



# Accreditation Policy

## 1. Definitions

## 2. Accreditation Process for Paralegal Education Programs

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Overview

2.3 Accreditation Application Process

2.4 Review of Submitted Application Package

2.5 Failure to Offer Accredited Program

2.6 Multiple Campus Locations

2.7 Application and Accreditation Fee Schedule

2.8 Changes to a Program

2.9 Declarations

2.10 Audit Policy

2.11 Audit Fee Schedule

2.12 Program Checks

2.13 Non-compliance with the Accreditation Documents

2.14 Reaccreditation

2.15 Program Expiry Due to Dormancy, Discontinuation and Change of Location

2.16 Program Accommodations

## 3. Program Requirements and Application Procedure

3.1 Academic and Field Placement Requirements

3.2 Program Coordinator and Field Placement Coordinator

3.3 Cohort Composition and Intake Dates

3.4 Individual Course Information

3.5 Faculty Information

3.6 Field Placements

- 3.7 Multiple Campus Locations Guidelines
- 3.8 Prior Learning Assessment and Transferring Credits
- 3.9 General Institution Policies
- 3.10 Marketing of the Paralegal Education Program
- 3.11 Contact Information

#### 4. Preparing and Submitting the Application

- 4.1 Preparing the Application
- 4.2 Submitting the Application

## Accreditation Forms

Form 1A—General Information Form

Form 1B—Payment Remittance Form

Form 2A—Paralegal Program Course Overview

Form 2B—Course Sequence

Form 3—Individual Course Information Form

Form 4A—Faculty Member List

Form 4B—Faculty Member Course Chart

Form 5—Field Placement Form

Form 6—Major Change Form

Form 7—Annual Declaration Form

## 1. Definitions

**“Accreditation”** means the formal approval by the Law Society for an Institution to deliver an Accredited Program according to the requirements set out in the Accreditation Documents.

**“Accreditation Documents”** means this document (the Paralegal Education Program Accreditation Policy), the Accreditation Forms and any related documents.

**“Accreditation Form”** means each form associated with the Accreditation Documents, including Form 1A, Form 1B, Form 2A, Form 2B, Form 3, Form 4A, Form 4B, Form 5, Form 6 and Form 7.

**“Accredited Program”** means a Program that is offered by an Institution and that has received and retained approval by the Law Society.

**“Active Good Status”** means not suspended by the Licensing Body, not the subject of open disciplinary proceedings by the Licensing Body, not the subject of court proceedings related to professional conduct or capacity or good character, not the subject of an open investigation by the Licensing Body, not the subject of an open complaint to the Licensing Body regarding allegations of harassment or discrimination, not in

an incapacitated status and not subject to a practice restriction or condition by the Licensing Body. For clarity, a Licensee can be in Active Good Status while at the same time being in a status of “otherwise employed in Ontario.”

**“Application”** means the completed documentation submitted by an Institution requesting that a proposed Program become or remain an Accredited Program.

**“Cohort”** means a group of students who begin their paralegal education studies in an Accredited Program at the same time for a given Session at a given campus and continue their studies together.

**“Compulsory Legal Course”** means each paralegal education course set out under the heading “Academic and Field Placement Requirements.”

**“Core Program”** means the Compulsory Legal Courses and the additional courses that are part of the Accredited Program that together equal, at minimum, the mandatory number of course hours in an Accredited Program.

**“Course Outline”** means a document that meets the requirements for a Course Outline set out below.

**“Engaged Individual”** means an individual who is authorized to provide class P1 legal services without a licence under sections 30(1), (2) or (3) of By-Law 4 made under the Law Society Act, RSO 1990, c. L.8, and who is actively providing legal services to an administrative tribunal, a government or a government agency, a legal aid clinic, a collection agency, a court or a legal department.

**“Exempted Individual”** means an individual who is (i) not subject to any relevant restrictions in his or her appointment, practice, employment, duty or service at any time during the individual’s participation as a Faculty Member, (ii) a judge, justice of the peace or an Engaged Individual and (iii) approved by the Law Society to instruct a Substantive Law Course in an Accredited Program.

**“Faculty Member”** means an instructor in an Accredited Program.

**“Field Placement Coordinator”** means the individual responsible for the supervision and maintenance of the Accredited Program’s field placement program.

**“Field Placement Host”** means an entity that undertakes to host a paralegal student to perform a field placement as part of an Accredited Program. A Field Placement Host may be the same as a Field Placement Supervisor (e.g., in the case of a sole proprietorship).

**“Field Placement Supervisor”** means a Licensee or a Licensee Equivalent who undertakes to provide mentorship, guidance and supervision to a paralegal student during the student’s field placement.

**“Institution”** means a post-secondary educational institution in Ontario that is registered with the MTCU as a private career college or a college of applied arts and technology.

**“Intake Date”** means the date of commencement of the Core Program by a Cohort in an Accredited Program.

**“Key Personnel”** means the Program Coordinator, Field Placement Coordinator and any Accredited Program faculty head.

**“Law Society”** means the Law Society of Ontario.

**“Licensee”** means an individual who is licensed by the Law Society as a lawyer or paralegal.

**“Licensee Equivalent”** means an individual who is (i) not subject to any relevant restrictions in his or her appointment, practice, employment, duty or service at any time during the individual’s participation as a Field Placement Host or Field Placement Supervisor and (ii) a judge, a justice of the peace, a member of the Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council or similar Licensing Body regulating immigration consultants or an Engaged Individual.

