

## **A Message from Teresa Donnelly, Treasurer, Law Society of Ontario**

Hello.

I am reaching out to all the licensing candidates who are being greatly impacted by changes to the of the licensing exams.

First, I want to acknowledge the stress and anxiety that this is causing you.

I have read your messages - and I have heard from my benchers colleagues as well as members of the LSO Team, regarding your concerns.

What has happened is unprecedented at the Law Society of Ontario and incredibly disruptive.

I know that this impacts your personal and professional lives.

And after these unpredictable two years, we all are looking for certainty - for things to stay on course, as planned.

I assure you that the team at the Law Society is working hard to support you as best we can in a challenging and unexpected set of circumstances.

Your messages are resonating with us – we have heard about a scheduled surgery, weddings, down payments made and the disruption these decisions have caused.

I want to be candid about how we arrived here.

Through the investigation, we have learned that there are strong indications that examination content has been improperly accessed through cheating.

Evidence indicates the potential involvement of third parties in this activity.

The investigation remains active.

This week, the external investigation team hired by the Law Society issued letters to those who may be involved in the cheating scenario.

Those impacted will be subject to investigation through the regulatory process as a result of conduct related to the licensing examinations.

[PAUSE]

So what are our options at the LSO?

Do we continue with online examinations that we strongly believe have been compromised?

Do we license candidates under that cloud?

Do we cancel the examinations?

We are a public interest regulator – we have to ensure that our exams are valid and defensible;

that we have a timely path to licensure for candidates working diligently to launch their careers; we have to take steps to protect the reputation of candidates not involved in cheating and we need to uphold the integrity of the legal professions.

Given the information and the evidence, continuing with online examinations was not possible.

In-person delivery provides the necessary degree of security to ensure examination integrity and to protect the reputation of all those candidates who are in no way implicated in the investigation.

The Law Society team moved quickly to schedule in-person examinations, in five cities, with as little delay as possible.

The four-week shift from June to July for the summer examinations was necessary to secure multiple venues with sufficient space,

implement security and invigilation measures, prepare printed materials, adhere to COVID-19 protocols and ensure there are specific plans in place for candidates who require accommodations.

Our objective was to provide as little delay as possible while ensuring the integrity of the examinations and protecting the reputations of all those candidates who are in no way implicated in the investigation.

I am truly sorry for those of you who are experiencing negative impacts due to others' improper conduct.

I remind you that you have access to the Member Assistance Program for confidential counselling, coaching, online resources and peer support, should you need it.

I also encourage you to attend the live question and answer webinar scheduled on May 9 with the Law Society's Licensing and Accreditation team. Watch your online account for details.

More information and FAQs about the in-person delivery model, can be found on LSO.ca.

If you have concerns about your specific situation, please contact us through your online account so we can work together to address your needs.

We appreciate your continued patience as we respond to this challenging situation. We will continue to support you and to keep you updated on developments as we move ahead.

Thank you.