

# THE COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO LAW SCHOOL IN CANADA





# INTRODUCING EMOND

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In 1978, Professor Paul Emond published the first Emond casebook. It was a casebook on real estate law, which was soon followed by administrative law and constitutional law casebooks. They were used at the time for classes at the University of Toronto and Osgoode Hall Law School.

Now, over 35 years later, Emond is one of the leading publishers of casebooks and textbooks used in legal education programs across Canada. Our award-winning legal practice resources are widely used by lawyers, paralegals, and other legal professionals in all corners of the country. We have committed ourselves to developing resources that will aid legal professionals throughout the course of their careers—beginning with legal education, continuing through the licensing exam preparation process, and culminating in a successful legal career.

If you are just beginning your journey, you have an exciting and challenging path ahead of you. Start by visiting our Law Student Portal at [emond.ca/lawstudentportal](http://emond.ca/lawstudentportal) where you can prepare yourself with introductory law overviews, summaries, and case briefs. In a few short years, when you have finished law school and are preparing for the Ontario Licensing Exams, remember that Emond is here to offer support in the way of tutoring, exam preparation, and practice exams. Our Comprehensive Bar Exam Preparation Manual is available free of charge at [emond.ca/cbpmanual](http://emond.ca/cbpmanual).

The road ahead of you won't be easy, but, as most legal professionals will tell you, it is worth the effort. We hope our resources will serve as a valuable aid to you through these coming years, and we wish you the best of luck.

[www.emondexamprep.ca](http://www.emondexamprep.ca) | [www.emond.ca](http://www.emond.ca)

[emondexamprep@emond.ca](mailto:emondexamprep@emond.ca)

416-975-3925 | 1-888-837-0815

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# 1 PREPARING FOR LAW SCHOOL

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## A. THINKING OF BECOMING A LAWYER?

Even if you have dreamed of becoming a lawyer since you were a child, deciding to go to law school and preparing for it can be a daunting process. There are many steps involved, and it requires a significant investment of time and money. However, this career path can be very rewarding and take you in different and interesting directions throughout your career. Before embarking on this unique journey, you should start by doing your research and learning as much as you can about what is involved in pursuing this career path.

Your journey begins with obtaining an undergraduate degree at an accredited university. Most law schools in Canada require you to have completed a four-year undergraduate degree in a program of your choice. It is important to choose an area that you are interested in for your undergraduate degree, as you will be more likely to excel and achieve higher grades. Your undergraduate grades are a key factor in determining whether you will be accepted into the law school of your choice. Many law schools pride themselves on having a diverse group of students from a variety of educational backgrounds, but the common thread is that they are high achievers in their areas of study.

To get a better idea of the legal field and the career path you are embarking on, it is a good idea to talk to lawyers or other legal professionals. Most lawyers are more than happy to talk to prospective students about their legal journeys and the experiences they have had along the way. Even if you end up deciding not to practise law, a law degree can open up many new career paths for you. A few of the most common alternative career fields are education and academic administration, banking and finance, conflict resolution, government and politics, human resources, legal consulting, and legal writing and publishing. This manual will help guide you along the path to becoming a licensed lawyer, with a focus on the licensing process in Ontario specifically.

 [The Canadian Bar Association website](#) has some useful resources for researching where your law degree can take you.

### B. OVERVIEW OF LAWYER LICENSING PROCESS

To get a better idea of the path that lies ahead, this chapter summarizes the stages of the legal licensing process in Ontario. Each of the stages mentioned will be addressed in more detail later in this manual; however, this section provides an overview of the timeline and steps involved.

<b>1</b>	Complete an Undergraduate Program
<b>2</b>	Write the Law School Admission Test (LSAT)
<b>3</b>	Apply to Law School and Complete your Juris Doctor (JD) Degree
<b>4</b>	Write the Licensing Exam(s)
<b>5</b>	Complete Ten Months of Articling
<b>6</b>	The Call to the Bar (Become Licensed as a Lawyer)

### **Step 1: Complete an Undergraduate Program**

One of the most common questions that prospective law students have is: “What do I need to study during my undergraduate degree in order to apply to law school?” The answer, surprisingly, is: anything you want. Canadian law schools accept students from *all* academic backgrounds, ranging from accounting and finance to criminology to art history. It is important to choose an undergraduate program that reflects your interests and enables you to excel, since your academic performance and experiences during undergrad will help you create a strong law school application.

### **Step 2: Write the Law School Admission Test (LSAT)**

It is common for individuals to spend a few months to a year studying for the LSAT prior to writing the test. Once you have written the LSAT and received your score, you are ready to start researching and applying to law schools.

### **Step 3: Apply to Law School and Complete your Juris Doctor (JD) Degree**

In Ontario, most law school programs take three years to complete as a full-time student. Each law school has different entrance requirements and cut-off dates, and most schools release the entrance statistics for the students who were accepted the previous year.

[These pages](#) illustrate the average entrance scores of students from last year for each law school within Ontario. Looking at these statistics will help you assess which schools you would be a competitive applicant for.

Once you have determined which schools you are going to apply to, you will need to prepare and gather the required documentation to submit your application. The majority of law schools in Ontario require you to submit the following with your application:

- LSAT score
- Undergraduate transcripts
- A personal statement
- List of employment and volunteer experiences
- List of academic achievements

- List of extracurricular activities
- Research and publication achievements
- Reference letters

After you have gathered all of the required documentation and submitted your application, you must wait to see if you receive any offers of acceptance. Some schools offer early acceptances that require a response from you within a prescribed period. Once you receive your acceptances, you may select your school of choice and begin your law degree.

### **Step 4: Write the Licensing Exam(s)**

After obtaining your law degree (Juris Doctor, or JD), you must complete ten months of articling and pass the licensing exam(s), also called the bar exam, in the province where you plan to practise law. You may complete these two steps in whichever order you prefer; however, most students choose to complete their licensing exams before they begin articling.

In Ontario, the licensing exam consists of two multiple-choice exams: the barrister exam and the solicitor exam. The exams are administered by the [Law Society of Ontario](#) (LSO; formerly the Law Society of Upper Canada) and can only be written at certain times throughout the year. Most students complete their last year of law school in April and register to write the licensing exams several weeks later, in June. By taking this approach, these students will be prepared to begin articling by the end of the summer, meaning they will complete their ten months of articling and be eligible to become licensed (“Called to the Bar”) by the following summer.

### **Step 5: Complete Ten Months of Articling**

The topic of articling will be addressed in more detail later in this manual. In a nutshell, articling entails working under the supervision of a licensed lawyer for ten months in order to gain practical experience as a legal professional. Students can begin articling as soon as they complete law school, but most students wait until after they have written their licensing exams in June. That way, if the firm you articulated for wishes to hire you to continue working as a licensed lawyer, you will be able to continue working without having to take a break to write and pass the licensing exams.

### **Step 6: The Call to the Bar (Become Licensed as a Lawyer)**

In Ontario, the Call to the Bar is a formal ceremony held by the Law Society of Ontario in which you become officially licensed to practise as a lawyer. Some documentation must be submitted in order to be Called to the Bar, and the [LSO website](#) has helpful resources outlining what is required. Most law schools within Ontario will begin to notify you during your third year of studies about what documentation is required in order to prepare for your Call to the Bar. You must have completed your law degree (JD), your articles, and the licensing exams in order to be Called to the Bar.

## **C. THE LSAT**

### **i. Structure and Purpose of Test**

Nearly all law schools within Canada and the United States require the Law School Admission Test as one component of a student's admission file. The LSAT is used to measure skills that are considered to be critical for success in law school. The LSAT measures a candidate's ability to read and comprehend complex texts, to organize and manage information, to draw reasonable inferences and think critically, as well as to analyze and evaluate the reasoning and arguments of others.

The LSAT is a primarily multiple-choice test made up of five 35-minute sections. Four out of the five sections make up the test taker's score; these sections include: reading comprehension, analytical reasoning, and two logical reasoning sections. The fifth section is an unscored section usually used to pretest new test questions for a later sitting of the test. The placement of the unscored section will vary and is not identified to test takers until they receive their score report. There is also a 35-minute unscored writing sample section at the end of the test. Copies of the writing sample section are sent to all the law schools you apply to.

The reading comprehension section measures a candidate's ability to read, with understanding and insight, lengthy and complex texts similar to those that will be encountered in law school. The reading comprehension section of the LSAT contains four sets of reading questions, each consisting of a selection of reading material followed by five to eight questions. The reading selection in three of the four sets consists of a single

reading passage; the other set contains two related shorter passages. Reading selections for this section of the LSAT are drawn from a wide variety of subjects in the humanities and social sciences, the biological and physical sciences, and areas related to the law. Usually, the selections are densely written, using high-level vocabulary, and contain sophisticated arguments or multiple points of view. Reading comprehension questions require the test taker to read carefully and accurately while at the same time determining the relationships among the various parts of the text and drawing reasonable inferences from the material in the selection.

The analytical reasoning section measures a candidate's ability to understand a structure of relationships and to draw logical conclusions about that structure. Analytical reasoning questions appear in sets, and each set of questions is based on a single passage. The passage used for each set describes common ordering relationships, grouping relationships, or a combination of both types of relationships. Analytical reasoning questions reflect the kinds of detailed analyses of relationships and sets of constraints that a law student must perform in legal problem solving. However, the specific scenarios associated with these questions are usually unrelated to law, since they are intended to be accessible to a wide range of test takers. In analytical reasoning questions, test takers are asked to reason deductively from a set of statements and rules that describe relationships among persons, things, or events.

The logical reasoning section measures a candidate's ability to analyze, critically evaluate, and complete arguments as they occur in ordinary language. The questions are based on short arguments drawn from a wide variety of sources, including newspapers, general interest magazines, scholarly publications, advertisements, and informal discourses. These arguments mirror legal reasoning in the types of arguments presented and in their complexity, though few of the arguments actually contain law-related subject matter. Each logical reasoning question requires you to read and comprehend a short passage, and then answer one or two questions about it. The questions are designed to assess a wide range of skills involved in thinking critically, with an emphasis on skills that are central to legal reasoning.

The writing sample portion of the exam is sent out to the law schools that you apply to, and most schools use the sample to evaluate at least some applicants for admission. The writing sample is not scored and does not make up part of your LSAT evaluation. The writing

prompt presents a problem, and you are asked to make a choice between two positions or courses of action. Both of the choices are defensible, and you are given criteria and facts on which to base your decision. There is no “right” or “wrong” position to take on the topic, so the quality of each test taker’s response is a function not of which choice is made but of how well or poorly the choice is supported and how well or poorly the other choice is criticized. The LSAT writing prompt was designed and validated by legal education professionals. Since it involves writing based on fact sets and criteria, the writing sample gives applicants the opportunity to demonstrate the type of argumentative writing that is required in law school, although the topics are usually non-legal. You will have 35 minutes in which to plan and write an essay on the topic you receive. No special knowledge is required or expected for this writing exercise. Law schools are interested in the reasoning, clarity, organization, language usage, and writing mechanics displayed in your essay. How well you write is more important than how much you write.

### ii. Studying for the LSAT

In order to best prepare for the LSAT, it is recommended that you complete practice tests and sample questions to get an idea of the structure of the test. There are free sample tests available at <https://www.lsac.org/jd/lsat/preparing-for-the-lsat>. You can also purchase additional practice materials at <https://www.lsac.org/jd/lsat/preptools> or at most commercial bookstores. Completing timed practice tests is the best way to improve your score and train yourself for test day. Be sure to also attempt a writing sample section under time constraints. By timing yourself, you will be able to determine how much time you can afford to spend on each question, as well as which sections and question types you should spend additional time practising. Practice tests will also help you to become acquainted with the test format and instructions, so these won’t distract you on test day.