**“Licensing Body”** means, for a Licensee, the Law Society, and, for a non-Licensee, the governing body that has a similar regulatory role for that individual’s profession.

**“Major Change”** means any change to an Accredited Program’s course structure, location, content, hours, organization, assessment methods or delivery, Key Personnel or field placement process.

**“MTCU”** means the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

**“Paralegal Education Program Accreditation Policy” or “PEPAP”** means this policy established by the Law Society for the regulation of paralegal education programming accreditation in Ontario.

**“Program”** means a paralegal education offering intended to result in a certificate, graduate certificate, diploma, degree or similar academic award.

**“Program Assessment Plan”** means a document that meets the requirements for a Program Assessment Plan set out below.

**“Program Check”** means a review of an Accredited Program to assess compliance with the requirements of the Accreditation Documents.

**“Program Coordinator”** means the individual who is responsible for the maintenance of the Accreditation for the Institution’s Program and who is responsible to the Institution and to the Law Society for monitoring, coordinating and controlling Program standards within an Accredited Program.

**“Reaccreditation”** means the formal approval by the Law Society for an Institution to continue to deliver an Accredited Program, according to the requirements set out in the Accreditation Documents.

“**Substantive Law Course**” means each Compulsory Legal Course, excluding Legal Computer Applications and Legal Accounting.

## 2. Accreditation Process for Paralegal Education Programs

### 2.1 Introduction

In 2007, pursuant to changes to the *Law Society Act* made by the *Access to Justice Act, 2006*, the Law Society assumed responsibility for the regulation of paralegals. As a result, the Law Society governs and regulates both lawyers practising law in Ontario and paralegals providing legal services in Ontario. The Law Society governs in the public interest by ensuring that the people of Ontario are served by lawyers and paralegals who meet high standards of learning, competence and professional conduct.

Individuals seeking to become licensed to provide legal services as paralegals in Ontario must, in addition to being of good character, generally meet two fundamental licensing conditions. First, the applicant must have graduated from a paralegal education program in Ontario accredited by the Law Society. Second, the applicant must have successfully completed the paralegal licensing examination set by the Law Society. The conditions set out in these Accreditation Documents not only establish the framework for Accreditation, but also provide the foundation, structure and conditions for paralegal education in Ontario.

### 2.2 Overview

As part of its statutory mandate, the Law Society determines whether a Program sought to be offered in Ontario by an Institution will receive or maintain Accreditation or Reaccreditation. Accreditation of a Program is required for both colleges of applied arts and technology and private career colleges. The Accreditation Documents reflect the recommendations approved by the Law Society's Convocation in February 2014. **It is important that each Institution read the Accreditation Documents carefully, including the definitions and Accreditation Forms.**

The Accreditation Documents set out a comprehensive, integrated and sequential development process that supports a continuous learning environment for paralegal students, consisting of three pillars:

- **Training:** the Accreditation Documents specify rules for the creation of an environment in which the paralegal student can develop the skills and attitudes required to perform the professional roles and responsibilities of a paralegal.
- **Education:** the Accreditation Documents mandate the provision of a base of legal and other relevant knowledge upon which a paralegal student, once licensed, will be able to rely in order to correctly interpret legal situations and apply sound judgment.
- **Work Experience:** the Accreditation Documents provide for the application and continued development of paralegal skills, knowledge and attitudes acquired through training and education in the performance of an assigned role and duties as a paralegal student in a field placement environment.

Among other requirements set out in the *Program Requirements and Application Procedure* section, Accredited Programs are required to include, at a minimum, certain Substantive Law Courses, which cover the essential elements of procedural and substantive legal services practice as well as ethical and responsible practice, certain other Compulsory Legal Courses, which relate to legal accounting and computer applications, and a field placement.

Accreditation and Reaccreditation are each in effect for a period of five years, unless terminated earlier. Where appropriate, the term "Accreditation" as used in the Accreditation Documents includes Reaccreditation, with any necessary changes as appropriate.

Graduates of an Accredited Program are (subject to meeting other obligations, such as payment of the applicable fees) eligible to apply to write the paralegal licensing examination that, in addition to other requirements, must be completed for an individual to qualify for a licence to provide legal services as a paralegal in Ontario.

The Law Society will review each proposed Program as a whole to assess whether the Application and the Institution demonstrate that (a) the Institution understands and reflects the goals of the Law Society's entry-level competence requirements; (b) the Institution is capable of delivering a robust Program at a standard that is at least commensurate with that of existing Accredited Programs; and (c) individuals who graduate from that Program will have the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to be licensed as paralegals and to provide ethical and professional legal services upon entering the profession.

### **2.3 Accreditation Application Process**

Any Institution that wishes to make an Application to offer a Program must be registered with the MTCU. The Institution must provide proof of its approved status with its Application to the Law Society by including a copy of the Institution's funding approval or confirmation of registration from the MTCU. If a Program is approved for Accreditation by the Law Society, notice of the Accreditation will be provided to the MTCU. At that time, the MTCU will decide whether or not to approve the Program.

### **2.4 Review of Submitted Application Package**

The Law Society will initially conduct a technical review of the Application to ensure that it has been completed in accordance with the *Program Requirements and Application Procedure* section and that it contains the basic required elements of an Accredited Program.

If, based on the technical review, the Law Society determines that the Institution has failed to meet the basic Application requirements (e.g., the Application contains serious or significant errors or inaccuracies; the Application is incomplete; course assessments have not been included; there are no Faculty Members or insufficient Faculty Members listed; or the Application fee has not been rendered), the Institution will be notified by letter of the deficiencies and the Application will be denied. The denial letter will be copied to the MTCU.

