

Law Clerks – Alternate Pathway to Licensing

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Effective December 2, 2022, the Law Society of British Columbia amended its rules to recognize a judicial clerkship as an alternate pathway to licensing. This means that law clerks will have the option of applying for call and admission after completing PLTC and a clerkship term of at least nine months without being required to complete a minimum period of articles. Law clerks may still choose to complete a period of articles prior to their call and admission, in consultation with their principal lawyer and firm, government body, or other organization.

1. If I am a law clerk, am I required to complete a period of articles with a principal lawyer as part of a law firm, government body or other organization in order to be eligible for call and admission to British Columbia?

If a law clerk has completed a clerkship term of at least nine months, there is no requirement to complete a period of articles as an articulated student with a principal lawyer in order to be eligible to apply for call and admission.

2. If I complete a clerkship of at least nine months, am I still permitted to also complete a period of time as an articulated student with a principal lawyer as part of a law firm, government body or other organization before being called and admitted in British Columbia?

Law clerks, in consultation with their principal lawyer and firm, government body or other organization, are still permitted to complete a period of articles prior to call and admission.

3. What do I need to do if I decide to complete a period of time as an articulated student?

If you wish to act as an articulated student and complete a period of articles prior to call and admission, you must apply for enrolment in the Law Society Admission Program with a lawyer who is qualified to act as a principal by submitting to the Law Society:

- a completed application for enrolment in the prescribed form;
- proof of academic qualification;
- an articling agreement (including an articling checklist) stating the proposed enrolment start date not less than 30 days from the date that the application is received by the Executive Director
- other documents or information that the Credentials Committee may reasonably require;
- the enrolment application fee and PLTC fee.

4. When would I complete the period of articles?

The period of articles can commence once your application for enrolment as an articulated student has been approved by the Law Society. The period of articles can be either prior to or after the period of time served as a law clerk but not during.

5. If I decide to article, am I still required to successfully complete PLTC?

Yes, all students will be required to successfully complete PLTC. As an articulated student, registration in a particular PLTC session will occur in consultation with your principal lawyer at the firm, government body, or other organization where you will be completing your articles.

6. If I decide to article, is there a minimum period of articling that will need to be completed?

There is no obligation for law clerks who have completed at least nine months of a clerking term to complete a minimum articling period in order to be called and admitted. The period of articles will be determined in consultation with your principal lawyer at the firm, government body, or other organization where you will be completing your articles.

7. Following a period of articles, what do I need to do to be called and admitted?

In order to qualify for call and admission, an articulated student must deliver to the Law Society:

- a petition for call and admission;
- a declaration of the principal;
- a declaration of the applicant;
- a joint report of the principal lawyer and the applicant certifying completion of the obligations under the articling agreement;
- a written report on the law clerk's character and competence from the judge to whom the law clerk clerked.

8. If I decide not to article, do I need to enrol in the Law Society Admission Program as an articulated student?

Law clerks who choose not to article will not be required to enrol in the admission program as an articulated student.

9. If I decide not to article, do I still need to successfully complete the PLTC?

Yes, law clerks are still required to successfully complete the PLTC.

10. As a law clerk, when will I attend PLTC?

Attendance at PLTC must occur either prior to or after the period of time served as a law clerk, but not during. PLTC fees must be paid at least 30 days prior to attendance at a particular session.

Registration in a particular PLTC session can occur once the Law Society has received confirmation of acceptance as a law clerk by the Courts and proof of academic qualification.

11. As a law clerk, am I still required to complete the Practice Management Course?

Yes, law clerks are still required to successfully complete the Practice Management Course prior to call and admission.

12. Following my clerkship and successful completion of PLTC, what do I need to do to be called and admitted?

In order to qualify for call and admission, a law clerk must deliver to the Law Society:

- a petition for call and admission
- a completed application for call and admission;
- an application for call and admission fee;
- a written report on the law clerk's character and competence from the judge to whom the law clerk clerked.

13. Can I be called and admitted while I am continuing to clerk?

If you have met the required nine-months of clerking (or a combination of articling and clerking totalling at least nine months) and have successfully passed PLTC and met all other requirements for call and admission, you are eligible to apply for call and admission while continuing as a law clerk. Upon call and admission, you must opt for a non-practising membership with the Law Society until such time as you have completed your clerkship.

How can I obtain more information?

If you have any questions about clerking as an alternate pathway to licensing, please contact:

Registration and Licensee Services
Law Society of British Columbia
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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 for call and admission or to the Law Society Admission Program and with any changes in the Rules that may occur. If you have any questions, contact Registration and Licensee Services at the Law Society of British Columbia.