You may also consider enrolling in an LSAT preparation course. These courses typically offer a series of sessions over the course of a month or two, and include prep materials such as practice exams, sample questions, and strategies on how to answer the types of questions found in each section of the exam. Some courses provide online-only sessions, while others include face-to-face lessons with an instructor. Most courses also provide a mock exam during the final session or class. Some of the companies that provide LSAT prep courses include Kaplan Test Prep, Harvard Ready, Oxford Seminars, and The Princeton

Review. Some law schools, such as Osgoode Hall Law School and the University of Toronto, also offer free LSAT prep courses to students with financial need. It is important to do your research and investigate whether a prep course is the right study method for you. Visiting or calling the prep course companies you are considering before signing up is a good idea—that way you can see if the learning environment and strategy is the right fit for you. Prep courses are by no means required for the LSAT, and many students have successfully written the LSAT without completing a prep course.

It is important that you start studying for the LSAT as early as you can. By exposing yourself to the test questions early on, you will have more time to develop strategies and understand how the test works. You should also try to identify your weaknesses and focus on those areas in your studies—remember that it is what you do *in between* practice exams that helps you raise your score each time you write. Understanding what type of learner you are is also vital. If you are someone who needs to be in a classroom setting, then taking a prep course is probably the best route for you. If you are an interactive learner who prefers self-paced study, then an online course or self-taught approach might be best.

### iii. Writing the LSAT

The LSAT costs approximately \$250 to write. You can register to take the test and find out more information about the LSAT on the Law School Admission Council website: <https://www.lsac.org/lsat/taking-lsat>. The LSAT is only offered at certain times throughout the year, as well as at certain test centre locations. Most test centre locations are at educational institutions and facilities, such as universities. Many law schools require that the LSAT be taken by December at the latest for admission the following fall. However, we suggest taking the test earlier, in June or September/October, rather than waiting until December. That way, if you are unsatisfied with your initial test score, you are able to retake the test during the December sitting, before law school application deadlines.

On test day, test takers are allowed to bring only one item into the test room: a clear plastic zip-lock bag (maximum size: one gallon), which must be stored under their chairs and may only be accessed during breaks. The zip-lock bag may contain only the following items: the LSAT admission ticket, valid ID, wallet, keys, medical products, feminine hygiene products, tissues, No. 2 or HB wooden pencils (no mechanical pencils are allowed), an eraser, a pencil sharpener, highlighters, a beverage in a plastic container or juice box, and



a snack. No electronic devices are permitted in the test room, and test takers may only wear an analog (non-digital) wristwatch.

Since you're allowed to bring highlighters to the test, making quick notes and highlighting as you read through passages can be a major help. Try not to rush through the test, be sure to pace yourself, and leave a few minutes at the end of each section to review your answers. Doing a number of practice tests ahead of time will help you develop an appropriate pace for working through the test.

You can expect to receive your test score approximately three to four weeks after writing the test. There is no pass or fail outcome for the LSAT: the test is scored in a range from 120 to 180, with 180 being the highest possible score. Your LSAT score is based on the number of questions that you answered correctly; there are no deductions for incorrect answers. Therefore, be sure to answer all questions, and take your best guess if you find yourself running out of time. All questions are weighted the same. If you do not get your ideal score after the first attempt, you can always rewrite the test. However, keep in mind that law schools will have access to your complete test record and not just your highest score.

## D. RESEARCHING LAW SCHOOLS

### i. Ontario Schools and Studying Out of Province

There are many law schools in Ontario, as well as several in other provinces. The full list is as follows:

#### ***Law Schools in Ontario***

- [Lakehead University](#)
- [Osgoode Hall Law School \(York University\)](#)
- [Queen's University](#)
- [University of Ottawa](#)
- [University of Toronto](#)
- [Western University](#)
- [University of Windsor](#)

### ***Law Schools in Other Provinces***

- [Dalhousie University](#)
- [McGill University](#)
- [Thompson Rivers University](#)
- [Université de Montréal](#)
- [University of Alberta](#)
- [University of British Columbia](#)
- [University of Calgary](#)
- [University of Manitoba](#)
- [University of Moncton](#)
- [University of New Brunswick](#)
- [Université de Sherbrooke](#)
- [University of Saskatchewan](#)
- [University of Victoria](#)

Students who plan to practise law in Ontario but attend law school in another province should keep in mind that the laws and legal procedures they learn in school will be specific to that jurisdiction. This can pose a challenge when it comes to preparing for the licensing exams in Ontario. Students who opt for this arrangement need to be prepared to dedicate additional time and effort when they prepare for their Ontario licensing exams, as there will be a steeper learning curve.

### **ii. Factors to Consider**

When considering which law schools to apply to, there are many factors to consider. A key concern for many individuals is the cost of law school. Tuition fees for law schools within Ontario are by no means cheap, and you have to be prepared to spend a significant amount of money when embarking on the law school journey. For some, this means acquiring debt in order to finance their law degree. Beyond the cost of tuition, you must also plan for the costs associated with housing, transportation, lifestyle, school materials, and casebooks.

Schools within Ontario vary somewhat when it comes to tuition costs. The next section provides links to the financing sections of each law school in Ontario, so that you can get an idea as to what tuition will cost. Some schools offer scholarships and financial assistance programs to help students pay for law school. The availability of such resources can be an important factor in deciding which school to attend.

The last factor to consider when researching law schools is whether the school offers any unique programs or extracurricular activities that interest you. For example, some law schools within Ontario offer dual/combined programs such as a JD/MBA or JD/MES. Some schools also offer combined programs with universities in the United States so that students can obtain law degrees in both countries. Each of the law schools within Ontario has a variety of clubs and volunteer opportunities that are unique to them, so you should take some time to visit each school's website and research what it has to offer. Talking to current students as well as alumni can also help you gain better insight into the programs that are offered.

## 1 PREPARING FOR LAW SCHOOL

These pages provide a quick reference guide to help you compare Canadian common law programs taught in English. All information displayed reflects the most recent data made available by each law school or the Law Students Admissions Council (LSAC). If a law school is not displayed, it is because there was insufficient data available for it.

### MCGILL UNIVERSITY

**\$4,388** First Year  
Tuition Costs '18

**162** Median LSAT **3.7** Median GPA

First Year Class Size: 183  
Total Applicants: 1249  
Website: mcgill.ca/law  
**14.7%**  
Acceptance Rate

### UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

**\$34,980** First Year  
Tuition Costs '18

**166** Median LSAT **3.8** Median GPA

First Year Class Size: 208  
Total Applicants: 2199  
Website: law.utoronto.ca  
**9.5%**  
Acceptance Rate

### YORK UNIVERSITY

**\$27,243** First Year  
Tuition Costs '18

**161** Median LSAT **3.7** Median GPA

First Year Class Size: 301  
Total Applicants: 2873  
Website: osgoode.yorku.ca  
**10.5%**  
Acceptance Rate

### QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

**\$19,246** First Year  
Tuition Costs '18

**161** Average LSAT **3.7** Average GPA

First Year Class Size: 200  
Total Applicants: 2737  
Website: law.queensu.ca  
**7.3%**  
Acceptance Rate

### UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

**N/A** First Year  
Tuition Costs '18

**N/A** Median LSAT **N/A** Median GPA

First Year Class Size: 246  
Total Applicants: 1978  
Website: uwindsor.ca/law  
**12.4%**  
Acceptance Rate

### UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

**N/A** First Year  
Tuition Costs '18

**N/A** Median LSAT **N/A** Median GPA

First Year Class Size: 320  
Total Applicants: 2637  
Website: commonlaw.uottawa.ca/en  
**12.1%**  
Acceptance Rate

### UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

**\$22,785** First Year  
Tuition Costs '18

**162** Average LSAT **3.7** Average GPA

First Year Class Size: 176  
Total Applicants: 2200  
Website: law.uwo.ca  
**8.0%**  
Acceptance Rate

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

**\$12,391** First Year Tuition Costs '18

**166** Median LSAT **3.9** Median GPA

First Year Class Size: 191 **12.2%**  
 Total Applicants: 1562 **Acceptance Rate**  
 Website: [allard.ubc.ca](http://allard.ubc.ca)

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

**\$11,000** First Year Tuition Costs '18

**165** Median LSAT **3.9** Median GPA

First Year Class Size: 113 **10.7%**  
 Total Applicants: 1058 **Acceptance Rate**  
 Website: [uvic.ca/law](http://uvic.ca/law)

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

**\$13,700** First Year Tuition Costs '18

**161** Average LSAT **3.7** Average GPA

First Year Class Size: 130 **11.0%**  
 Total Applicants: 1184 **Acceptance Rate**  
 Website: [law.ucalgary.ca](http://law.ucalgary.ca)

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

**\$14,424** First Year Tuition Costs '18

**161** Median LSAT **3.8** Median GPA

First Year Class Size: 160 **15.1%**  
 Total Applicants: 1061 **Acceptance Rate**  
 Website: [ualberta.ca/law](http://ualberta.ca/law)

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

**\$12,500** First Year Tuition Costs '18

**161** Median LSAT **3.9** Median GPA

First Year Class Size: 107 **16.1%**  
 Total Applicants: 665 **Acceptance Rate**  
 Website: [law.robsonhall.com](http://law.robsonhall.com)

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

**\$13,003** First Year Tuition Costs '18

**158** Median LSAT **3.4** Median GPA

First Year Class Size: 130 **13.2%**  
 Total Applicants: 984 **Acceptance Rate**  
 Website: [law.usask.ca](http://law.usask.ca)

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

**N/A** First Year Tuition Costs '18

**N/A** Median LSAT **N/A** Median GPA

First Year Class Size: 170 **13.1%**  
 Total Applicants: 1300 **Acceptance Rate**  
 Website: [dal.ca/faculty/law.html](http://dal.ca/faculty/law.html)

UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

**\$10,576** First Year Tuition Costs '18

**158** Median LSAT **3.8** Median GPA

First Year Class Size: 92 **12.9%**  
 Total Applicants: 715 **Acceptance Rate**  
 Website: [unb.ca/fredericton/law](http://unb.ca/fredericton/law)

### iii. Available Resources

#### ***Scholarship and Financial Information***

- Bora Laskin Faculty of Law: <https://www.ouac.on.ca/guide/olsas-lakehead/#financial>
- Osgoode Hall Law School: <https://www.ouac.on.ca/guide/olsas-osgoode/#financial-services>
- University of Ottawa: <https://www.ouac.on.ca/guide/olsas-ottawa/#scholarships>
- Queen's University: <https://www.ouac.on.ca/guide/olsas-queens/#financial>
- University of Toronto: <https://www.ouac.on.ca/guide/olsas-toronto/#financial>
- Western University: <https://www.ouac.on.ca/guide/olsas-western/#supp>
- University of Windsor: <https://www.ouac.on.ca/guide/olsas-windsor/#entrance>

#### ***General Application Information***

- Ontario Universities' Application Centre: <https://www.ouac.on.ca/olsas/>

#### ***School-Specific Information***

- Bora Laskin Faculty of Law: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/law>
- Osgoode Hall Law School: <https://www.osgoode.yorku.ca>
- University of Ottawa: <http://commonlaw.uottawa.ca/en>
- Queen's University: <https://law.queensu.ca>
- University of Toronto: <https://www.law.utoronto.ca>
- Western University: <https://law.uwo.ca>
- University of Windsor: <http://www.uwindsor.ca>

# 2 APPLYING TO LAW SCHOOL

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## A. TIMELINE OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

### i. The Ontario Law School Application Service

The Ontario Law School Application Service (OLSAS) is a centralized service for all students applying to law schools within Ontario. OLSAS is operated by the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC). While OLSAS provides a single application processing service, each law school is autonomous in reaching its admission decisions. Each applicant completes one common application form and provides one set of academic documents, which are then accessible to the applicant's chosen law schools. The application website is at [https://www.ouac.on.ca/apply/olsas/en\\_CA/user/login](https://www.ouac.on.ca/apply/olsas/en_CA/user/login).