If a full review of the Application reveals that the Program does not meet one or more of the Accreditation requirements (e.g., the Compulsory Legal Courses do not meet each of the competencies required for each Compulsory Legal Course, as set out in [Form 3](#)), the Law Society may decline the Application.

If the full review of the Application reveals that additional information or revisions are required to complete the Application or to complete the full review assessment, the Law Society will notify the Institution in writing and will provide specific details regarding the information that is required to complete the review process. The Institution will be given an opportunity to respond and a reasonable deadline by which the Law Society must receive a response. The Law Society will complete its review when the additional requested information is provided.

The Law Society's decision regarding the approval or denial of an Application is final. There is no appeal. Where an Application fails a technical or full review of the Application, the Application fee is non-refundable. Similarly, an Accreditation or Reaccreditation fee is non-refundable if an Accredited Program is later discontinued by the Institution, has its status as an Accredited Program suspended or terminated by the Law Society or has its institutional registration or Program approval suspended or terminated by the MTCU.

The Law Society's accreditation review consists of a paper-based review, as well as other activities, which may include:

- **Conducting document searches:** Document searches may include the retrieval of data about the current state of programming within the Institution, program business cases, complaints, critiques or MTCU incident reports.
- **Conducting site visits:** Site visits may be used to capture details of actual instructional performance (including in respect of programs offered by the Institution that are related to the law, such as policing, law clerk and immigration consultant programs), facilities and resourcing that an Institution may allocate to support an Accredited Program.
- **Performing interviews:** Interviews may be used to obtain in-depth information from Institution graduates, students, proposed or existing Faculty Members and others on the quality of a proposed Program and the capability of the Institution to deliver an Accredited Program.
- **Using subject matter experts:** Reports of subject matter experts may be used to ensure that Program proposals are feasible, are beneficial and meet Accreditation requirements.
- **Conducting other research:** Other tools, such as paralegal education market surveys or professional demographics, may be used to acquire information related to an Institution's proposed Program.

Institutions that have received Accreditation for their Program are required to offer the Accredited Program to students and have the required minimum Cohort begin the Accredited Program no later than 12 months after the Application's approval date to ensure that the information in the Application remains current with

the Institution's offering. The Law Society will not provide Accreditation for Programs more than 12 months in advance of the Accredited Program's planned initial offering date. An invoice for the Accreditation Fee will be issued upon Accreditation.

An up-to-date list of all Accredited Programs is published on the Law Society's website at [www.lso.ca](http://www.lso.ca).

Institutions whose proposed Programs have been previously declined Accreditation are permitted to reapply for a proposed Program without restriction; however, each Application is considered a new application and all formal requirements, including payment of the Application fee, must be met with each submission.

## **2.5 Failure to Offer Accredited Program**

Where an Institution does not successfully commence offering an Accredited Program to a Cohort within 12 months following the Application's approval date, the Institution's Accreditation automatically expires. Institutions whose Accreditation expires under this section are permitted to reapply without restriction; however, each Application is considered a new application and the Institution must meet all formal requirements, including payment of the Application fee, with each submission.

## **2.6 Multiple Campus Locations**

If an Institution wishes to offer a Program at multiple campus locations, a separate Application must be provided for each proposed campus location. Guidelines for these Applications are set out in the *Program Requirements and Application Procedure* section. Similarly, if an Institution wishes to expand its existing Accredited Program offerings by offering the Program at an additional campus location, a separate Application must be completed for that proposed new location. Approval of the Program at the additional campus location must be obtained from the Law Society before the Program can be offered at the new location. An Application fee is payable for each campus location seeking Program Accreditation.

If the Institution wishes to cease delivery of an Accredited Program at one or more of its campus locations or to consolidate multiple campus location offerings due to the Institution's inability to meet the requirements of the Accreditation Documents or for other reasons, the Institution must notify the Law Society before any Accredited Program is discontinued.

Please note the Program Coordinator's obligations in respect of multiple campus locations, which are set out in the *Program Coordinator and Field Placement Coordinator* section.

### **2.6.1 Synchronization Requirement for Multiple Campuses for an Accredited Program**

Where an Institution offers an Accredited Program at multiple campus locations, the Accredited Program must be offered in a synchronous manner across the campus locations. (Note: Institutions are still required to submit a separate Application for Accreditation or Reaccreditation for each campus location.)



The curriculum, assessments and policies at all campus locations are required to be coordinated and overseen by the Program Coordinator(s).

Where an Institution offers two or more different Accredited Programs (e.g., one diploma Program and one certificate Program), synchronization is not required.

## 2.7 Application and Accreditation Fee Schedule

Application and Accreditation Fees	Fee* (\$)
Application Fee for Accreditation for each Program	500
Application Fee for Additional Campus Location	500
Accreditation Fee	4,500
Additional Campus Accreditation Fee (per campus location for each Program)	1,500
Late Payment Fee	250

\*All fees, except the late payment fee, are subject to applicable taxes.

### 2.7.1 Application Fees

Application fees are due at the time of Application and must be paid by cheque, money order/draft or credit card, payable to the Law Society of Ontario. The Application fee is non-refundable. If an Institution submits an Application but fails to remit the required fee with the Application, a technical failure of the Application will result and the Law Society will send a denial letter to the Institution.

If the Application is declined due to technical deficiencies or the Application is denied after a full review, and the Institution chooses to submit another Application, each subsequent Application is subject to an additional Application fee.

### 2.7.2 Accreditation Fees

The Law Society will issue an invoice for the Accreditation fees.

