

Information

The Law Society
of British Columbia



Law Society Admission Program

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About the Program

What is the Law Society Admission Program?

In order to be called to the British Columbia bar, applicants are required to complete a 12-month training program. The program, called the Law Society Admission Program (LSAP), consists of three components:

- nine months of articles;
- 10 weeks of full-time attendance at the Professional Legal Training Course (PLTC); and
- two qualification examinations based on the PLTC *Practice Material* and course work.

The Law Society Admission Program is supervised and administered by the Credentials Committee of the Law Society. This information sheet provides an overview of the LSAP (both articles and PLTC), as well as instructions on how to enroll in the program.

Who is eligible for enrolment in LSAP?

To be eligible for enrolment in the Law Society Admission Program, an applicant must provide:

- proof of graduation from a common law faculty of a Canadian university; or
- a Certificate of Qualification issued by the National Committee on Accreditation (NCA): for more information, see the information sheet *NCA Certificate of Qualification*.

Who is eligible to act as a principal?

To be eligible to serve as a principal to an articled student, a lawyer must have been in active practice of law in Canada:

- for at least five of the 6 years immediately preceding the articling start date; and
- Engaged in full-time practice at the time of application to act as a principal.

Of the six years that the lawyer has spent in the active practice of law immediately preceding the articling start date, at least three of those years must have been spent in:

- British Columbia; or

- Yukon Territory, while the lawyer was a member of the Law Society of BC. A lawyer may act as principal to no more than two articled students at one time.

In exceptional circumstances, the Credentials Committee may allow a lawyer who does not qualify under Rule 2-57 to act as a principal, or to act as principal to more than two articled students at one time.

Is it necessary to have an articling position secured to apply for enrolment in LSAP?

Yes. Students must have a commitment of articles before applying for enrolment in LSAP. The onus of obtaining an articling position is entirely on the student. Please contact the following sources for further assistance:

- [Careers Services Office, Faculty of Law, UBC](#)
- [Law Careers Office, Faculty of Law, University of Victoria](#)
- [The Canadian Bar Association, BC Branch](#)
- [Thompson Rivers University, Faculty of Law](#)

Canadian law students attending other law schools should contact the Career Services Office at their law school. Non-Canadian law students or NCA students can contact the Career Services Office at the UBC Faculty of Law to order a *Legal Careers Guide* which provides advice on the articling job search in BC: <http://www.allard.ubc.ca/alumni/services/career-services/ubc-law-career-guides>

Admission to the program

How do I enrol in LSAP?

You must submit your application package and fees for enrolment in LSAP to the Law Society **at least 30 days before your enrolment start date.**

You must also submit a separate application form for registration in PLTC to the Law Society before the deadline for the session requested.

Details on how to make these applications are below.

What documents are required to enrol in LSAP?

The LSAP application package must be completed and filed with the Law Society **at least 30 days before** your LSAP enrolment start date: see Law Society Rule 2-54. You must submit the following:

- Application: Law Society Admission Program Enrolment, including an attached photograph;
- Articling Agreement;

- Articling Skills and Practice Checklist;
- **official transcript** sent directly from the university showing the **actual granting** of the LL.B. degree and grades, or NCA Certificate of Qualification if your legal qualifications have been acquired outside Canada; and
- enrolment fee (cheques payable and sent to the Law Society of BC) of **\$2,887.50**.

An official transcript may be submitted at a later date only if you have recently graduated from law school and the university has not yet processed the granting of your LL.B. in time for the 30-day deadline. In this case, you must provide a letter from the Dean confirming that all requirements have been met. The official transcript must also be submitted **as soon as it is available**.

What if I cannot meet the application deadline?

No student failing to provide all documents by the deadline will be enrolled retroactively, save in exceptional circumstances as directed by the Credentials Committee.

The onus is entirely on the student to ensure that all documentation is complete and filed with the Law Society **30 days before** the commencement date of articles. **This is not the responsibility of the proposed principal**. Applications for retroactive status must be accompanied by a written submission to the Committee setting out reasons for the late documentation.

What is the fee?

The current fee for enrolment in the Law Society Admission Program, including PLTC, is **\$2,887.50** (\$2,750 plus GST). This fee is subject to change. The enrolment fee is payable to the Law Society and must be received **at least 30 days before** the enrolment start date.

Can I enrol in LSAP if I'm a member of another Canadian law society?