### ii. Important Deadlines

When it comes to applying to law school, it is critical that you make note of important dates and deadlines for submitting the required documentation and completing your application. The usual application deadline for first-year law programs is November 1st of the year prior to your start date, although this may vary. At this time, your application must be complete, and OLSAS must have received your transcripts and reference letters. There are a few exceptions to this timeline—for example, the application deadline for the first-year French program offered at the University of Ottawa is March 1st of the same year you intend to begin school. The application deadline for the combined Canadian and American Dual JD Program at the University of Windsor is mid-April, usually April 15th. If you are applying to upper-year programs instead of the first-year law program, then applications are due in the spring, usually May 1st.

If you are still completing coursework in the January–April semester, OLSAS must receive your final transcripts by June 30th of the year you intend to begin school. Transcripts are requested through the OLSAS online application system and sent to OLSAS from your previous educational institutions. If you run into issues requesting transcripts, contact OLSAS, your university's Student Services department, or your academic adviser.

The deadline for paying for your applications is one week after the respective application deadline. If you receive any provisional acceptances, these become firm acceptances at the beginning of July (approximately two months before you would start law school). All deadlines operate with an 11:59 p.m. EST cut-off time.

## B. COMPONENTS OF THE APPLICATION

Several components make up your online application. The following are key pieces of information that will need to be submitted to complete your law school applications on the OLSAS service.

### i. LSAT

On the OLSAS website, you will be asked to enter your Law School Admission Counsel (LSAC) account number under “LSAT” in the online application. With that number, OLSAS will be able to retrieve your LSAT results. The account number is a nine-digit identification number beginning with an uppercase “L” followed by eight numbers and is assigned by LSAC. Enter the most recent LSAT date and/or the date you plan to write the LSAT. Be sure to update your application if your test date changes. Also note that the LSAT is not required if you plan to apply to Ottawa’s French programs *only*.

Once OLSAS receives your application, it will request your LSAT scores from the LSAC. It is important that you confirm the status of your registration with LSAC, as LSAC will provide LSAT reports to OLSAS only if you are a current registrant. Also, keep in mind that some law schools require that the LSAT be written by a specific date. The LSAT registration fee includes up to five years of score reporting to law schools that request your report. It is *not* necessary to write the LSAT before applying to OLSAS.

### ii. Reference Letters

Most, if not all, law schools require that you ask individuals (“referees”) to provide a reference on your behalf. Referees may submit their reference letters online or by mail. If you provide an email address for your referee to OLSAS, they will be required to complete the reference online. Ensure that your referee is prepared to use the online form before



providing their email address to OLSAS. Once you have added a referee's email address, select "Send Email" to notify them about completing their online reference in a secure environment. It is your responsibility to ensure your referee received the email and successfully submitted the reference to OLSAS.

If your reference does not have an email address or prefers to submit their reference in hard-copy format, you can download the form and provide it to them. Your referee must then mail in the form with their accompanying letter to OLSAS when it is complete. Only one version of the reference can be submitted. You will not be able change your referees once they have been emailed or once the forms have been downloaded. Ensure that you give your referees sufficient time to complete their reference letters and submit them to OLSAS by the deadline.

You will notice that some schools have requirements about the types of references required. Most law schools require that one of your references come from an academic source. It is recommended that you choose a professor who has taught you or supervised your work—while conducting research, for example. Ideally, your referee will be someone you have developed a relationship with and who can attest to your conduct as a student, as well as someone who can describe the personality traits you possess that would make you a valuable member of the legal profession.

### **iii. Academic Background and Transcripts**

On the OLSAS application website, record the last high school you attended and list all post-secondary institutions you have attended. These include the following: community colleges/CEGEPs, universities, junior colleges, and graduate schools. You must also request official transcripts from each university, college, CEGEP, junior college, graduate school, and other post-secondary institutions at which you have registered. Note that these include transcripts from any foreign institutions that you attended while studying abroad on exchange. OLSAS does not require International Baccalaureate or Advanced Placement transcripts. To be considered "official," transcripts must be sent directly from the institution's Registrar's Office to OLSAS, be printed on the institution's official transcript paper, and be imprinted with the school's seal and/or bear the appropriate signatures. OLSAS will *not* accept any photocopies of transcripts. Only one copy of your transcripts is required. If you attended or are currently enrolled at an Ontario university,

you *must* request your transcript through your online application. If you attended or are currently enrolled at an Ontario college, you *may* request your transcript through your online application. By completing the online transcript request and forwarding the appropriate fees, you authorize the OUAC to arrange for your official transcripts to be sent to OLSAS, and you do not need to contact the Registrar's Office directly.

### **iv. Sketch/Verifiers**

Your sketch is an opportunity for you to include details of your activities and experiences in the following categories: full-time employment, part-time employment, volunteer activities, extracurricular activities, academic honours and achievements, and research/publications. Indicate the duration and nature of your involvement in these activities, and use discretion in deciding which details to report. Think of this section of the application as a modified version of your resume: explain the role you played in each experience as well as the duration of each, and highlight any unique factors or key skills that arose from your involvement. All law schools use this information when making admissions decisions.

For "Employment History," specify the name of your employer, your job title, and a short description of the nature of the work. Account for all years since you completed high school. OLSAS will arrange the sketch in the order required by the law schools. The sketch complements any personal statement requirement, and OLSAS recommends that you provide full information in the sketch. It is important that you also accurately document any breaks in time for the activities listed, including a change from full-time to part-time employment (or vice versa). If necessary, use multiple entries for the same employer or activity to properly indicate changes in status or time periods.

For each activity mentioned in your sketch, you will need to provide the name, address, and telephone number of a contact who can verify your involvement in that activity. Any activities that can be substantiated by academic transcripts (e.g., scholarships, special commendations) do not require verifiers. Law schools reserve the right to confirm the information provided in these sections by consulting the individuals you listed as verifiers, so be sure that you do not mislead or misrepresent your involvement.

### v. Personal Statement

Some law schools require you to provide additional information as part of your online application. This information could include writing a personal essay or answering optional questions, such as the following: “Describe how you plan to contribute to the legal community,” or “How do you stand out as a candidate compared to other applicants?” The number of questions and additional information required varies from school to school. It is important that you think critically and reflect on the experiences you have had, both personally and academically, to provide a holistic and compelling answer. The personal statement and question sections allow law schools to glimpse who you are as an individual beyond your academic accomplishments. If you have endured personal hardships or had unique experiences that have influenced your academic journey or future professional goals, it is important that you find a way to weave them into your responses.

Your personal statement is an opportunity for admissions committees to hear your voice. Instead of reiterating the items on your resume, focus on sharing your story. What makes you unique? Did a particular experience spark your passion for the law? What do you hope to achieve with a career in law? These questions are just a few examples to kick-start your thinking. You can find more details about what to include in your personal statement by visiting each law school’s admissions web page. Some schools offer a variety of prompts or suggested tips, while others offer sample statements that can provide you with guidance. Once you’ve narrowed down what you want to talk about in your statement, make sure you give yourself enough time to actually write it. It may take several days, even weeks, to craft a compelling personal statement—one that is clear, cohesive, and free of errors. You might also want to account for time to allow a friend or family member to proofread your statement to ensure that it is well-written and impactful. Make sure to give yourself enough time to tailor your personal statement to fit the requirements of each law school (e.g., meeting word/character limits, answering specific questions, etc.).

## C. ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS CHART

The following chart depicts the entrance requirements for each of the law schools within Ontario for the 2018 application period. The updated requirements for new application cycles will be posted at <https://www.ouac.on.ca/guide/olsas-program-requirements/>.

## 2 APPLYING TO LAW SCHOOL

	<b>Bora Laskin (Lakehead University)</b>	<b>Osgoode Hall Law School (York University)</b>	<b>University of Ottawa</b>	<b>Queen's University</b>	<b>University of Toronto</b>	<b>Western University</b>	<b>University of Windsor</b>
<b>First-Year Class Size 2016</b>	57	290	309	200	206	176	160 (JD) 85 (JD/JD)
<b>Number of Applicants in 2017</b>	544	2,758	2,615	2,351	2,109	2,123	1,710 (JD) 437 (JD/JD)
<b>Part-Time, Half-Time, Extended Time</b>	N/A	Extended time	Half-time	Part-time (up to five spaces available)	Half-time	Extended time	Half-time
<b>Minimum Undergraduate Academic Requirements</b>	Three years or more; undergrad- uate program completion is preferred.	JD requires three years or more at a recognized university in a program leading to a degree; JD/MA (Philos- ophy) requires the completion of a four-year honours undergrad- uate degree in Philosophy.	Three years or more; undergradu- ate program completion is strongly encouraged.	Three years or more; completion of undergrad- uate degree is preferred and is required for com- bined programs.	Three years; almost all admitted applicants have completed a four-year degree.	Three years of full-time (or equivalent) university study is required.	Three years or more is preferred; most successful applicants have completed an undergraduate de- gree; Canadian and American dual JD program requires the completion of a four-year undergrad- uate degree by the beginning of August in the year of entry.
<b>LSAT</b>	Test must be taken in or after June 2013; no minimum LSAT score; highest score used—the weight given to the LSAT varies depending on the fulfillment of other elements of the application.	Earliest acceptable score June 2013; latest acceptable score February 2018; highest score.	June 2013; highest score; no minimum LSAT score.	Earliest acceptable test date: June 2013; latest test accepted: February 2018; highest score.	Earliest acceptable test date: June 2013; latest acceptable test date: February 2018; most successful applicants score 160 and above.	Earliest test accepted: June 2013; latest test accepted: February 2018; scores of 160 or higher are considered most competitive; highest score is used for admission purposes, although all scores are reviewed.	June 2013; highest score; no minimum LSAT score; the weight given to the LSAT varies, depending on the fulfillment of other application elements.
<b>GPA</b>	Competitive applications have an overall academic standing of "B+"/75% with an "A-"/80% in the last 2 years of study at the undergraduate level.	Most successful applicants have a cumulative GPA of "A-."	Most successful applicants have a cumulative GPA of "A-."	Most successful applicants have a cumulative undergraduate average of "A-."	Most successful applicants have a cumulative GPA of "A-" or higher.	Most successful applicants have a cumulative undergraduate average of "A-" or 3.7 GPA.	Holistic lens that considers: 1. university program 2. work experience 3. community involvement 4. personal accomplishments 5. career objectives 6. personal considerations 7. LSAT scores.

## 2 APPLYING TO LAW SCHOOL

	<b>Bora Laskin (Lakehead Univeristy)</b>	<b>Osgoode Hall Law School (York University)</b>	<b>University of Ottawa</b>	<b>Queen's University</b>	<b>University of Toronto</b>	<b>Western University</b>	<b>University of Windsor</b>
<b>Personal Statements</b>	Required from all applicants.	Required from all applicants.	Required from all applicants.	Required from all applicants.	Required from all applicants.	Required from all applicants.	Personal Profile is required from every applicant.
<b>Referee Forms (Letter of Reference)</b>	Two letters of reference are required (one academic and one may be non-academic).	Two required; at least one academic reference is strongly recommended.	Two required by all; at least one from an academic source.	Please provide one academic reference. No more than three letters of reference may be filed to support an application.	References are not required.	General, Access and Aboriginal/Indigenous—two (one academic required); Mature—two references required.	One academic reference form and one non-academic reference form.
<b>Programs</b>	JD.	JD, JD/MBA, JD/MES, JD/MA (Phil), JD/Extended.	JD, JD/MA, JD/MBA, Canadian and American Dual JD, PDC (Combined JD/LLL).	JD, JD part-time, JD/MBA, MIR/JD, MPA/JD, MA (Econ)/JD.	JD, JD half-time, JD/MA (Criminology), JD/MA (Economics), JD/MA (English), JD/MA (European and Russian Affairs), JD/MBA, JD/MGA (Global Affairs), JD/MI (Information), JD/MPP (Public Policy), JD/MSW (Social Work), JD/PhD (Economics), JD/PhD (Philosophy), JD/PhD (Political Science), JD/Certificate Aboriginal Legal Studies, JD/Certificate Environmental Studies, JD/Certificate Sexual Diversity Studies, JD/Collaborative Program—Jewish Studies.	JD, JD/MBA, JD/Extended.	JD, JD Half-time, Canadian and American Dual JD, MSW/JD, MBA/JD, LLM.
<b>Categories</b>	General, Aboriginal/Indigenous, Access.	General, Aboriginal/Indigenous.	General, Special Circumstances, Access, Mature, Aboriginal/Indigenous.	General, Aboriginal/Indigenous, Access (includes disadvantaged, disabled and mature applicants).	General, Mature, Aboriginal/Indigenous.	General, Aboriginal/Indigenous, Access, Mature.	General, Aboriginal/Indigenous.