Accreditation fees must be paid by cheque, money order/draft or credit card, payable to the Law Society of Ontario.

Institutions accredited for the first time that determine that they will not offer the Accredited Program have 12 months after receiving Accreditation to request a refund of the Accreditation Fee. Once a refund is requested, the Institution's Accreditation is automatically terminated. For all refund requests, a minimum administration fee of \$700, plus taxes, will be levied. For each additional campus location, a further \$190 administration fee, plus taxes, will be levied. Institutions that have previously offered an Accredited Program at any campus location are not eligible for a refund.

## 2.8 Changes to a Program

Administrators and Program Coordinators who govern the delivery of an Accredited Program must notify the Law Society in writing of any Major Change (see definitions) to the Accredited Program as soon as possible *prior* to the change so that the Law Society can determine if the change is permissible within an Accredited Program. Notwithstanding the above, in respect of a matter completely out of the control of the Institution that could not reasonably have been anticipated that results in a Major Change, the Institution must notify the Law Society in writing of such Major Change as soon as the Institution becomes aware of such matter. The addition or removal of Faculty Members who are not Key Personnel does not need to be reported to the Law Society.

Any Major Change to an Accredited Program must be approved by the Law Society prior to the Major Change taking place (except that, where the Major Change occurred as a result of a matter completely out of the control of the Institution, the Institution must, after having notified the Law Society of the Major Change, immediately cure any concern the Law Society has with such Major Change).

Accredited Programs that fail to receive approval for a Major Change prior to the Major Change being implemented are considered to not be in compliance with the Accreditation Documents.

Institutions must use the Major Change Form ([Form 6](#)) for this purpose and must attach all relevant documentation (including revised Accreditation Forms).

## 2.9 Declarations

In addition to the requirement to notify the Law Society of any Major Change to an Accredited Program, Institutions are required to submit the following declarations and confirmations in accordance with the stated timeframes:

- annual declaration;
- cohort composition declaration;
- cohort composition confirmation; and
- cohort completion declaration.

### 2.9.1 Annual Declaration

Institutions must use the Annual Declaration Form ([Form 7](#)) for this purpose.

### **2.9.2 Cohort Composition Declaration and Cohort Composition Confirmation**

**At least six weeks** before a new Intake Date, the Institution must declare the specific date (including the month, day and year), specific Session (e.g., full-day, morning, afternoon or evening) and number of students enrolled for each Cohort for that Intake Date. **At least one week** before the Intake Date, the Institution must either confirm that the proposed new Cohort or Cohorts will begin on the Intake Date or notify the Law Society that there will be no proposed new Cohort or Cohorts for that Intake Date. If the proposed new Cohort or Cohorts will begin, the Institution must declare the number of students enrolled for each Cohort for that Intake Date. Only individuals formally enrolled count toward the minimum Cohort requirement — interested individuals/prospects do not. Individuals previously counted toward a Cohort at *any* Institution do not count toward the minimum Cohort requirement and reference to such individuals must be made by a separate notation. A Cohort of at least **15** students is required. **Proposed Cohorts that do not meet the minimum size of 15 students at least one week prior to the Intake Date are not eligible to proceed.** There are no standard forms for the cohort composition declaration and cohort composition confirmation. An email with the required information sent to [paralegaleducation@lso.ca](mailto:paralegaleducation@lso.ca) will suffice.

Where an Institution separates its non-Core Program course offerings from its Core Program course offerings, the Institution's cohort composition declaration is due no less than six weeks prior to the start of the Core Program course offering of the Accredited Program and the cohort composition confirmation is due no less than one week prior to the start of the Core Program.

### **2.9.3 Cohort Completion Declaration**

For each Cohort finishing its studies, the Institution must declare to the Law Society the number of students who have completed the academic portion of the Accredited Program. If the Institution's field placements take place at the end of the Accredited Program, this declaration should be made at the conclusion of the Cohort's in-class studies. The declaration must reflect the number of students in a given Cohort who have successfully completed the mandatory coursework that forms the curriculum for the Accredited Program. The cohort completion declaration must be made for each Cohort within two weeks of each Cohort's completion of such mandatory coursework and must include the period of the Cohort's Session (e.g., full-day, morning, afternoon, evening). Where some students have moved to a different Cohort during the Accredited Program (e.g., in the second year of a two-year program as a result of scheduling considerations), the information provided in the cohort completion declaration must be reported as it relates to each of the original Cohorts. Where individuals completed studies with a Cohort but were not part of the Cohort (e.g., where a student from another Institution received advanced standing at the Institution), reference to such individuals must be made by a separate notation in the cohort completion declaration.

There is no standard form for the cohort completion declaration. An email with the required information sent to [paralegaleducation@lso.ca](mailto:paralegaleducation@lso.ca) will suffice.

## 2.10 Audit Policy

The Law Society will audit Accredited Programs at periodic intervals, but no less frequently than once in the first three years following the date of Accreditation and once every five years thereafter. As noted by Convocation in 2013, and as set out in the [Audit Policy and Framework](#) applicable to Accredited Programs, audits help ensure compliance with the goals, criteria and standards of paralegal education programs. Audits also promote consistency of practice among Institutions offering paralegal education programs and help ensure that students are exposed to and develop the knowledge and skills required to provide legal services to the public. An Accredited Program site visit will be conducted to validate the information submitted by each Institution and to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Accredited Program's content, learning environment and processes.