Members of other Canadian law societies are eligible to apply for call and admission in BC as transfer applicants and may not be required to complete the LSAP. If you are a member of another law society and choose to enroll in the LSAP rather than pursue an application for transfer, you must:

- provide a letter to the Law Society confirming that you are aware of your options and have chosen the LSAP route;
- pay a fee of \$4,357.50 (\$4,150, plus GST), which includes an unsubsidized PLTC component; and
- if you decide to change to a transfer applicant during the LSAP period, you must provide a complete transfer application and transfer application fee of \$1,181.25 (\$1,125, plus GST) at least 30 days before your proposed call date.

For more information on applying for call and admission on transfer, see the information sheet *Transfers*.

Can I obtain credit for clerking or time spent articling or practising elsewhere?

The regular nine-month articling term can be reduced by the completion of:

- a clerkship at the Supreme Court of Canada, BC Court of Appeal or Supreme Court, Federal Court of Canada or the Tax Court of Canada;
- a clerkship at a superior court in another Canadian jurisdiction;
- articles in another Canadian jurisdiction; or
- practice experience in a common law jurisdiction outside Canada.

Applicants may be eligible for a maximum reduction of five months in the nine-month articling term, resulting in a minimum articling period of four months. For details, see the information sheet *Reductions in the Articling Term and Exemption from PLTC*.

Can I complete my articles on a part-time basis?

You may apply to complete some or all of your articles on a part-time basis by submitting to the Law Society at least two months before the enrolment start date:

- the enrolment application and enrolment fees; and
- a letter from you and your prospective principal setting out:
 - your principal's express approval of the part-time arrangements;
 - the type of experience to be provided to you;
 - the hours per day you will work in the office of your principal; and
 - the length of your proposed articling term.

Your proposed articling term must be a continuous period that will give you work experience equivalent to the regular nine-month articling period, and your articles must be completed within two years of the articling start date.

The part-time equivalent of the articling period must be calculated on the following basis:

- eight hours of scheduled work equals one day of articles; and
- no credit will be given for more than eight hours per day.

Any request to alter the above requirements must first be approved by the Credentials Committee at one of its regular monthly meetings.

What else do I need to know about completing the LSAP application form?

The privilege of practising law in British Columbia is exclusive to members of the Law Society of BC. For the protection of the public and the profession, the *Legal Profession Act* imposes a statutory obligation on the Benchers to be satisfied that each applicant for enrolment as an articulated student is of good character and fit to become a barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court. The onus is placed on the applicant to satisfy the Benchers in this regard.

You are advised to answer all questions fairly and fully and to disclose to the Society anything that you consider might adversely affect your application so that it can be considered at an early date. You should give the fullest details possible and supporting documentation.

When considering past criminal charges or convictions, the Credentials Committee assesses these factors:

- applicant's age at the time of the conduct in question;
- recentness of the conduct;
- reliability of the information;
- seriousness of the conduct;
- factors underlying the conduct;
- cumulative effect of the conduct or information;
- evidence of rehabilitation;
- applicant's positive social contributions since the conduct;
- applicant's candour in the admissions process; and
- materiality of any omissions or representations.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding disclosures under this section, please contact the Credentials Officer at the Law Society.

Registration in PLTC

Is it necessary to have an articling position secured to apply for registration in PLTC?

PLTC is part of the articling year. Students must have a commitment of articles before applying for a PLTC session. To qualify for registration in a PLTC session, a student must:

- be enrolled in the Law Society Admission Program; and
- have entered into and filed an Articling Agreement.

What are the PLTC enrolment options?

There are three PLTC sessions each year. PLTC is offered three times a year in Vancouver, and once a year in Victoria in May (simultaneously with the Vancouver session). The Victoria session has space for only a limited number of students.

Attendance at PLTC is required and students should plan to be at PLTC for a full 10 weeks, Monday to Friday, 9 am – 3:30 pm. The course also requires a substantial amount of reading and number of assignments.

In consultation with their principals, students are required to choose when they will attend PLTC and when they will do the articling portion of the program. Most students take PLTC either at the beginning or end of articles. However, some law firms and students prefer to split the office requirement with attendance at PLTC. Students who decide to take PLTC at the end of their articling year have an extra consideration. If, for some reason, the student is unable to successfully complete the course, he or she will be required to do remedial work. The student will be expected to come back in the next session of PLTC to complete the outstanding or failed work. This may affect a student's eligibility date to begin practice. To avoid this delay, PLTC may offer an early remedial opportunity shortly after the end of each PLTC session, so that students can become eligible for practice as originally planned.