### D. WHERE AND HOW TO APPLY

#### i. Applying Online

The application process is quite lengthy, and the exact amount of time required to complete your application will depend on the number of law schools you apply to. You should allow for 5 to 25 hours to prepare your application. You can begin the process by creating a username and password on the OUAC website: <https://www.ouac.on.ca/>. You will need these credentials to create an application, as well as to make updates or changes to it.

Your application will not be submitted until you click on “Verify and Submit” and complete the submission process. Upon doing so, you will receive a confirmation number. Once you have submitted your application, OLSAS will forward it to all of the requested law schools, regardless of your qualifications and the completeness of your application. After you have submitted your application, you will not be able to make changes to the following information: academic record (except to add an institution), school submissions, sketch/verifiers, referees, and status in Canada. Therefore, you should ensure that your application is complete and up to date before the application deadline. Each Ontario law school has its own admissions requirements and reserves the right to determine whether degrees granted by post-secondary institutions are suitable for the purpose of admission. Be aware of these variations, and be sure you qualify for consideration before paying and submitting your applications to OLSAS.

To ensure that you are considered by the schools of your choosing, study the application procedures for each law school you apply to. Be sure to submit your application and supporting documents before the deadlines. It is vital that you give your referees

sufficient time to complete their references and submit them to OLSAS before the deadline. After submitting your application, you will receive an OUAC/OLSAS reference number. You will also receive a confirmation number when you successfully submit changes to your application and/or respond to offers of admission. You will be able to monitor your documentation in the “Document Tracking” section as soon as you create your application. It is your responsibility to ensure that OLSAS receives the application and all required supporting documentation by the required deadline. Failure to comply with the admissions requirements and deadlines will likely result in your application being cancelled. Additionally, any unsolicited application materials and information that you submit is unlikely to be considered for admission purposes.

### **ii. Application Cost**

The cost of applying to law schools entails a flat application service fee of \$200 to use the OLSAS system, plus an additional \$100 or \$125 fee for each law school you apply to. Some schools also charge a \$12 fee for each transcript request. Your application will not be forwarded to the law school until you submit the full payment. If you pay a fee and then wish to withdraw your application, you will not receive a refund. For information on how to waive a law school’s \$100 fee on the basis of financial need, consult the individual law school in the OLSAS online application, or contact the law school directly. Payment for your applications is part of the final “Submit” process of the OLSAS online system. Take note that the following forms of payment are accepted: credit card, online banking/e-transfer, and Western Union Business Solutions. For more information about payment options, visit <https://www.ouac.on.ca/fees/>.

# 3 CHOOSING A LAW SCHOOL

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## A. RECEIVING OFFERS

Law schools may make offers of admission any time after your application is received. To respond to an offer of admission, you must log into your OLSAS account. After you submit a response, you will be locked out of your application for one business day. Only one offer of admission may be accepted at a time. It is important to note that once you officially accept a law school's offer, your other choices will be marked "Decline: No Further Consideration." Your applications to any other Ontario law schools will be cancelled, and you will be removed from all wait lists.

You also have the option of providing a "provisional acceptance" to an offer. If you decide to give a provisional acceptance, you must indicate which other choices you wish to remain active. If you do not indicate that you still wish to be considered for a specific choice, it will be marked as "Decline: No Further Consideration." Provisional acceptances to first-year programs will automatically become firm at the beginning of July. Any time you make a change to your account, by accepting or declining an offer, you will need to click "Review/Submit" before exiting and follow through with the "Submit" process. You will be given a confirmation number after exiting and making changes.

If you receive more than one offer of admission, you must make a decision. This can be a difficult decision to make, and this chapter will cover some important factors to consider before making it. Some schools will include perks in their offers, such as entrance scholarships, which may only be available upon a firm acceptance to the school by a certain date. Be sure to consider each offer you receive carefully and keep track of any important deadlines that are outlined.

## B. VISITING LAW SCHOOLS

Visiting the schools that you plan on applying to is a great way to determine whether you could see yourself attending those schools and living in the surrounding areas. By visiting schools *before* you apply, you can weed out the schools you are not interested in attending.



### 3 CHOOSING A LAW SCHOOL

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This can save you a lot of time and money when it comes to the application process. If you are unable to take such an approach prior to applying, it is highly recommended that you at least visit the schools where you've received an offer of acceptance.

Signing up for a campus tour is a great way to get a feel for a school's educational environment, as well as talking to representatives from the school about what programs and extracurricular activities are offered. Campus tours give you a first-hand look into life at each law school and provide you with a solid understanding of the schools' environments. Most law schools in Ontario offer prospective students the opportunity to schedule campus tours led by current law students. These tours allow you to learn about the law school's facilities, the structure of the law program, and other unique opportunities offered at the school. A campus tour also allows you to ask any questions you may have regarding the program, as well as to receive advice from someone currently enrolled in the school's law program. Most schools include information about signing up for campus tours in their offers of acceptance.

Another great way to gain a better understanding of a law school that you are considering is to attend a lecture. It is usually easy to find an ongoing lecture when wandering through the school, and most professors won't mind if you pop in for a few minutes to listen. Just remember to be courteous and ensure that you do not cause any disruption when entering or exiting the lecture hall. It is recommended that you sit near the back, if possible, to avoid causing any distraction to the professor or students. However, don't worry if attending a lecture is not an option for you. Most law schools participate in recruitment events across the province that provide applicants with opportunities to speak to staff and students about the school and program. Below is a list of links from schools in Ontario that provide more information about recruitment events:

- Osgoode Hall Law School of York University: <https://www.osgoode.yorku.ca/programs/juris-doctor/jd-admissions/admissions-events/>
- Western University: [https://law.uwo.ca/future\\_students/jd\\_admissions/recruitment\\_events.html](https://law.uwo.ca/future_students/jd_admissions/recruitment_events.html)
- Queen's University: <https://law.queensu.ca/jd-admissions/information-events>
- University of Ottawa: <https://commonlaw.uottawa.ca/en/students/admissions/recruitment-2015>
- University of Toronto: <https://www.law.utoronto.ca/events/day>

## C. CONSULTING WITH STUDENTS AND ALUMNI

Another great way to get more information about a law school is to go directly to the source and talk to current or past students. Most students and alumni are more than willing to talk about their experiences and provide useful insights into their everyday lives at law school. If you sign up for a campus tour, you will be put in touch with a current student who can answer many of the questions you have regarding the law school you are considering. If you are looking to speak to current students without attending a tour, many law schools have “student ambassadors” who have volunteered to speak to prospective students who have questions about the law program or the life of a law student at that school. Contact Student Services/Academic Services at the law school you are interested in to find out how you can connect with a current student.

Once you have been put in touch with a current student, it is a good idea to ask them any questions you have about the program and school. Some common questions to ask are:

- How is the first-year curriculum structured?
- What extracurricular/volunteer opportunities are offered at or unique to the school?
- Are there placement programs or experiential learning opportunities offered?
- Can I afford the cost of tuition?
- How does the student balance school and a social life?
- What are their suggestions on where to live on- or off-campus?
- What are some particular courses that are highly recommended and unique to the school?
- What professors are highly rated?

You can also learn a lot about a particular school by speaking to alumni. Alumni can not only give you insight into what it is like to attend the school but also where your degree can take you once you have graduated. Most law schools have a list of alumni that have volunteered to act as mentors to students currently attending law school. Some schools may be able to put prospective students in touch with these individuals for insight into their educational and employment experiences.

It is also strongly recommended that you reach out to friends and family members who have attended law school. People within your existing network may be more willing to discuss their experiences with you in an open and honest manner. Speaking to a variety

of people, including those who have attended schools other than the ones you are considering, can provide you with a wealth of knowledge before you even begin your legal studies. These conversations can help you develop a better understanding of what to expect from your legal education and career.

Below are some resources to help you get into contact with current students and alumni from Ontario law schools:

- Osgoode Hall Law School of York University: <https://www.osgoode.yorku.ca/programs/juris-doctor/jd-admissions/contact-us/>
- Western University: [https://law.uwo.ca/future\\_students/jd\\_admissions/student\\_ambassadors.html](https://law.uwo.ca/future_students/jd_admissions/student_ambassadors.html)
- University of Windsor: <http://www.uwindsor.ca/law/389/contact-us>
- University of Toronto: <https://www.law.utoronto.ca/admissions/jd-admissions/jd-admissions-enquiries>

## D. ACCEPTING AN OFFER

If you receive offers from more than one law school, determining which school is right for you can be stressful and difficult. Most Canadian law schools have a positive reputation, and many people will say that you can't go wrong in choosing to pursue a legal education within Canada. However, there are some important factors that you should consider when determining which law school is the right one for *you*.

One of the most important considerations is location. Are you prepared to uproot your life and move to a new city for the next three years? If the answer is no, then you have likely narrowed down your choices. It is also important to consider the cost of moving and living in a new city, should you choose to relocate. Consider whether you would live on- or off-campus, and inquire with the school about the housing options available. If you don't move, is there a school within driving distance of where you live? Consider the cost of commuting by car or public transit and whether or not this is a feasible option for the next three years. Ideally, your living situation will provide you with a sense of comfort while you are studying. Law school can be demanding and stressful, so ensuring you have a comfortable living situation can help you feel less overwhelmed.

Consider the type of law that you want to practise. Certain schools have reputations for specializing in certain areas of the law. This is often because of location or the combined programs that are offered at the school. You should also contemplate whether you would be interested in doing a combined degree. Researching the faculty members at each school is a good idea, as this is a factor that can play a part in which school you choose, particularly if you are interested in a certain area of the law. If you aren't sure which area of law you want to practise in, that's fine too. First-year programs tend to be generalized to give students broad exposure to many different areas of law. If this is the case for you, try to select a school that has a wide variety of course options so that you are not limited when you do decide which type of law you want to practise.

Consider the cost of tuition for each school and whether or not it is feasible for you to attend that school. Most schools offer scholarships, grants, and bursaries that can help ease the financial strain. Awards with monetary compensation may also be available to you after your first year. Certain schools may have job opportunities for students, which may also help if you are planning to work while attending law school.

Take a look at the specific opportunities and courses offered at each school. Some schools offer placement programs, research projects, advocacy competitions, intensive courses, workshops, and clinical education opportunities that provide unique and invaluable experiences. Be sure to research the opportunities available to you and what is required from you to participate.

Remember that only one offer of admission may be accepted at a time. If you decide to provide a provisional acceptance because you need more time to decide or because you want to wait to see if you get an offer from another school, you must indicate which other choices you wish to remain active. If you do not indicate that you wish to be considered for a specific option, it will be declined. Provisional acceptances will automatically become firm at the beginning of July, and most schools require you to have made a decision by this time. In their letters of admission, some schools will indicate whether they require you to reply by a certain date, as well as if any grants or scholarships are being offered to you. Take notice that some schools offering early acceptance and scholarships require you to provide a firm acceptance before the July deadline.