The audit process site visit constitutes a comprehensive review that may result in

- confirmation of the apparent compliance and effectiveness of the Accredited Program;
- identification of deficiencies and required corrective measures; or
- a decision regarding Accredited Program continuation, including, but not limited to, loss of Accreditation.

Program Coordinators and Institution administrators will be required to verify that the Institution is maintaining the mandatory requirements of an Accredited Program. The Law Society's audit team will request updated information regarding the Accredited Program prior to conducting a site visit at the Institution (note that, where there are multiple campus locations, multiple site visits may be conducted).

The site visit may consist of, but is not limited to, the following activities:

- meetings with the Program Coordinator and the Institution's and/or Accredited Program's senior administrators;
- meetings with a representative group of students;
- meetings with Faculty Members;
- class observations;
- a tour of the facilities, including the library, computer labs and classrooms;
- meetings with the Field Placement Coordinator; and
- a review of records, such as samples of student work.

A draft agenda for the site visit will be sent to the Program Coordinator when the audit is scheduled. For more detailed information regarding the audit process, please see the Audit Policy and Framework, available on the Law Society's website at [www.lso.ca](http://www.lso.ca).

Where an audit or complaint reveals a potential concern that could be assessed through additional site

visits, the Law Society may re-attend at a campus location.

The Law Society will issue an invoice for the applicable audit fees upon completion of the audit site visit. Additional fees may be incurred by the Institution for follow-up visits to address non-compliance with mandatory requirements or Accredited Program quality concerns. These fees are set out in the Audit Fee Schedule.

## 2.11 Audit Fee Schedule

Audit Fees	Fee* (\$)
Program Audit Fee	4,500
Additional Campus Audit Fee (per campus location)	1,500
Audit Revisit Fee (non-compliance and remediation)	2,000
Late Payment Fee	250

\*All fees, except the late payment fee, are subject to applicable taxes.

Audit fees must be paid by cheque, money order/draft or credit card, payable to the Law Society of Ontario. Audit fees are due by the date specified in the invoice or accompanying cover letter, as the case may be. The audit fee is non-refundable.

**A late fee of \$250 applies to all invoices not paid on or before the late payment deadline. In addition, failure to remit monies owed by the due date may result in consequences for a Program's Accreditation status and may result in notification to the MTCU. An Institution is not permitted to have any new Cohort commence the Accredited Program if the Institution has an overdue account with the Law Society.**

## 2.12 Program Checks

The Law Society may conduct a Program Check during periods when an Accredited Program is not undergoing a comprehensive review through the audit process site visit. The Law Society may conduct a Program Check when a complaint or other information is received that indicates that an Accredited Program may not be fulfilling the standards and criteria in the Accreditation Documents.

Program Checks permit the Law Society to engage in ongoing monitoring of an Accredited Program and address concerns that may arise. The possible outcomes of a Program Check are

- moderate assurance that the Accredited Program is compliant and generally effective;

- identification of problems and recommendations for more extensive review.

Normally, a Program Check will not result in fees being incurred by the Institution. However, in situations where a Program Check uncovers deficiencies in an Institution's Accredited Program that warrant a formal audit being initiated, applicable audit fees will be charged to the Institution upon completion of the audit site visit.

### **2.13 Non-compliance with the Accreditation Documents**

Where the Law Society determines (whether during the course of an audit or Program Check, as a result of a complaint or otherwise) that an Accredited Program is not fulfilling the standards and criteria of the Accreditation Documents, the Law Society may determine that the Accredited Program's Accreditation should be revoked.

In determining whether an Accredited Program is fulfilling the standards and criteria of the Accreditation Documents, the Law Society will assess information available to the Law Society from a number of sources, including the following:

- any complaints from a current or former Faculty Member, employee, student or contractor of an Institution offering an Accredited Program;
- any ongoing or completed Law Society investigations;
- any ongoing or completed Law Society audits;
- the success of the Institution in developing entry-level competence in its students;
- the Institution's prior compliance with the standards and criteria of the Accreditation Documents;
- and
- any other information available to the Law Society.

Any decision to revoke an Accredited Program's Accreditation would be made by the Executive Director of the Professional Development and Competence Division of the Law Society. The Institution will be notified of the decision and may request a review of a revocation decision by the Paralegal Standing Committee of the Law Society.

### **2.14 Reaccreditation**

Program Accreditation and Reaccreditation are granted in five year increments. The Law Society will initiate the Reaccreditation process at the appropriate time. A notice for Reaccreditation will be sent by the Law Society at an appropriate date well in advance of the Institution's requirement to submit a Reaccreditation Application, for each Accredited Program. If the Institution wishes to continue to deliver the Accredited Program, it will be required to complete a new Application seeking Reaccreditation. Additional guidelines concerning Reaccreditation may be found in the *Program Requirements and Application Procedure* section. The Institution must comply with the Law Society's Reaccreditation process to maintain the Institution's Accreditation (i.e., status as an Accredited Program provider). If Reaccreditation is not sought by the Institution, or if it is not granted by the Law

Society, the Law Society will assist the Institution to determine a date by which students will have graduated from the Accredited Program. The Program will then be removed from the Law Society's listing of Accredited Programs.

<b>Reaccreditation Fees</b>	Fee* (\$)
Reaccreditation Fee for each Program (every five years)	3,500
Additional Campus Reaccreditation Fee for each Program (per campus location, every five years)	950
Late Payment Fee	250

\*All fees, except the late payment fee, are subject to applicable taxes.