Please see the *Application: Professional Legal Training Course Registration* for the recognized PLTC options and the relevant PLTC application deadlines.

What documents are required to register in PLTC?

To register for a PLTC session (as a component of the LSAP), a student must:

- obtain the principal's written consent to register in that session; and
- submit a completed *Application: Professional Legal Training Course Registration* to the Law Society before the deadline for the session requested.

Students should indicate a first and second choice for PLTC, and should be prepared to attend either session until they receive written confirmation of acceptance into a PLTC session. There is no guarantee that a student will be admitted to the first choice of a PLTC session.

The Law Society does not reserve places for students in PLTC. An early application is to a student's advantage. Once the deadline has passed for a session, the Society assesses the number of students registered and the spaces available. If a PLTC session is oversubscribed, students articling outside the Lower Mainland and those from one-student firms receive priority. Then, a waiting list is established from applications filed on time, ordered according to the date of receipt.

Law firms with more than two students requesting the same session, may be considered for the waiting list. Applications moved to the waiting list are given priority in the student's second choice session, provided those applications were received by the deadline. All late applications go to the bottom of the waiting list in the order received.

Confirmation of acceptance in a PLTC session is sent to the student after the application deadline date. At that time, information regarding course materials is also provided. Once confirmed in a session, a student may not transfer to another session without the consent of PLTC and the student's principal.

The onus is entirely on the student to ensure that all documentation is complete and filed with the Law Society before commencement of PLTC. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that PLTC receives the *Application for PLTC Registration* before the deadline date for the session requested.

Can I take PLTC part-time?

The Benchers have approved the concept of part-time articles and part-time attendance at PLTC. There is no part-time schedule set for PLTC. Therefore, the program will attempt to accommodate students within the framework of the existing course. A number of variations can be made depending on the student's situation.

A student may apply to complete PLTC on a part-time basis by submitting a written request stating the reasons for attending part-time and setting out any resulting constraints on the student's attendance. The student should contact PLTC at least six months before starting a PLTC session.

Can I be exempted from PLTC?

If you have completed a bar admission course in another Canadian jurisdiction or if you are a lawyer qualified in a foreign country, you may apply to the Credentials Committee to be exempted from all or a portion of PLTC. See the information sheet *Reductions in the Articling Term and Exemption from PLTC*.

Once in the LSAP

Can I take a vacation during articles?

An articulated student must work full-time in the office of a principal for a continuous period of not less than nine months, except for law clerks or others who have been granted a reduced articling period. A principal may give a student up to 10 working days as vacation during the articling portion of the program. Any vacation time will not be calculated in the nine-month period.

If you are required to take more than 10 working days off from your articles for holidays or sick time, you must apply for a leave of absence under Law Society Rule 2-69.

Can I take a leave during articles?

Students may take a leave of absence from articles under Law Society Rule 2-69 provided that:

- the total time of leaves of absence, other than maternity and parental leaves, does not exceed 22 working days (or such longer period approved by the Executive Director under Rule 2-69(8));
- the leave does not affect the student's attendance at PLTC; and
- the student's principal consents to the leave of absence.

Any time taken for a leave of absence will not be calculated in the nine-month articling period.

For parental leaves, a student who becomes a birth or adoptive parent during or within 12 weeks before the articling period is entitled to 12 weeks or, where the student is the primary caregiver of the child, 16 weeks parental leave. A student is entitled to 18 weeks maternity leave during the period from 11 weeks before to 17 weeks after giving birth, in addition to the parental leave entitlement.

If the maternity or parental leave causes a student to fail to attend any part of PLTC, the Credentials Committee may require the student to attend all or part of PLTC at a session held after the completion of the student's maternity or parental leave.

Students who take a leave of absence must notify the Law Society in writing in advance of the leave or, in the case of a maternity or parental leave, as soon as possible.

Can I be employed outside of articles?

During the articling term and PLTC, an articulated student is not permitted to accept employment from any person other than the student's principal or a person to whom the student's articles are seconded, except with the approval of the Law Society: see Law Society Rule 2-68. Any employment outside of articles must have the principal's consent, be performed outside normal office hours, and in no way interfere with the student's articles or commitment to PLTC. Students

must first apply to the Law Society for approval in advance of engaging in any employment outside of articles.

