
For Immediate Release

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NEWS RELEASE

Law Society approves new alternative to traditional articling requirement

Toronto: The Law Society's governing body today approved a three-year pilot project that will allow lawyer licensing candidates to either article or complete a Law Practice Program (LPP), starting in the 2014-15 licensing year. The pilot project will measure competence through a fair process which provides access to the profession and fosters access to justice, while protecting the public.

The new licensing pilot project will be extended for up to an additional two years if there is insufficient evidence to properly evaluate the pilot after three years.

Convocation also approved an appropriate member contribution to help defray costs of the pilot project. The amount of the contribution will be recommended by the Law Society's Professional Development and Competence Committee to Convocation.

The program reflects the views of the majority of the Articling Task Force and was developed following extensive consultation with the profession and other stakeholders throughout 2012.

"Convocation had a robust discussion and agreed that this is the best path to follow, recognizing the complexity of the issue and that there is no one tried and tested solution," says Law Society Treasurer Thomas G. Conway. "This project addresses the reality of the articling placement shortage and that the articling requirement should not be a barrier to licensing to eligible, competent candidates."

Under the pilot project, candidates may either complete the traditional 10-month articling term, with enhanced documentation, or an approximately four-month long Law Practice Program (LPP), which will also include an additional four-month co-operative work placement.

The Law Society will outsource the LPP and the establishment of the work placements will be the responsibility of the third-party provider. The Law Society will oversee the assessments of defined learning outcomes necessary for entry-level practice for all candidates.

"Today's decision builds on feedback received by the task force during the consultation process," says Treasurer Conway. "Convocation is grateful to task force members for their continued hard work throughout 2012 on this very important issue. We also thank all the individuals, legal organizations and other stakeholders who took the time to provide insightful and valuable input.

"Everyone recognizes the need to ensure that our licensing requirements are fair and accessible, and that the public needs competent lawyers in under-served areas who can provide the services needed at an affordable price."

The LPP will expose licensing candidates to practice areas where there is a great need for new lawyers, such as family, immigration and criminal law, as well as in small firms and non-profit organizations that traditionally cannot afford articling students.

The two paths to licensing will be monitored, assessed and compared, with a final report to Convocation on the pilot project.

The licensing window for candidates commencing the Licensing Process in May 2012, or after, will be extended so that any candidates unable to secure an articling position will be able to enroll in the LPP. To minimize fees, the cost of the LPP will be equalized among all licensing candidates.

“Law firms and legal organizations will have an important role to play in supporting and facilitating the success of both components of the pilot project – and must be encouraged to do so,” the Treasurer adds.

More details about the dual-track pilot project are outlined in the final report of the Articling Task Force, [*Pathways to the Profession: A Roadmap for the reform of lawyer licensing in Ontario.*](#)

The Law Society regulates [lawyers and paralegals](#) in Ontario in the public interest. The Law Society has a mandate to protect the public interest, to maintain and advance the cause of justice and the rule of law, to facilitate access to justice for the people of Ontario and act in a timely, open and efficient manner.

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