The Law Society will issue an invoice for the applicable Reaccreditation fees. Reaccreditation fees must be paid by cheque, money order/draft or credit card, payable to the Law Society of Ontario. All fees relating to Reaccreditation are due by the date specified in the invoice or accompanying cover letter, as the case may be. A late fee of \$250 applies to all invoices not paid on or before the payment deadline. In addition, failure to remit monies owed by the due date may result in consequences for a Program's Accreditation/Reaccreditation status and may result in notification to the MTCU. An Institution is not permitted to have any new Cohort commence the Program if the Institution has an overdue account with the Law Society.

### **2.15 Program Expiry Due to Dormancy, Discontinuation and Change of Location**

At any time, if 12 months pass without a new Cohort in an Accredited Program at an Institution's campus location, and there is at the end of the 12-month period no other Cohort in progress in the Accredited Program at that campus location, the Program at that campus location is dormant and Accreditation at that campus location is deemed by the Law Society to expire automatically. No new students may be enrolled in the Accredited Program at the campus location once Accreditation has expired as a result of dormancy. For Institutions offering an Accredited Program at multiple campus locations, only the Accredited Program at the dormant campus location expires.

The Institution must notify the Law Society in writing in advance if it intends to discontinue an Accredited Program (at one or more locations). If a Cohort is in the midst of its studies at the time of the notice, the Institution must specify the date that the Cohort will complete its studies and must provide a comprehensive plan describing how Accredited Program quality and quantity standards will be maintained

until the Cohort's graduation. No new students may be enrolled in the Accredited Program after the Institution sends the notice of discontinuation. An Institution cannot withdraw or revoke a notice of discontinuation.

If the Institution wishes to restart a dormant or discontinued Program, the Institution must restart the process for Accreditation for the Institution or campus location, as applicable, including payment of the applicable fees.

Expiry and discontinuation information will be reflected on the Law Society's website.

Where an Institution moves the location for an Accredited Program (e.g., to a new building in close proximity to the existing location), such move may not necessarily constitute the discontinuation of an Accredited Program; however, a Major Change Form ([Form 6](#)) must be completed and the Law Society will determine whether the change in location constitutes the discontinuation of an Accredited Program. Where the move is determined to constitute discontinuation of an Accredited Program (and not merely a move of location), the Institution must restart the process for Accreditation for the Institution or campus location, as applicable, including payment of the applicable fees.

## 2.16 Program Accommodations

The Law Society expects all Institutions offering Accredited Programs to discharge their obligations to students under the *Human Rights Code* in accordance with Ontario law.

## 3. Program Requirements and Application Procedure

### 3.1 Academic and Field Placement Requirements

An Accredited Program must offer a minimum of **830 Program hours**, comprising the following:

- **590 instructional hours** in Compulsory Legal Courses;
- **120 hours of field placement/practicum** work experience; and
- **120 instructional hours** in additional courses that relate to a paralegal's permitted scope of practice or support becoming a well-rounded paralegal graduate.

Compulsory Legal Courses must be within a paralegal's permitted scope of practice (see section 6 of [By-Law 4](#) under the *Law Society Act* for the areas within the permitted scope of practice) and must meet the competencies set out in [Form 3](#). The field placement/practicum must also meet the competencies set out in [Form 3](#).

In respect of the 120 instructional hours in additional courses, an Institution is permitted to offer additional legal courses exclusively, in place of general education courses. Any additional legal course provided cannot fall outside of a paralegal's permitted scope of practice. Alternatively, the Institution may increase



the hours of the Compulsory Legal Courses to a total equal to or greater than 120 hours above the minimum 590 Program hours. A combination of additional legal/non-legal courses and augmented Compulsory Legal Course hours may also be implemented to satisfy the requirement.

The Compulsory Legal Courses, and the minimum instructional hours for each Compulsory Legal Course, are set out below.

### **3.1.1 Compulsory Legal Course List and Minimum Instructional Hours**



<b>Compulsory Legal Course Name</b>	<b>Minimum Instructional Hours</b>
Administrative Law	30
ADR – Alternative Dispute Resolution	30
Advocacy	30
Communication/Writing	20
Criminal/Summary Conviction Procedure	30
Employment Law	30
Ethics and Professional Responsibility	30
Evidence and the Litigation Process	40
Introduction to the Legal System	40
Legal Accounting	30
Legal Computer Applications	30
Legal Research/Writing	30
Practice Management/Operating a Small Business	40
Provincial Offences/Motor Vehicle Offences	40
Residential Landlord and Tenant Law	30
Small Claims Court	40
Torts and Contracts	30

<b>Compulsory Legal Course Name</b>	<b>Minimum Instructional Hours</b>
Tribunal Practice and Procedure	40

### **3.1.2 Delivery Format**

The Accredited Program must be delivered in a format that allows students to study legal principles in context. To satisfy this requirement, Substantive Law Courses must be delivered concurrently with at least one (and preferably two) other courses. Semesters that include a minimum of two Compulsory Legal Courses or modular systems where students alternate course material in the morning and afternoon or during the week are acceptable formats to satisfy the requirement. This requirement must be satisfied for each Session of the Accredited Program that the Institution chooses to offer.