## E. ONTARIO LAW SCHOOLS

### i. Key Highlights and Student Insights

Below are some key highlights and unique characteristics of each of the law schools in Ontario. Some schools offer insight into their law programs through feedback and comments from past and present students. Links are provided below for you to access these comments. Please note that the following is not a complete representation of each law school, and it is recommended that you visit the website of each school you are considering in order to gain a full understanding of what each school has to offer.

#### ***Osgoode Hall Law School of York University***

Osgoode offers a number of joint and combined programs, such as JD/MBA, JD/MES (Master of Environmental Studies), JD/MA Philosophy, and JD/BCL (Bachelor of Civil Law). It also offers a broad range of courses covering almost all areas of the law. Osgoode is known for its clinical and intensive programs, such as the following: the Advanced Business Law Workshop (Corporate Finance); the Advanced Business Law Workshop (Mergers and Acquisitions); the Anti-Discrimination Intensive Program; the Business Law Intensive; the Community and Legal Aid Services Program; the Criminal Law Intensive; the Disability Law Intensive; the Environmental Justice and Sustainability Clinical Program; the Feminist Advocacy (Ending Violence Against Women) Clinical Program; the Investor Protection Clinic; the Immigration and Refugee Law Intensive; the Innocence Project; the Intellectual Property Law and Technology Intensive Program; the Intensive Program in Aboriginal Lands, Resources, and Governments; the International and Transnational Law Intensive Program; the Mediation Intensive Program; the Osgood Business Clinic; the Poverty Law Intensive at Parkdale Community Legal Services; and the Test Case Litigation Project.

To find out more about each clinical and intensive program, visit <https://www.osgoode.yorku.ca/clinics-intensives/>.

Go to <https://www.osgoode.yorku.ca/programs/juris-doctor/> and scroll down to “The Student Experience” to read first-hand accounts written by students at Osgoode Hall Law School.

#### ***Western University Faculty of Law***

Western Law is known for its ambition to be the pre-eminent law school in Canada focusing on business law in the global environment. A unique aspect of Western Law is the combined JD/MBA and JD/HBA (Honours Business Administration) programs with the Ivey School of Business, as well as the Western Business Law Clinic. Western Law has also developed several curricular streams that provide students with informal guidance on the courses and co-curricular activities that they may wish to pursue in light of their interests. Students do not formally enroll in the streams; the streams simply provide advice for navigating a course of study in a specific area of the law. They also provide suggestions on the types of experiential learning, clinical work, research, or advocacy opportunities that can enhance students' understanding and skills. The curricular streams offered include business law; criminal law; government and public administration; intellectual property, information and technology; international law; labour, employment, and social justice; litigation; and universal or specialty practice.

To find out more about the unique opportunities Western has to offer regarding business law, visit [https://law.uwo.ca/future\\_students/business\\_law/index.html](https://law.uwo.ca/future_students/business_law/index.html).

To find out more about the curricular streams, visit [https://law.uwo.ca/future\\_students/curricular\\_streams/index.html](https://law.uwo.ca/future_students/curricular_streams/index.html).

#### ***Queen's University Faculty of Law***

The law program at Queen's University is known for its wide range of clinical opportunities. The school operates five legal aid clinics focusing on the areas of prison law, family law, elder law, business law, and poverty law. These clinical opportunities allow students to gain experience providing legal assistance to low-income residents. Queen's also offers mooted programs, two law journals, extracurricular placement opportunities, and a wide range of internship and externship opportunities. Queen's Law also offers a number of combined programs, such as the BComm/JD, MBA/JD, JD combined with a graduate diploma in business, MA Economics/JD, Master of Industrial Relations/JD, and a Master of Public Administration/JD. There is also a combined Civil Law/Common Law joint program offered.

To find out more about each of the law clinic opportunities, visit <http://queenslawclinics.ca>.

To find out more about the law program at Queen's University, visit <https://law.queensu.ca/about/student-success>.

#### ***University of Ottawa Faculty of Law***

The Common Law program at the University of Ottawa is known for its expertise in law and technology, health law, environmental law, public law, and international law (including immigration and refugee law). The law program at uOttawa has a commitment to social justice and a strong Indigenous Law program. The school also has a top mooting program and offers a unique experience to students by way of its location in the national capital. A wide variety of legal clinics also operate in conjunction with the law school, providing students with a unique hands-on learning experience. The clinics include the University of Ottawa Community Legal Clinic, the uOttawa-Ecojustice Environmental Law Clinic, the Samuelson-Glushko Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic, the Refugee Hub, the Ticket Defence Program, and the Ian G. Scott Courtroom—a fully functional courtroom where sitting judges hear regular cases. The University of Ottawa also offers a French Juris Doctor program, as well as a Civil Law program, for those wishing to practise law in Quebec.

To learn more about the Common Law program at the University of Ottawa, visit <https://commonlaw.uottawa.ca/en>.

To learn more about the Civil Law program at the University of Ottawa, visit <https://droitcivil.uottawa.ca/en>.

#### ***University of Windsor Faculty of Law***

The law program at the University of Windsor is shaped by a strong focus on access to justice and transnational law. The University of Windsor offers a unique program allowing students to earn joint Canadian and American dual JD degrees. It also offers other unique degree programs, such as a combined MSW/JD, a combined MBA/JD, and a Master of Laws



program. When it comes to upper-year course offerings, students at Windsor Law are allowed, with permission, to enroll in courses that are taught in other faculties at the University of Windsor and certain courses that are taught at the law schools at Wayne State University and the University of Detroit Mercy for credit toward their JD degree. The law program at the University of Windsor also offers a number of clinical and experiential learning opportunities where students can gain hands-on legal experience, including two poverty law clinics and a university-based mediation service.

To learn more about the clinical and experiential learning opportunities offered at Windsor Law, visit <http://www.uwindsor.ca/law/341/clinical-and-experiential-learning>.

To learn more about the joint Canadian and American dual JD program, visit <http://www.uwindsor.ca/law/370/canadian-american-dual-jd-program>.

#### ***University of Toronto Faculty of Law***

The law program at the University of Toronto is made up of an exemplary group of international faculty members. It also offers a variety of clinics and public interest opportunities, such as Downtown Legal Services, Advocates for Injured Workers, the Barbara Schlifer Commemorative Clinic, the International Human Rights Clinic, the Health Equity and Law Clinic, the Constitutional Advocacy Clinic, and Pro Bono Students Canada. The Faculty of Law also has a number of special programs available to students, including the Health Law and Policy Group, the International Reproductive and Sexual Health Law Program, the June Callwood Program in Aboriginal Law, and the Centre for Transnational Legal Studies. A variety of combined degree programs are also offered, such as JD/MBA, JD/MA Criminology, JD/MA Economics, JD/PhD Economics, JD/MA English, JD/MA European and Russian Affairs, JD/MGA (Global Affairs), JD/MI (Information Studies), JD/PhD Philosophy, JD/PhD Political Science, JD/MPP (Public Policy), and JD/MSW (Social Work).

To learn more about the clinics and special programs offered at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law, visit <https://www.law.utoronto.ca/centres-programs>.

To hear from now-graduated students of the University of Toronto Faculty of Law, visit <https://www.law.utoronto.ca/admissions/why-u-t>.



#### ***Bora Laskin Faculty of Law of Lakehead University***

The Faculty of Law at Lakehead University is still somewhat new; however, this program offers students a unique hands-on learning experience that makes them eligible for licensing directly after graduating. Students at Lakehead partake in the Integrated Practice Curriculum, which requires them to complete a four-month placement in their third year of study, similar to that of an articling position. The program at Lakehead has a unique focus on Aboriginal and Indigenous law, natural resources and environmental law, and sole/small-town practice. The school also has a Community Legal Services Clinic that students can participate in, as well as a Pro Bono Students Canada chapter and a law journal.

To find out more about the Integrated Practice Curriculum, visit <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/law/curriculum/ipc>.

To find out more about the Faculty of Law at Lakehead through student experiences, visit <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/law/student-profiles>.

# 4 SURVIVING FIRST YEAR

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## A. PREPARING FOR FIRST YEAR

With your course selections made and the first year of law school quickly approaching, you may experience a great deal of anxiety and anticipation surrounding the unknown. The important thing to remember is that you've made it this far. You successfully wrote the LSAT, applied to law schools, and got accepted—you will succeed. The following are some tips and tricks to help you prepare for your first year of law school; however, remember to take some time to relax and enjoy the summer too. It is important to catch up with friends and family, celebrate your achievements, travel, and read for pleasure. Don't worry about cramming your brain full of legal knowledge or studying ahead what you think you might need to know—there will be lots of learning to come!

### i. Know how YOU learn

You've probably heard it before: "There are many different types of learners." This is one of the most important things to remember during law school. Unfortunately, many law school curricula are geared towards auditory learners, with most learning occurring through lectures in which professors verbally convey content to students. Some professors provide lecture slides to students, which allows for visual learners to follow along with the content. Some law schools also provide experiential learning opportunities that allow for students to see how actual legal practices develop in real time and provide kinesthetic learners with hands-on learning.

You may find yourself trying to change your approach to studying and learning in an attempt to adapt to an unfamiliar environment and because you feel you are being closely compared to your intelligent (and nervous) peers. It is important to remember that the approach to learning and studying that you have implemented thus far has proven to be successful—you have made it to law school! Depending on what you studied during your undergraduate degree, learning the law can feel like learning a second language. A large amount of new content will be thrown at you at in a short period of time, and your tried-and-true study method can serve as a solid foundation on which you can tackle new ideas and concepts. It is vital that you use the approach that works best for *you*.

### ii. Orientation Week

As the start date for law school approaches, you will likely be flooded with information via email/mail regarding Orientation Week. Depending on the law school you attend, Orientation Week can span from a few days to almost two weeks. You may be eagerly anticipating or nervously dreading this upcoming series of events; however, finding time to participate in at least a few events is important, so that you can get a feel for the school environment and meet your peers. Most of the activities will be social outings aimed at getting new students to interact with one another outside of a classroom context. These activities can include scavenger hunts, sporting events, barbeques, karaoke, pub nights, and more! During this time, you may also have opportunities to mingle with upper-year students and perhaps even some faculty members, which is a valuable opportunity to start establishing a network.

### iii. Textbooks

For most courses, you will receive your book list on the first day of class or the week preceding it. While the bookstore may seem like the most convenient option for purchasing your books, you can likely find better value by ordering your textbooks directly from the publisher. At Emond, we sell our casebooks online at [www.emond.ca](http://www.emond.ca) for prices that are equivalent to the used copies sold at school bookstores, and we offer free shipping within Canada. We also sell digital versions of our casebooks and bundled print and digital combinations. These options that can be a huge help if you want to travel light on your way to and from class. If you are considering purchasing digital versions of your casebooks, be aware that some classes have open-book exams: you may wish to also have print copies of the books to bring with you into exams.

### B. STRUCTURE OF FIRST YEAR

When it comes to the structure of your first year of law school, you won't have much choice over your courses. Depending on the law school you attend, you may have the option of choosing between a seminar or two, but for the most part, you will be given a pre-set course schedule. Most law schools divide first year into two semesters, with some courses running the full year. All schools will provide you with a diverse group of introductory-level courses to get you acquainted with the different areas of law. No matter which school you attend, you will have courses focused on the following areas of study during your first year of law school: criminal law, contract law, tort law, Constitutional law, legal research and writing, property law, and civil procedure.

Orientation Week usually begins the last week of August, with classes beginning the week after that. Most law schools offer two Reading Week breaks: one during the beginning of November and the other in mid-February. First-semester classes end at the beginning of December, with exams running the second week of December. The second semester usually begins the first week of January and ends at the start of April, with exams running through the middle of April. For exact dates, search for the "Academic Calendar" on your school's website.

