with the *Rules of Professional Conduct* or the *Paralegal Rules of Conduct*, as the case may be.

10. Who is eligible to vote in the benchers election?

All lawyer and paralegal licensees whose licences are not suspended on April 5, 2019 are eligible to vote.

11. How many candidates can voters vote for?

Lawyer voters can cast up to 20 votes for candidates inside Toronto and up to 20 votes for candidates outside Toronto. Voters are not required to cast all 40 of their votes.

Paralegal voters can cast up to 5 votes for all candidates. Voters are not required to cast all 5 votes.

12. How do voters vote?

Election procedures will be published by January 31, 2019. During the second week of April 2019, all eligible voters will be provided with detailed instructions on how to vote. Voting will close at 5:00 p.m. on April 30, 2019.

13. What is a regional bencher?

Eight lawyer candidates will be elected as regional benchers. The regional bencher is the lawyer candidate who receives the highest number of votes from lawyer voters in each of the eight electoral regions. The business addresses of regional benchers, or, where they have no business address, the home addresses of regional benchers, must be within the electoral regions in which they are elected.

14. What are the eight electoral regions?

- **City of Toronto**
- **Northwest Electoral Region** composed of the territorial districts of Kenora, Rainy River, and Thunder Bay.
- **Northeast Electoral Region** composed of the territorial districts of Algoma, Cochrane, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Sudbury, and Timiskaming.
- **East Electoral Region** composed of the counties of Frontenac, Hastings, Lanark, Lennox and Addington, Prince Edward and Renfrew; the united counties of Leeds and Grenville, Prescott and Russell and Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry; and the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton.
- **Central East Electoral Region** composed of the District Municipality of Muskoka, the counties of Haliburton, Northumberland, Peterborough, Simcoe and Victoria; and the regional municipalities of Durham and York.
- **Central West Electoral Region** composed of the counties of Bruce, Dufferin, Grey and Wellington; and the regional municipalities of Halton and Peel.
- **Central South Electoral Region** composed of the county of Brant; and the regional municipalities of Haldimand-Norfolk, Hamilton-Wentworth, Niagara and Waterloo.

- **Southwest Electoral Region** composed of the counties of Elgin, Essex, Huron, Kent, Lambton, Middlesex, Oxford and Perth.

15. How many benchers are elected?

A total of 40 lawyer benchers are elected - 20 from inside Toronto, and 20 from outside Toronto. A total of five paralegal benchers are elected.

16. When do the benchers elected on April 30, 2019 take office?

Benchers will take office on May 23, 2019, the first sitting of Convocation after the election.

17. How long does an elected bencher hold office?

The length of term for elected benchers is four years.

18. What are some of the duties of benchers?

Benchers attend monthly committee and Convocation meetings to develop policies related to the governance of individuals licensed to practise law and licensed to provide legal services in Ontario. Benchers also attend ceremonial calls to the bar and paralegal licensing receptions. Benchers may also be appointed to the Law Society Tribunal and sit on hearings to consider cases related to the competence, conduct and capacity of licensees.

19. How much time do benchers dedicate to Law Society business?

The amount of time benchers dedicate to Law Society business varies significantly from bencher to bencher. It is estimated that benchers dedicate an average of 31 days a year to the Law Society.

20. Are elected benchers remunerated?

Yes, elected benchers are remunerated for some of the activities they undertake for the Law Society at the rate of \$585 per day and \$355 per half-day (2018 rates). Benchers must contribute 26 attendances (an attendance is a half day or a full day) to Law Society activities before being eligible for remuneration.

21. How is the 26-day deductible calculated?

Half days and full days will count as one day of attendance until a bencher has exceeded the 26-day deductible for each remuneration cycle. The remuneration cycle will be based on the bencher year, not the calendar year.

22. What activities are eligible for remuneration?

Benchers are remunerated for attending Convocation, committee, task force and working group meetings, special Convocations, calls to the bar, bencher information sessions, and mandatory bencher education sessions. Benchers are also remunerated for sitting on Law Society Tribunal hearings and appeals and for conducting pre-hearing conferences and reason writing.

Benchers are remunerated for attending meetings as the Law Society's official representative at the direction of the Treasurer or Convocation. Remuneration is also given for time spent as the

Law Society's representative on boards of external organizations, and for other roles in external organizations where that external organization permits remuneration.

Reasonable time traveling to and from eligible Law Society activities is also counted for remuneration purposes. Attending a meeting by telephone is an eligible activity.

23. Are benchers reimbursed for expenses?

Benchers are reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in conducting Law Society business.