**Online or remote delivery of the Accredited Program is not permitted.**

### **3.1.3 Course Sequencing**

The curriculum must be covered in a logical order in light of the subject matter of each course, with foundational courses as prerequisites and with more advanced courses being scheduled towards the latter portion of the Accredited Program. The field placement should normally be scheduled with advanced courses or after completion of the Compulsory Legal Courses. A recommended sequence is as follows:

#### **Primary**

- Introduction to the Legal System
- Legal Computer Applications
- Communication/Writing
- Legal Research and Writing

#### **Secondary**

- Torts and Contracts
- Criminal/Summary Conviction Procedure
- Provincial Offences/Motor Vehicle Offences
- Administrative Law
- Employment Law
- Residential Landlord and Tenant Law
- Small Claims Court
- Tribunal Practice and Procedure
- Legal Accounting
- Ethics and Professional Responsibility

**Advanced**

- ADR – Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Advocacy
- Evidence and the Litigation Process

The courses may be provided in any order within these sections; however, the primary courses should be considered prerequisites and offered first in the Accredited Program. The advanced courses should be offered at the end of the Accredited Program, to build on learning from previous courses. One or two courses from the secondary category may be moved to the schedule of a primary or an advanced semester/module grouping if the Institution has a valid pedagogical reason to sequence the courses in this way.

**3.1.4 Course Names, Structure and Competency Coverage**

Institutions may use different names for the Compulsory Legal Courses but these should not deviate greatly from those set out in the *Course Sequencing* section.

Each Compulsory Legal Course must satisfy the minimum number of class hours as set out in the chart in the *Academic and Field Placement Requirements* section. These hours must be led by Faculty Members (including lecture, discussion, group-work, tests, etc.). Hours other than regularly scheduled class time cannot be counted toward the minimum required hours. If the Institution wishes to allocate additional course hours to certain subjects, this is permitted. Certain courses, such as Torts and Contracts, Legal Research and Writing, Evidence and the Litigation Process and others may be separated by their respective subject matter into two courses; however, deviation from the sequencing model should be kept to a minimum.

While individual competencies may receive additional coverage in other courses, each Compulsory Legal Course must provide sufficient instructional time to, and coverage of, all of the required competencies, as set out in *Form 3*.

**3.2 Program Coordinator and Field Placement Coordinator**

To receive and maintain Accreditation, a Program must have a *Program Coordinator* and a *Field Placement Coordinator*.

**3.2.1 Program Coordinator**

The Program Coordinator plays an integral role in the receipt and maintenance of a Program's Accreditation and is responsible to the Institution and to the Law Society for monitoring, coordinating and controlling Program standards within an Accredited Program. The Program Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all elements of the Accredited Program meet the Law Society's requirements at all times. The Program Coordinator must have experience, education or training relevant to the administration of educational programs, the design of instructional systems and the provision of adult education.

The Program Coordinator must be a Licensee, must be in Active Good Status at all times and must

- have at least three years of practice experience in Ontario as a lawyer or paralegal, or
- have at least one year of practice experience in Ontario as a lawyer or paralegal and have at least three years of teaching experience or a degree, diploma or certificate in education from an accredited or designated educational institution.

Proposed Program Coordinators who do not meet the above criteria may be approved upon application to the Law Society. Such application should include a recent résumé, copies of academic articles authored by the proposed Program Coordinator and other relevant information.

Current Program Coordinators already working at an Institution are considered “grandparented” for that Institution. Individuals who were Program Coordinators at one Institution (the “Former Institution”) may apply to the Law Society to be “grandparented” in respect of a different Institution, and the Law Society may, in its discretion, acting reasonably, approve such application. When exercising such discretion, the Law Society may take into consideration the individual’s responsiveness to the Law Society when at the Former Institution and the level of compliance of the Former Institution with the standards and criteria of the Accreditation Documents.

Where the Program Coordinator manages one to three campus locations, the Program Coordinator must teach no more than 20 hours per week at the Institution.

Where the Program Coordinator manages more than three campus locations, the Program Coordinator must teach no more than eight hours per week at the Institution.

The Program Coordinator’s responsibilities include

- serving as a central coordinating authority for the Institution’s delivery of the Accredited Program;
- communicating with the Law Society within a reasonable period of time and acting as a primary point of contact for the resolution of any matter relevant to an Accredited Program;
- coordinating and scheduling Faculty Members (including, e.g., ensuring that a Licensee or Exempted Individual is present in class to teach Substantive Law Courses);
- ensuring that Faculty Members have the experience, training and subject matter expertise required by the Accreditation Documents;
- coordinating regular Faculty Member meetings;
- facilitating the monitoring of Faculty Members’ lessons for content, delivery and emphasis on paralegal scope of practice in accordance with the Accreditation Documents through periodic classroom observations;
- overseeing the field placement portion of the Accredited Program (e.g., ensuring that prospective Field Placement Hosts have been confirmed as appropriate hosts and prospective Field Placement Supervisors meet the requirements set out in the Accreditation Documents);

- managing the coherent and consistent implementation of an effectively designed curriculum and effective assessments;
- assisting with the acquisition of effective instructional resources to support the delivery of the Accredited Program within the Institution;
- ensuring that all marketing associated with the Accredited Program is
  - demonstrably true, accurate and verifiable,
  - not misleading, confusing or deceptive, and
  - not likely to mislead, confuse or deceive; and
- ensuring that the Accredited Program produces graduates who have adequately mastered the required competencies in order to support their continued progression in the licensing process.

The periodic classroom observations referenced above must, unless the Law Society has approved otherwise in advance, occur at least annually for each Faculty Member where there are seven or fewer Faculty Members teaching in the Accredited Program and at least every two years for each Faculty Member where there are eight or more Faculty Members teaching in the Accredited Program. The Program Coordinator must document such observations and ensure that constructive feedback is provided to each Faculty Member as a result of such observations, unless the Law Society has approved otherwise in advance. The Institution must maintain a copy of the documented observations for at least two years and is strongly encouraged to use a template or standard form for all Faculty Member observations.