Where can I learn more about articles?

For more information about articles, see the Articling section of the Law Society website at lawsociety.bc.ca.

The Professional Legal Training Course (PLTC)

What is PLTC?

The Professional Legal Training Course (PLTC) is an intensive full-time, 10-week legal procedure and skills course. The course is designed to help you bridge the gap between law school and practice. PLTC is designed and taught by lawyers who have many years of practice experience. It is based on a definition of professional competency, including a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Students are strongly advised not to make any plans that will interfere with attendance during the 10 weeks of PLTC.

The course is taught at the Law Society building, 845 Cambie Street in Vancouver, and at the University of Victoria (during the May session only). There are usually 20 students and one instructor to a class. On several occasions throughout the course, guest instructors (practising lawyers) teach in the classroom or in the large lecture hall, providing students with their first-hand knowledge of daily practice.

This section provides an overview of PLTC. For more information, see the Professional Legal Training Course section of the Law Society website at lawsociety.bc.ca.

What is covered in the course?

- **Knowledge:** The substantive and procedural areas and transactions covered are representative of areas that articling students and newly called lawyers will encounter. They are taught in a fashion that gives students a feel for how law is practised and some techniques for educating themselves in new practice areas. The knowledge areas covered are:
 - Civil Litigation
 - Commercial¹
 - Company
 - Creditor's Remedies (including Builders' Liens)
 - Family¹
 - Real Estate¹
 - Estates¹
 - Law Office Management
 - Criminal Procedure

¹ Including related tax issues

- **Skills:** As well as knowing the law, a lawyer has to know how to use the law. To ensure this, students learn skills that they can use during their articles and when practising law. Students are given a number of opportunities to practise the skills in the course, either by watching other students or by practising themselves. Students have an opportunity to provide and receive feedback from fellow students and their instructors. The following skills are taught:
 - Advocacy
 - Writing
 - Interviewing
 - Drafting
 - Legal Research
 - Alternative Dispute Resolution (Mediation)
 - Problem-solving
- **Attitudes:** PLTC teaches ethical issues in the knowledge and skill areas in which they are most likely to come up in practice. In this way, students learn a practical approach to ethical matters. In addition to professional responsibility, PLTC teaches students about practice management within knowledge and skill contexts.

What are the requirements to complete PLTC?

To successfully complete PLTC, students must pass four skills assessments as well as two open-book qualification examinations (each three hours long).

- **Skills Assessments:** The skills assessments are in the areas of writing, drafting, advocacy and interviewing. The writing assessment involves writing an opinion letter. The drafting assessment involves drafting a simple contract based on facts given to the student. These are take-home exams that must be completed by the due dates set out in the PLTC schedule. The advocacy assessment is done in pairs in a mock Chambers setting, with one student being the applicant and the other the respondent. The interviewing assessment is also done in pairs, with one student playing the lawyer and the other student playing the client. Both the advocacy and interviewing assessments are individually scheduled and videotaped. A passing mark in all skills assessments is 70%.
- **Qualification Examinations:** At the end of the course, students must take and pass two qualification examinations. The examinations are based on PLTC work and the Practice Material. The examinations are open book and the *Practice Material*, including statutory material (provided to students) may be brought into the exams. The examinations consist of short answer essay type questions, multiple choice and some true/false questions. A passing mark is 60%.

There are also a number of assignments and exercises that must be satisfactorily completed. A copy of the *Requirements for Standing* is located in each classroom and should be referred to for more information.

What are the attendance requirements in PLTC?

The course runs for 10 weeks, Monday to Friday, with most days having both morning and afternoon sessions. **Attendance is required** and students should plan to be at PLTC from 9 am – 3:30 pm. There are some days where there are no classes and students are expected to do assignments or class preparation elsewhere. Statutory holidays have been included in the schedule. On occasion, students will be asked to attend according to an individually scheduled time for a particular purpose (a taped session, for example). A full schedule is handed out on the first day of the course.

There are a number of assignments during the session to be completed in the evenings or on weekends. For example, there is an evening cross-examination exercise and a weekend mock civil trial. Both are conducted at the courthouse.

Exceptions to the attendance requirements are only made in a few circumstances, and requests should be made well in advance. If a student is absent, he or she may have to make up the missed classes or exercises during the next session. PLTC covers considerable material in a short time, and students are required to attend all classes and lectures to ensure they are fully prepared for the assessments and examinations. In cases of emergency if a class is missed, it is the student's responsibility to obtain missed notes, lesson information or assignment requirements from other students or their instructors.