### C. STUDENT SERVICES

Your school will have a number of services available to assist you with the transition into first year and the rest of your law school experience. These services are meant to be utilized and are there to help you through some of the challenges you will encounter while pursuing a legal education. You may have found that you did not use such services during your undergraduate degree; however, law school will be different from any other educational experience you have had. The services offered by the law school are specifically crafted to address the needs of students in the Faculty of Law. Below are some of the most common resources and services that are offered by Student Services at most law schools in Ontario.

### **i. Financial Assistance**

As previously mentioned, it is important to consider the financial assistance and resources that are available to you when choosing a law school. Pursuing a legal education is not a cheap endeavour, and the financial burden that accompanies law school can cause students a great deal of stress. Fortunately, many law schools in Ontario offer bursaries, grants, and scholarships, as well as assistance with applying for OSAP and other government loan programs. Most law schools have a dedicated financial department, with advisers that can meet with students to discuss their options and help them set up payment plans and professional lines of credit. The majority of law schools will provide you with information regarding tuition and finances between the time you accept an offer and Orientation Week. Some schools run seminars and workshops during Orientation Week to assist students with planning and managing their finances throughout law school.

### **ii. Mental Health Resources**

Other important resources offered by law schools are the student counselling services and mental health resources. The first year of law school can be a steep transition for some, and everyone will experience stress at some point. It is vital that you talk to someone—a friend, family member, peer, or school staff member—if you are feeling overwhelmed. Law school is a unique experience that not everyone can relate to, and talking to someone who has gone through or is also going through the same experience can be very beneficial. Most law schools have a Student Peer Network or a Student Success and Wellness Group that provides services, workshops, social events, and professional counselling services to students throughout the year. You will likely learn about the different services available to you during Orientation Week, so make note of the services that are available and where to go should you need them.

### iii. Mentoring

Another useful service often offered by law schools is mentoring. Most law schools provide mentoring opportunities in which first-year students are paired with an upper-year law student. Mentoring is a great way to ease the transition into first year and can help to provide insight on what classes will look like, the teaching styles of professors, study tips, and emotional support. Some schools also offer opportunities for students to sign up to be paired with mentors from the legal field, who are past alumni of the school. This mentoring provides students with guidance on how to plan for their future careers and can lead to opportunities for students to shadow lawyers and gain first-hand insight into the legal profession. You will likely learn about the mentoring opportunities available to you during Orientation Week, but if not, be sure to contact Student Services at your school to inquire.

## D. GETTING INVOLVED

### i. Extracurriculars and Clubs

During Orientation Week, you will learn about the many extracurricular opportunities available to you while attending law school. Getting involved at law school is important in order to network, gain experience, and get exposure to real-life legal practices that might not be provided during your formal studies in the classroom. Be sure to join at least one club, clinic, or initiative during your first year of study. (You can always get more involved during your upper years.)

You can learn about the different opportunities available to you by visiting Student Services or talking to upper-year mentors. Additionally, many law schools run club fairs during Orientation Week (or the first few weeks of school), which allow students the opportunity to talk to representatives from the different clinics and clubs. While it is important to get involved, be careful not to not spread yourself too thin or put undue pressure on yourself. Continue to maintain relationships outside of school and spend time on the hobbies you enjoy, and develop a healthy sense of balance.

### ii. Thinking Ahead

Although some strategizing might be required as to which clubs and clinics you should join, be sure that you are genuinely interested in the extracurriculars that you take on—don't sign up solely for the sake of padding your resume. Clubs and extracurriculars can be a great way to gain experience working in different areas of the law and can help you determine which area of law you might want to pursue. Clinics provide hands-on learning experiences not available through lecture courses and can perfectly compliment what you are learning in the classroom. No future employer is going to fault you for joining a specific club or clinic, even if you end up realizing it is not an area you wish to pursue in the future. Many of the extracurricular activities offered during law school provide students with transferable skills that can be applied to almost any job that you pursue using your legal degree. You will come to realize that your time is precious during law school, so be choosy, do your research, and sign up for clubs and clinics that you are truly interested in. If you know which area of the law you are interested in pursuing, talk to your mentor, upper-year students, or alumni to gain insight into what extracurriculars might best prepare you for scoring your dream job.

## E. LECTURES AND EXAMS

### i. Structure

One of the biggest adjustments associated with law school is the exams. You are likely most accustomed to the forms of assessment used during your undergraduate degree, which probably involved a variety of different methods—exams, papers, seminar participation, presentations, and so on. When it comes to law school, there are fewer opportunities for assessment, and your entire grade for a course may rely on a single exam or paper. However, some schools do have courses that incorporate an assignment as well as an exam. Exams tend to be the preferred form of assessment and provide instructors with the most direct way to compare students in order to mark on a curve. After all students complete an exam, the marks are collected and compared to one another so that they can be adjusted if necessary. This is to ensure that grades fall along a predetermined distribution.

Law school exams will either be open-book or closed-book. A closed-book exam is the more traditional approach that you are likely used to from your undergraduate degree. With a closed-book exam, you are expected to know the content inside and out and are not allowed to bring any materials into the testing area with you. Because law school is content-heavy and involves a lot of reading and writing, open-book exams are fairly common. Most courses will end with a final open-book exam, where students are allowed to bring in textbooks and notes to help them answer questions. Although this may sound great, you still need to be sure you know the content and have a deep understanding of what was taught, as you will find that time flies quickly during the exam and you will not have time to look up the answer to every question. The more organized and succinct your lecture and reading notes are, the more helpful they will be when it comes to the exam.

When you get to law school, you will hear about something called a “summary” almost immediately. Summaries will be discussed in more detail below, but they refer to a concise compilation of the key concepts and ideas taught throughout the course, as well as references and excerpts from supporting texts and materials. Summaries are many students’ best friends when it comes to open-book exams.

Law school exams are typically administered in a lecture hall and written on your own computer using exam software. Most law schools do offer a separate computer lab environment for students who do not have their own laptops. Students also have the option to handwrite their exams. As many students opt to bring their own laptop for the exam, Student Services will send out emails prior to the exam period that instruct students on how to set up the exam software. Students are required to download the software onto their laptops, and they will be provided with access codes at the time of the exam, which will be taken in a lecture hall. Depending on the software used by your law school, you probably won’t be able to access any other programs while using the exam software. For this reason, any materials that you plan to take into the exam should be in hard-copy format. Be sure to check your computer before exam time to ensure that it is working properly and that all software is up to date.



### ii. Tips and Strategies

When it comes to preparing for exams, one of the most important things is to stay organized. You will find that the content taught in first year is dense and complex, and it may seem overwhelming when you begin studying for exams. The best way to approach exam preparation is to begin early: start building summaries and taking notes in an organized fashion from day one. Additionally, stay on top of your readings and be sure to compile or cross-reference your reading notes with your lecture notes to ensure that you have a comprehensive batch of material come exam time.

Whenever your professor makes mention of the exam or a tip or key point, be sure to write it down and highlight it for review later. Some law schools and student groups provide access to databases in which students can locate and download previous student summaries and practice exams for courses taught by specific professors. Using your own notes and building your own summaries will help you learn the material and digest the content. However, cross-checking your notes with those of another student—either past or present—will help to ensure that you are not missing any key points or concepts.

Taking a practice exam is also a good idea and can give you a feel for the way that a certain professor structures their exams and questions. It is also a good idea to conduct a mock exam for yourself using your summary (if the exam is open-book) so that you can assess how useful your summary is, whether it needs to be tweaked, and whether it is missing anything. Taking a practice exam will also prepare you for the timing of the exam so you can learn to pace yourself appropriately when answering questions. Most schools will have a database that provides students with practice exams that have been posted from previous years. Alternatively, some professors are open to providing students with past exams as examples. Be sure to inquire with your professor, Student Services, or a mentor as to whether practice exams are available.

### iii. Summaries

As soon as you begin law school, you will become familiar with the term “summary.” Chances are that everyone around you will be equally confused as to what these are and how to acquire them. A summary is a study tool that most law students create for each course in

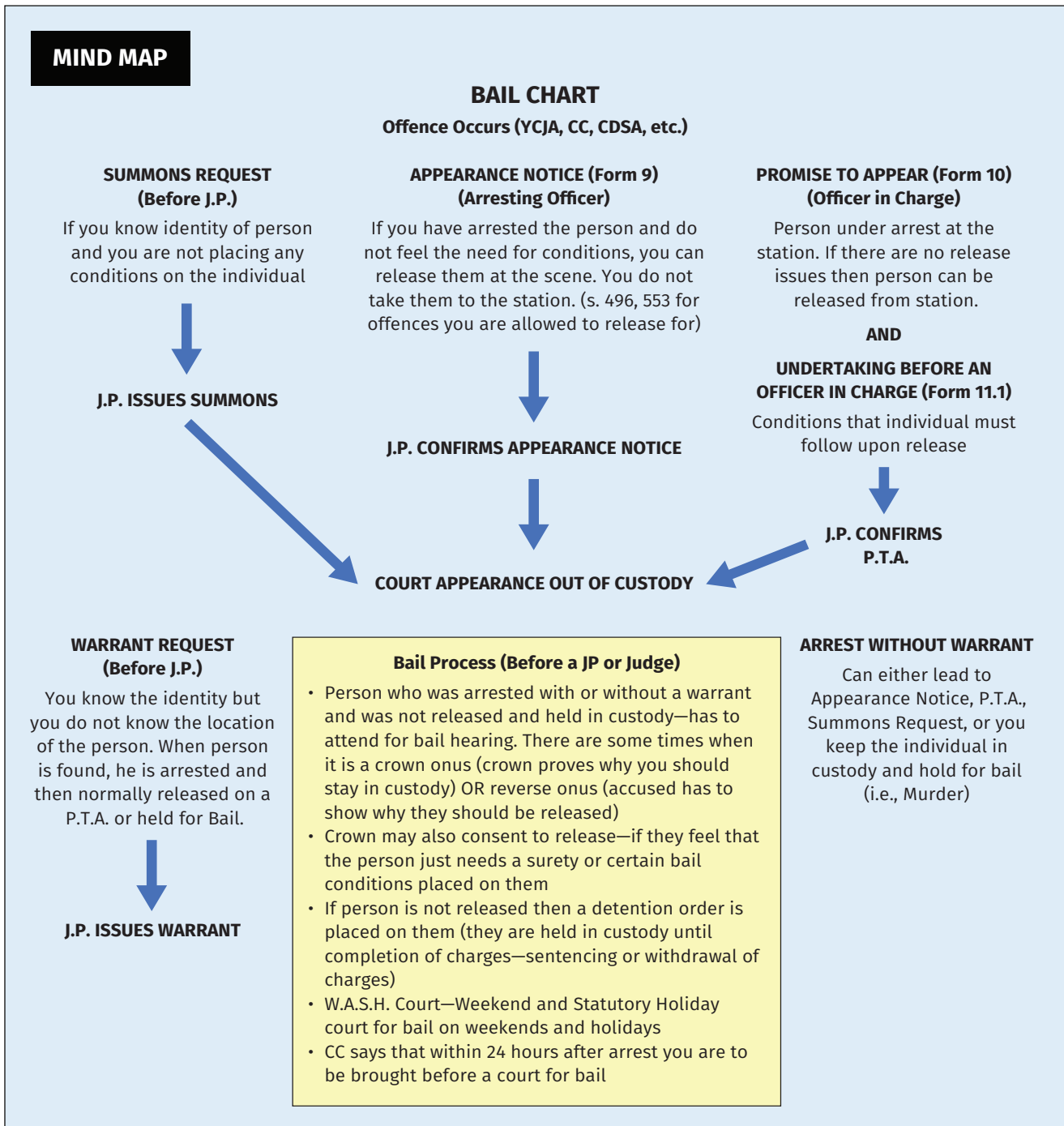
order to assist them on the exam (especially open-book exams). For your reference, some examples of summaries can be found on the Emond website at [www.emond.ca](http://www.emond.ca). A summary is typically created by compiling both lecture notes and reading materials together into a single document that includes a table of contents. Students may insert charts, tables, and definition sections into the summary to help convey key concepts and material in a more concise, easy-to-read format. A summary helps you organize your notes for the exam and allows you to easily access any key concept, chapter, or specific section quickly, which is especially helpful since you will not have a lot of time during the exam to go hunting through your materials. Students will often print and bind their summaries so that they can take the hard copy into the exam and reference it while answering questions. Depending on the structure and duration of the particular course, some students also find it beneficial to create a “short summary”—basically a higher-level version of a regular summary, with only key concepts and page references cited, or very short sentences pulled from reading materials. Depending on how well you know the material, these more condensed summaries may provide a faster, more efficient way for you to locate answers within your materials during the exam.

