



# Access to Justice Advisory Committee

## Terms of Reference

Updated: April 2020

## Mandate

Access to justice is an existential issue for the legal profession in British Columbia and requires that the Law Society actively engage in review and reform of the administration of justice to ensure that it works for all citizens of British Columbia. The Committee should monitor and advise the Benchers about key access to justice issues, with particular emphasis on access to legal services, and on legal aid issues and recommend to the Benchers as necessary actions or initiatives to address issues as they arise. This advisory function supports the Law Society's strategic planning process and the Vision for Publicly Funded Legal Aid and ensures the Society is addressing its part in ensuring access to justice.

## Composition

1. Under Rule 1-49, the President may appoint any person as a member of a committee of the Benchers and may terminate the appointment.
2. At least half of the Committee members should be Benchers, and the Chair of the Committee must be a Bencher.

## Meeting Practices

1. The Committee operates in a manner that is consistent with the Benchers' Governance Policies.
2. The Committee meets as required.
3. Quorum consists of at least half of the members of the Committee. (Rule 1-16(1))

## Accountability

The Committee is accountable to the Benchers. If the Benchers assign specific tasks to the Committee, the Committee is responsible for discharging the work assigned. If a matter arises that the Committee believes requires immediate attention by the Benchers, the Committee will advise the Executive Committee.

## **Reporting Requirements**

The Committee provides status reports to the Benchers twice a year.

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

1. Adopt an evidenced-based data-driven outcomes-focused approach to the matters identified in the mandate and to any recommendations to the Benchers that it may make;
2. Promote the creation of proper data analytics systems within the justice system and legal aid in order to better evaluate access to justice and legal aid issues in society and the justice system;
3. Keep the Benchers informed of key matters, to assist in setting policy, or to recommend that specific action be taken by the Benchers;
4. Explore opportunities for collaboration with third parties to advance the Law Society's Strategic Plan and to better understand issues for potential inclusion on future Strategic Plans;
5. Ensure the work of the Committee provides for input from the public, Law Society members and the Benchers in regard to matters within the Committee's mandate;
6. Identify stakeholders engaged with access to justice and legal aid in British Columbia and consult with those stakeholders, other professional organizations and experts as appropriate to ensure a broad engagement on the matters identified in the mandate; and
7. Meet with representatives of the Law Foundation annually to discuss the potential allocation of the access to justice funding the Law Society provides to the Law Foundation as delegated to the Committee by the Benchers.