

# How to Become a Lawyer in Ontario

## Information for law students and NCA applicants

You must be licensed by the Law Society of Ontario to work as a lawyer in Ontario. To become licensed, you must:

### Meet academic requirements

Complete a J.D./LL.B. from an approved law school in Ontario or another Canadian province or obtain a Certificate of Qualification from the National Committee on Accreditation.

### Apply to the licensing process

The licensing process year runs from May 1 to April 30. The deadline to apply is usually at the start of December of the previous year. You can apply online through the Law Society website. Allow plenty of time to prepare your application.

The licensing process consists of:

- two licensing examinations
- an experiential training requirement
- a good character requirement
- the call to the bar ceremony.

All parts of the licensing process must be completed within three (3) licensing years. Learn more about the licensing process by viewing the Licensing Process Information Session webcast, on the Law Society website.

### Pass the barrister and solicitor examinations

The barrister and solicitor examinations are self-study and open book examinations comprised of multiple-choice questions. Examinations are offered in the Summer, Fall and Winter. You do not need to write or pass the examinations before you article or attend the Law Practice Program.

On the Law Society website, you will find a *Guide to Licensing Examinations* with tips on preparing for the examinations. Tutoring for the examinations is available to candidates who are unsuccessful.

### Gain experience working in a legal environment

You may complete the experiential training requirement of the licensing process by articling or by attending the Law Practice Program (LPP). If you graduated from a law school with an Integrated Practice Curriculum (IPC), you are exempt from articling and the LPP. If you have practised law in another jurisdiction, you may apply for an exemption from articling and the LPP.

#### Law Practice Program

The Law Practice Program (LPP) is an 8-month program. The LPP runs from late August to the end of April at Ryerson University. The Programme de pratique du droit runs from early September to the end of April at the University of Ottawa. The Law Society's registration deadline for the LPP is usually at the end of May.

Visit [Iso.ca/how-do-i-become-a-lawyer](https://www.iso.ca/how-do-i-become-a-lawyer) for more information

### **Articling**

If you choose to articling you are responsible for finding your own 10-month articling placement with an approved articling principal. There are flexible options to complete articling.

If you are looking for a summer position in Toronto or an articling placement, make sure to read the recruitment procedures available on the Law Society website. The website also has information on resources to help you find an articling placement.

### **Be deemed to be of good character**

To be licensed as a lawyer in Ontario, the *Law Society Act* requires that an applicant be of “good character.” The good character requirement is intended to protect the public and maintain high ethical standards in the profession by ensuring that persons who are licensed as lawyers show respect for the rule of law and the administration of justice and conduct themselves with honesty, integrity and candour. The licensing application includes questions that assist the Law Society in determining whether the applicant is of good character.

### **Pay all required fees and submit all required forms**

A fees schedule that outlines all fees for the licensing process is set for each licensing process year and is available on the Law Society website. Financial assistance programs are available.

### **Be called to the bar**

Once you have passed your examinations, completed articling or the Law Practice Program, paid your fees, submitted your forms and have no good character issues, you are eligible to be licensed to practise law and to attend a call to the bar ceremony.

All eligible candidates must be in attendance for a call to the bar. At the call, candidates are presented with the Degree of Barrister-at-Law by the Law Society and a Court Certificate and are required to swear or affirm the oath required to practise law in Ontario. Candidates may also take an oath of allegiance.

## **Other Law Society Resources**

### **Discrimination and Harassment Counsel**

Harassment and discrimination have no place in the legal professions. The Discrimination and Harassment Counsel Program runs independently from the Law Society and provides assistance to anyone who may have experienced discrimination or harassment by a lawyer, paralegal, or licensing candidate within Ontario.

### **Member Assistance Program**

The Member Assistance Program (MAP) is a confidential service fully independent of the Law Society. Lawyers, paralegals, law students, other legal professionals and their families covered by the MAP are provided with confidential access to a number of services. Members can get professional help with issues related to addictions, mental or physical health, work-life balance, career, family and more.

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