### **iv. Case Briefs and Mind Maps**

In addition to summaries, other study strategies can be used to assist you come exam time. One of the first things you will likely learn in your legal research and writing class is how to create a “case brief.” Case briefs are a great way to organize and summarize any case law that you are required to read for your courses. If you get into the habit of creating briefs as you read through cases, you will have an easily accessible outline of the important parts of each case for future reference. Case briefs can then be built into your summaries or accompany them when it comes to preparing for exams. Case briefs will contain a summary of the key facts of the case, the outcome, any legal rule/law that emerged as a result of the case, the reasoning for the outcome, and the analysis of the law that the judge went through in order to reach the outcome. You can view examples of case briefs on the Emond website at [www.emond.ca](http://www.emond.ca).

Creating “mind maps” is another great way for you to organize key concepts and content in a comprehensive and easily accessible format. Mind maps are great tools for visual learners, as they allow a student to see how concepts interact and fit together. When it

comes to legal content, mind maps are especially useful for organizing procedural content, such as criminal procedure or civil procedure. Mind maps also allow you to demonstrate the connection between concepts or the procedural routes taken to achieve a specific outcome. This is an example of a mind map:



### F. UPPER-YEAR COURSE SELECTION

While your first year of law school is fairly general and is often scheduled for you, your second and third years of law school will offer opportunities to pick courses and build your own schedule. Although choosing your upper-year courses is not something you need to be concerned about during your first year, you should pay attention to which courses you enjoy, and the ones you do not enjoy. Once you have an idea of the areas of law that interest you, you can explore the courses your school offers in those areas. You should aim to take at least a few courses that you have a genuine interest in, even if you don't expect to practise in those specific areas.

We would advise against taking courses simply because they are covered on the bar exam, unless you think they are going to be especially difficult for you to learn *and* comprise a large part of the exam (e.g., civil procedure, real estate, criminal procedure, and family law). There are plenty of resources available to help you learn the subject matter for the bar exams, including CanBarPrep's substantive preparation course, which offers a crash course in the exam subject matter *without* requiring the commitment of a full term at law school.

# 5 ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS

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## A. GENERAL COMMENTS

Shortly after starting your first year of law school, you will hear about something called “OCIs” or “on-campus interviews.” The OCI process provides students with an opportunity to apply to jobs in the legal field and involves learning interviewing skills and how to tailor your resume for these jobs. For many students, just the thought of OCIs causes a great deal of stress and anxiety. However, it is important to relax and remind yourself that even if you do not secure a summer job working at a law firm after your first or second year, your career is *not* doomed. There are actually very few job opportunities available to first-year law students, and it is normal for the majority of law students to enter second year without having worked at a law firm or in the legal field. If you are one of the lucky ones who lands a job working at a law firm, or for the government, or doing legal research, you will be well on your way to building your resume and gaining valuable experience. If not, there are plenty of other summer job opportunities available to second-year students, which may lead to an articling job in the future. However, it is important to remember that it is still entirely possible to secure an articling position without having worked a summer job after second year.

## B. OVERVIEW OF THE ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEW (OCI) PROCESS

### i. Structure of the Application Process

The Law Society of Ontario (LSO) website provides valuable information about the OCI recruitment process for firms/organizations in Toronto. Different timelines and rules govern the processes in place in different cities (e.g., Toronto, Ottawa, London, etc.) Toronto has a large and quite extensive recruitment process, as does Ottawa, whereas other jurisdictions in the Greater Toronto Area may post job opportunities in a less predictable fashion.

Visit <https://lso.ca/becoming-licensed/lawyer-licensing-process/candidates/finding-a-placement> to learn more about the Toronto summer student recruitment procedures.

If you are seeking job opportunities in smaller jurisdictions, it is important that you directly contact the firm or organization you are interested in to gain more information about their summer student recruitment process. By doing this, you will ensure that you do not miss any important deadlines. Many medium- to large-sized firms have information on their websites indicating whether or not they take summer students and, if they do, how to apply.

It is also a good idea to directly reach out to smaller firms and organizations to inquire about whether or not they take on summer students, as they may not be participating in the formal recruitment—some firms do not know if they will be in a financial position to take on a student by the time they are required to confirm their participation in the formal recruitment process. Most law schools also provide students with access to a list of the firms and organizations that are participating in the recruitment. As well, Student Services usually provides students with updates on deadlines and important dates for how/when to apply to the job postings.

In Toronto, all firms and organizations participating in the formal recruitment will travel to your school (or a nearby area) to conduct interviews with applicants that have been selected. If you are notified that you have been selected to interview, you will sign up for a time slot that has been blocked off for the OCIs taking place at your school. As indicated on the Law Society website, there are very strict rules in place as to when the firms can reach out to students and contact them about the process, as well as when firms can provide offers to those who have interviewed.

For job opportunities in the summer after your first year of law school, applications are usually due at the end of January or early February. Students will be in a hurry to obtain their transcripts from their first semester in order to submit their grades with their application. Interviews will then be conducted over the course of one week in the middle of February. For job opportunities in the summer after your second year of law school, applications are usually due at the end of August or early September. Interviews are conducted over the course of one week at the beginning of November. More information on important dates and timelines for recruitment are provided below.

### ii. Interviews

Once you have applied and the application period has closed, you may then receive an invitation to interview with the firm(s) that you applied to. The OCI process is heavily regulated; therefore, interviews can only be conducted over the course of one week, and firms are limited to a certain amount of time with each candidate. Most schools have an online system that allows students to view and accept offers from firms and book their interview times. If you are fortunate enough to have multiple interviews, remember to be careful not to overbook yourself or schedule your interviews too close together. If you can, try to schedule interviews on different days or far apart on the same day so you have time to decompress and prepare between interviews. Interviews typically last between 15 and 30 minutes and are usually conducted on-campus or at a facility nearby. The firms and organizations participating in the recruit will have their own room or sectioned-off booth where they conduct their interviews. Be sure to arrive early—well in advance of your first interview time—so that you can check in and get a sense of where each firm/organization is located. Firms that regularly participate are those that work in different areas of law in private practice, as well as government agencies and organizations.

When preparing for interviews, it is always a good idea to do your research. Once you know which firm(s) you are going to interview with, be sure to spend some time on their website to get a feel for the practice and the type of work that they do. If an area of work is particularly interesting to you, come up with some questions or discussion points that you can use if the opportunity presents itself during the interview. Be sure to look at the different associates and partners that work at the firm and read through their biographies (if available) so that you can get a sense of who might be interviewing you, as well as the firm culture. Some firms indicate on their website which lawyers are in charge of recruiting and placing students, and they will likely be the ones to conduct the interviews. You can also use LinkedIn or other online platforms to see if there is a junior associate or articling student at the firm. Reach out to them, offer to take them for a coffee, and start networking. Meeting with someone at the firm who was recently in your shoes can greatly assist you in preparing for the interview and perhaps get you connected with other lawyers in the firm/organization.

You might also be able to do some research online to find out what kinds of questions are likely to be asked during the interview. Many of the larger firms specializing in private practice provide an outline of how they structure their interviews and the types of questions that may be asked. Be sure to ask Student Services if they have any guides or materials to assist with interview preparation: they may have examples of interview questions, or they might be able to match you with an upper-year student who has previously worked or interviewed at the firm. For example, interviews with government entities like the Crown Attorney's office are very structured. Schools often have access to guides that outline the types of questions that have been asked in the past. The Canadian Legal Career Development Network has created such a guide—it is attached at the end of this chapter as an example. Some schools also provide students with mock interview workshops where staff will review your resume and cover letter, ask you questions, and provide feedback in order to prepare you for your interviews.

### **iii. Networking and Social Events**

During the interview week, some firms might also invite candidates to a social event, meal, or reception with members of the firm in order to get to know them better. The Law Society also has formal rules and procedures around when such socializing is allowed to take place and when the firm(s) and candidates are to cease communication with one another prior to offers being made. When scheduling your interviews during the interview week, be sure to consider whether you are going to be invited for a meal or reception, and consider how much time this might take up in your schedule. Depending on the firms/organizations that you are invited to interview with, you may have to choose your top picks and turn down interviews with others. Many consider these social events to be like a second interview—a sign that the firm is highly interested in you. Therefore, attending the event or meal can be very important. The interview itself is important, but showing that you are committed to that particular firm and that you are highly interested in working for them is also important. Additionally, the social events allow you to interact with other members of the firm who were not in attendance during the interview. If you reached out to any junior members of the firm prior to your interview, you may see them again at a reception or social and can continue to build your network. Remember to treat any social event as a second interview, and therefore always conduct yourself in a professional manner and dress appropriately.



## C. TIMELINES AND IMPORTANT DATES

Below are the timelines and important dates for some of the more popular recruitments that take place within Ontario. This section is not a representation of all recruitment processes in Ontario, and it is strongly recommended that if you are applying to firms/organizations in jurisdictions outside of the major cities listed below, you contact the firms/organizations directly to inquire about their summer recruitment processes. The exact dates included below are for the 2019 hiring cycle and may change by a day or two in future cycle periods.

### i. Toronto Recruitment

#### *First-Year Summer Students*

- Application Deadline: January 23, 2019
- Call Day for Interviews: February 8, 2019
- Interview Week Begins: February 19, 2019

#### *Second-Year Summer Students*

- Application Deadline: August 20, 2018
- Call Day for Interviews: October 26, 2018
- Interview Week Begins: November 5, 2018

### ii. Ottawa Recruitment

Many firms and organizations located in Ottawa participate in a formal recruitment governed by the legal community in Ottawa. Dates and times for applications and interviews are set by this community and may be subject to change each year. These dates are usually not far off from the Toronto recruitment deadlines. For information on important dates and timelines, visit the website of the firm/organization that you are interested in, or be sure to visit the Student Services or Career Development office at your school to inquire about the Ottawa recruitment process.

### D. RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS

One of the most important parts of the OCI process is your resume and cover letter. At this point in your life, you have likely applied for jobs and have a version of your resume to work from. There is no single right way to construct or organize your resume; however, you will want to ensure that the information on it is updated to reflect your most recent accomplishments in law school, as well as your involvement in any clubs or extracurriculars that you have joined since beginning your first year. The Career Development and Student Services offices at your school will likely offer resume-building workshops and mock interview sessions prior to the start of the OCI process; these can be of great assistance in helping you prepare for applying and interviewing. Many of the law firm/organization websites offer tips on how to prepare for OCIs and on what is required in your application. Some websites also have examples of resumes and cover letters from previous successful applicants, so you can get an idea of how you should structure your application materials. For example, Fasken has a section on its website that provides guides for prospective students regarding cover letters, resumes, and interviews.

Visit <https://www.fasken.com/en/careers/lawstudentshub/toronto> for more information on how to structure your cover letter and resume.