Do not make any work, travel, vacation, family or other plans that might conflict with the 10 weeks of the PLTC session.

On the first day of each session, each student will receive a copy of the PLTC Student Handbook of policies, procedures, guidelines and information on the course.

What accommodation is available to a student with disabilities?

PLTC is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities receive reasonable accommodation to minimize the effect of the disability as much as possible during the course, while maintaining the validity of PLTC assessment and examination procedures.

A student with a disability may apply in writing to PLTC for accommodation in any part of the course, including assessments and examinations. A student must apply for accommodation at least 30 days before the commencement of the course. If the disability arises during the course, the student must apply as soon as possible after the disability arises. In applying for accommodation, a student must describe the procedures that will minimize the effect of the disability as much as possible. A student may be asked to provide documentation and background information about the disability. Please contact PLTC to obtain the accommodation package and more information.

Does PLTC provide support to students requiring assistance?

PLTC provides support to students requiring assistance with the skills portion of the course. An Academic Support Instructor is available, on a part-time basis, to assist PLTC students. First Nations students receive first priority; second priority is given to other students, as time permits. For further information about academic support, please call Diane Stuart at 604.697.5813.

Call and admission to the bar**How do I qualify for call and admission?**

To qualify for call to the bar and admission as a solicitor of the Supreme Court of British Columbia, you must complete the following satisfactorily:

- the articling term;
- PLTC; and
- any other requirements imposed by the Credentials Committee.

How do I apply?

During the articling term, you will receive a package from the Law Society that includes an application for call and admission, information about the membership options and applicable fees.

After completion of all requirements for call and admission and approval of appropriate documentation, you must take the barristers and solicitors oath prior to becoming eligible for practice.

New lawyers must be presented to the court in a call and admission ceremony, but no longer need to attend that ceremony prior to issuance of their practising certificates. However, presentation to the court is required before the first renewal of a certificate (i.e., before the end of the calendar year in which a lawyer qualifies for call and admission). As an exception, a lawyer who qualifies for the first time in the last four months of the calendar year may have his or her certificate renewed once without presentation in court. The lawyer must be presented to the court before the end of the calendar year after the one in which he or she qualifies for call and admission. Please refer to Rule 2-84 of the Law Society Rules.

Each student who applies for call and admission will be informed of the options available for presentation to the court.

What are the dates for upcoming call ceremonies?

Dates for call ceremonies can be found on the Law Society's website Calendar at: lawsociety.bc.ca.

Can I be called and admitted outside the Lower Mainland?

If you wish to be called and admitted outside the Lower Mainland, you may make arrangements to be called at a regional call ceremony elsewhere in BC.

A regional call ceremony can be scheduled on an as-needed basis, wherever there is a student who wants to be called, a Bencher or local bar association that wants to hold the ceremony and a Supreme Court judge and courtroom that are available.

Regional call ceremonies must be held on the date of the regular call ceremony or as soon after that date as practicable. Regional call ceremonies cannot be held before the regularly scheduled call dates.

Once your application for enrolment has been approved, the Law Society will provide you with further information on arranging a regional call. You must initiate the arrangements at least 90 days before your scheduled call and admission.

How can I obtain more information?

If you have questions about the Law Society Admission Program, please contact:

Member Services
Law Society of British Columbia
845 Cambie Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 4Z9

Tel.: 604.605.5311
BC Toll-free: 1.800.903.5300
Fax: 604.687.0135
Email: memberinfo@lsbc.org

If you have questions specifically about PLTC or the qualification examinations please contact:

Program Liaison, PLTC
Law Society of British Columbia
845 Cambie Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 4Z9

Tel.: 604.697.5859
BC Toll-free: 1.800.903.5300
Fax: 604.669.5232
Email: achow@lsbc.org

Lynn Burns, Deputy Director, PLTC

Tel.: 604.697.5808
BC Toll-free: 1.800.903.5300
Email: lburns@lsbc.org

The information in this package is based on the Law Society Rules as they exist at this time. You must comply with the Rules that are in effect at the time you apply to the Law Society Admission Program and with any changes in the rules that may occur while you are enrolled in LSAP. If you have any questions about LSAP, contact Membership Services at the Law Society of British Columbia.