Your cover letter should be no longer than a single page, and your resume should be limited to two pages. Be succinct and concise when writing your cover letter, and only include the most recent and relevant experiences on your resume if spacing is an issue. On the next page is an example of how you could structure and organize your resume. You can download an editable Word version here:



[Download Sample Resume Word File: emond.ca/lawstudentresume](https://emond.ca/lawstudentresume)

## Jane Doe

55 Law St., Toronto Ontario A1B 2C3

[janedoe@email.com](mailto:janedoe@email.com)

555-555-5555

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### EDUCATION

#### Osgoode Hall Law School at York University, Toronto, Ontario

*Juris Doctor Candidate 2014*

2011-Present

- Mediation Intensive Clinical Program
  - Accepted into a select program where participants receive training to become a certified community mediator.
  - Participants conduct community and Small Claims Court mediations, provide education on conflict prevention and resolution, design and carry out a community engagement project.
- Monash University at the Prato Centre, Italy June 2012
  - International Comparative Family Law
- Frozen Osgoode Open Moot February 2012
- Fraser Milner Casgrain Negotiation Competition June 2012

#### Trinity College at the University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario

*Honours Bachelor of Arts, double major in English and Women & Gender Studies*

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### ACADEMIC AWARDS

College Scholar, Trinity College	2011
Dean's List, Trinity College	2007-2011
L.C.A. Hodgins Scholarship for Excellence in English, Trinity College	2008-2009
The Helen Gregory MacGill Prize in Women's Studies, University of Toronto	2007-2008
Entrance Scholarship, Trinity College	2007

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### EMPLOYMENT

#### Parks, Forestry & Recreation, City of Mississauga

*Assistant Supervisor of Aquatics (part-time)*

2009-2012

- Effectively led a team of ten staff, performed timely evaluation, managed employee relations, directed department communication and meeting facilitation, executed facility scheduling.
- Developed creative training programs to provide orientation to new and experienced staff, conveyed policies and procedures, and enhance staff competence.
- Collaborated with community service providers on cross-departmental projects to deliver robust programming for different age groups and participant needs.
- Demonstrated resilience and calm in crisis situations and provided maximum safety for participants resulting in no serious incidents.

*Lifeguard and Swimming Instructor*

2005-2009

- Instructed various programming to over 150 children and adults per year, adapted existing programs to integrate children with special needs, managed communications with parents and guardians.
- Successfully communicated and worked cohesively with colleagues to execute emergency response strategies and provide first aid treatment.

**Lululemon Athletica**, Toronto, Ontario

*Associate*

2008-2010

- Prepared daily cash and sales reconciliation, conducted receiving and inventory, and managed customer returns.
  - Effectively resolved problems and provided personal product recommendations for special customer needs.
- 

### COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEERISM

**Osgoode Women's Network**, Osgoode Hall Law School

2012-Present

*Meeting Chair & Secretary*

- Part of an executive that plan events to connect female students with lawyers.
- Establish and communicated priorities and the agenda, develop action plans, take and distribute minutes to general membership.

**Osgoode Orientation**, Osgoode Hall Law School

September 2012

- Support and accompany incoming student to their first week at law school through events and communication sessions.

**Community and Legal Aid Services Programme**, Osgoode Hall Law School

2011-Present

*Caseworker and Intake Volunteer*

- Immigration Division caseworker: conduct legal research, retainer meetings, and client interviews in order to provide legal access to refugees.
- Intake volunteer: perform client screenings and intake interviews, appointment scheduling, data entry, and respond to telephone and walk-in prospective client inquiries for all services.

**Future Possibilities for Kids**, Toronto, Ontario

2010-Present

*KidCoach*

- Act as an assigned coach and mentor to a child from an at-risk neighbourhood assisting them to build self-esteem, work through challenges, and progress through a curriculum designed to identify their leadership potential.

**Humanities for Humanity**, Trinity College, University of Toronto

2010-2011

*Mentor*

- Acted as a student mentor and discussion facilitator in an evening learning program for youth and adults who were unable to attend post-secondary educational institutions due to socioeconomic barriers.
- 

### SKILLS AND INTERESTS

- Intermediate oral and written French
- Royal Conservatory of Music Grade VIII Piano, Grade III Musical Theory
- Standard First Aid with CPR-C certified, Targeted Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Site Responder
- Travel (Morocco, Croatia, Italy, Spain, France, Great Britain, East and West coasts of Canada)
- Hot yoga, swimming, running, sailing
- Avid baker



# CLCDN

Canadian Legal Career Development Network

## Interviewing with the Crown

Interviews with the Crown are more substantive than firm interviews, but what does that really mean? The information below has been gathered from students who have participated in these interviews and should help give you a sense of what the interviews are like and how to prepare for them.

The key to success in a Crown interview is to prepare as much as possible. A good place to start is to review the branch website. Review your course material relating to criminal law and evidence – you will be asked substantive questions about recent case law and evidence – and know why you want to practise criminal law. It's also a good idea to skim through the Crown Policy Manual (which can be found online) and to somewhere drop into your answers that you at least know the manual exists. The interviews will most likely be standardized and may seem like an oral exam. Your interviewers will be marking your interview or at the very least noting your answers. If you haven't yet taken Evidence or Criminal Procedure, tell the interviewers up front.

During the interview, make sure to think your answers through and take your time. If you recall something that you would like to add to a previous answer, ask your interviewers if you can do so; however, make sure that you are giving thoughtful, logical answers. Jumping around from question to question will make you appear disorganized. Your interviewers may give you a written copy of the questions they will be asking and allow you to take notes as the interview

progresses. Remember that even though these are fairly standardized interviews, your interviewers are still looking for “fit.” Not only do you need to have the knowledge and skills the interviewers are looking for, but interviewers are also assessing whether you will fit well into the culture of their particular branch.

The questions you can anticipate can be broken down in to three main categories:

- (1) Experience questions
- (2) Questions that focus on criminal law and the specific office (particularly important)
- (3) Hypothetical questions

Some of the questions you may be asked are below:

### **General Questions**

- Why do you want to go into criminal law?
- Why do you want to work for the Crown? Why the Crown in particular?
- What is your most significant experience in criminal law this far?
- Where do you see yourself in 3-5 years?
- Tell us something interesting about yourself.
- Would you ever consider working for the defence? Have you applied to any defence firms?
- Tell us what you did to prepare for this interview. (This is an opportunity to mention the Crown Policy Manual.)

### **Substantive Questions**

- What is the role of the Crown?
- What is the role of the Crown in reference to the victim?
- What is the role of the Crown in reference to the police?
- What is the relationship of the Crown with the defence?
- Do you know anything about our office?
- What are the daily tasks of a Crown attorney? What are the tasks of this office?
- What steps does the Crown have to take before getting to trial?
- What is the current status on the law and how will it affect future decisions in areas of exclusion of evidence and right to counsel?
- Name three types of evidence that can be used at a trial.

- Have you come across a legal issue during your studies that you would like to discuss?
- Tell us about a recent SCC decision you agreed with/disagreed with/found interesting
- What provisions of the *Charter* are relevant to Criminal law?
- If you could amend one of those Criminal-themed *Charter* provisions (add something, remove something) what would it be?
- What is hearsay, what is the general rule about its admissibility, and what are three exceptions to the rule?
- List some SCC cases that relate to the hearsay rule and exceptions.
- When admitting into evidence a statement that a witness made to the police, what needs to be proved, who has the burden to prove it, and to what standard must it be proven?
- What is the test for dealing with expert witnesses and how does it work?
- When would a conditional sentence be appropriate for an offender?
- What is the rule upon encountering an inconsistent statement? What is the rule that applies when you want to admit a prior inconsistent statement from your witness?
- What is the rule about similar fact evidence?
- Name three characteristics/qualities that a Crown attorney needs and place them in order of importance.
- What legislation should a Crown attorney know?
- What articles of the Charter apply to criminal law? Choose three examples and explain how they are applied.
- What is a preliminary hearing? What is the standard used in these hearings?
- How can witnesses refresh their memory?
- Fact pattern: A famous celebrity is in town. A witness saw a female hotel worker leaving the celebrity's room looking anxious and worried. The celebrity was later charged with sexual assault, but the witness cannot make it to the appointed trial time. What do you do?
- You are the Crown Attorney in a Highway Traffic Act matter at the Provincial Offences Act court. An officer approaches you before the trial and informs you that the defendant in your case is an informant in a very serious criminal trial. The witness has informed the police the defendant would not cooperate when charged with a Highway Traffic Act offence. What do you do?
- You are given a fact pattern dealing with unconstitutionally-obtained evidence and asked your opinion as to whether you would admit it, and whether it was likely to be admitted by the court.

- Rules of sentencing in a fact pattern: you are given a fact pattern and asked what sentence you would give the individual in addition to how you arrived at the sentence.

### **Hypothetical Questions**

- What constitutes a “good” document that you would submit to court?
- What would you do if the victim in the fact pattern came up to you and told you that she thought your sentence was a joke and that the accused deserved a much harsher sentence?
- What would you do if your witness agreed to testify about something important, but during the actual trial, the witness refuses to speak?
- Imagine that you are a summer student at the Crown Law Office - Criminal. You are doing a trial. The judge asks you to speak to an issue of law that you have no knowledge of. What do you do?
- (Crown Law Office – Criminal) – A man is convicted of sexually assaulting his 5-year old daughter; he’s given a conditional sentence of 9 months. It’s the Crown’s opinion that he should have been in prison for 5-9 years. You’re asked by the Crown to appeal. What information do you need to write an opinion? What factors into a conditional sentence? Would you appeal? On what grounds can you appeal? Can you appeal simply because you don’t like the sentence?
- (Crown Law Office – Criminal) – You are helping out with unrepresented inmate appeals. You are going through the file and realize that you think the inmate should not have been convicted. A) What do you do? B) You are the Crown - do you go for an appeal?

### **You should also know:**

- How the Provincial Crown differs from the Federal Crown.
- Who the Attorney General is.
- The role of the Crown.
- The difference between the Crown Attorney’s Office and the Crown Law Office – Criminal.
- A bit about the Crown Policy Manual – what it is, when would you refer to it, general principles.

*The CLCDN would like to thank the Career and Professional Development Office at the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law (Common Law) for the information contained in this document.*



# 6 THE ONTARIO LICENSING EXAMS

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## A. OVERVIEW

The Ontario bar exams consist of two open-book licensing exams: the barrister exam and the solicitor exam. Each exam is 7 hours long and is composed of between 220 and 240 multiple-choice questions, answered on a scantron sheet. The exam questions are designed to assess a candidate's competence in a variety of subject areas. The barrister exam is divided into sections that cover civil procedure, criminal procedure, family law, and public law, while the solicitor exam covers real estate, estate planning, and business law. Both exams include ethics and professional responsibility questions scattered throughout.

Students who have registered to write the Ontario bar exams will receive study materials from the LSO 6 to 8 weeks before their exams. These materials are approximately 1600 pages in length (including both barrister and solicitor content) and they contain all the information required to pass the exams. Students must independently read and study this material to prepare for the exams, and many students prepare additional reference materials such as indexes and summaries. Students have a total of three attempts to pass each exam, and must pass both exams to be Called to the Bar in Ontario.

## B. EMOND EXAM PREP

As you begin preparing for the Ontario bar exams, you will likely have many questions about how to study effectively, what types of reference materials and study aids you'll need, and what to expect on exam day. Emond offers a variety of exam preparation resources at [www.emondexamprep.ca](http://www.emondexamprep.ca), including review courses, practice exams, and tutoring. We have also published a free resource to help answer your questions and walk you through the exam preparation process from start to finish. You can access it here:



[Download the Bar Exam Preparation Manual at emond.ca/cbpmanual](http://www.emond.ca/cbpmanual)



LAST BUT NOT LEAST,  
**GOOD LUCK!**





[www.emondexamprep.ca](http://www.emondexamprep.ca) | [emondexamprep@emond.ca](mailto:emondexamprep@emond.ca)  
1-888-837-0815 | 1 Eglinton Ave E, Suite 600, Toronto ON

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