Where an Institution offers an Accredited Program at multiple campus locations and the Program Coordinator is not on-site at each campus location full time, the Program Coordinator or Institution must appoint a faculty head at each campus location to oversee the Accredited Program on a day-to-day basis. The Institution must also ensure that the Program Coordinator is sufficiently involved in the core operations of the Accredited Program at all campus locations to maintain the quality of the Accredited Program (sufficient involvement may be assessed based on frequency of attendance at each campus location, activities performed at each campus location, knowledge of and interaction with campus students and faculty, etc.). Each faculty head must be a Licensee, be made known to students, administrative staff and other faculty as the Accredited Program faculty head for the campus location, and report to the Program Coordinator on a regular basis.

Where a Program Coordinator is prohibited, as a result of a collective or other agreement that regulates the terms and conditions of Faculty Members' work in the Accredited Program, from performing any task required pursuant to the Accreditation Documents, the Program Coordinator must notify the Law Society in advance, providing details of such prohibition. The Law Society will consider whether to permit such task to be delegated. If the Law Society so permits, the Program Coordinator must ensure that the task is performed by an individual who is at least as competent to perform the task as the Program Coordinator. Competence entails both knowledge of the law and an understanding of adult education best practices.

### **3.2.2 Field Placement Coordinator**



- understand the scope of practice for paralegals in Ontario and ensure that Field Placement Supervisors are aware of the scope of practice;
- ensure, by contract with the Field Placement Host and Field Placement Supervisor or by other means, that (a) no field placements require a paralegal student to perform tasks that should not be performed by a paralegal student (e.g., because they are outside the scope of practice for a paralegal or because they require supervision but the student is not being supervised); and (b) the Field Placement Supervisor will remain in Active Good Status during the period of the field placement and will inform the Field Placement Coordinator if the Field Placement Supervisor ceases to be in Active Good Status during the period of the Field Placement;
- communicate field placement requirements to students;
- secure Field Placement Hosts and Field Placement Supervisors for students well in advance of the start of a field placement;
- ensure that each Field Placement Supervisor directly supervises no more than two paralegal students at any one time;
- finalize arrangements with Field Placement Hosts;
- monitor the day to day operations of the field placement program on behalf of the Program Coordinator; and
- respond to issues from students, Field Placement Hosts and Field Placement Supervisors.

Before finalizing a field placement, the Field Placement Coordinator must

- check the Field Placement Supervisor's status (in the case of a Licensee, using the Law Society's lawyer and paralegal directory; in the case of a Licensee Equivalent, using such means as are available);
- confirm with the Field Placement Supervisor that the Field Placement Supervisor is, and will during the period of the field placement remain, in Active Good Status;
- verify that there is no basis upon which to conclude that the Field Placement Supervisor may not be in Active Good Status; and
- provide any relevant policies to the Field Placement Supervisor.

While students are expected to be reasonably cooperative (e.g., by preparing résumés; identifying to the Field Placement Coordinator, upon request, their area of interest; making themselves reasonably available for interviews; behaving professionally at interviews; and making themselves reasonably available to potential Field Placement Hosts to perform work), it is the responsibility of the Institution to secure the field placements for students in the Accredited Program. The Institution must notify students in writing before the Intake Date if there are limits on the types of Field Placement Hosts it is able to secure (e.g., limited to one or two areas within the paralegal scope of practice).

### **3.3 Cohort Composition and Intake Dates**

Institutions are permitted to offer a grouping of non-mandatory courses before or after the Core Program during which the minimum Cohort size requirement does not apply and/or new students may be added; however, the following conditions must be met:

- The Accredited Program must contain a minimum of 710 hours of classroom instruction, exclusive of pre- or post-Program studies. These 710 Core Program hours must comprise a minimum of 590 Compulsory Legal Course hours plus 120 hours of additional legal and/or non-legal content.
- No student may be enrolled as a deemed member of the Cohort after the Intake Date. Any student who receives advanced standing in accordance with the Institution's advanced standing policy and the requirements of the Accreditation Documents should **not** be included in the cohort composition declaration, cohort composition confirmation or the cohort completion declaration, regardless of whether such student enrolled in the Accredited Program before or after the Intake Date. However, a separate notation regarding such student must be included in such declarations.
- The pre- or post-Program courses are distinct from the Core Program and do not form part of the Accredited Program. The pre- and post-Program courses must not include any subject matter included in the Compulsory Legal Courses.
- If fewer than 15 students start their pre-paralegal studies before the Institution's one-week cohort composition confirmation and the Institution fails to enroll the minimum 15 students at least one week prior to the Intake Date, these students will not be able to commence their paralegal studies until a future Intake Date.

### **3.3.1 New Student Intake Dates**

Accredited Programs are limited to two Intake Dates per Session per calendar year (see sample Intake Date schedule, below). For example, an Accredited Program with a morning and an evening Session is permitted two Intake Dates for each Session per year. An Institution must maintain documentation that tracks Intake Dates and new registrant numbers and provide these statistics to the Law Society upon request. Except with prior Law Society approval, an Institution is not permitted to admit a new student to a course in the Core Program after the Intake Date unless the student has received advanced standing course credit equivalent to the Cohort's already completed studies.

Session	Intake #	Intake Date
Morning	1	March 1
Evening	1	June 1
Morning	2	September 1
Evening	2	November 1

These Intake Dates must be consistent for all campus locations where the Accredited Program is offered.

**Intake Dates may not be rescheduled. If an Institution skips an Intake Date, the only other permissible Intake Dates are those the Institution previously declared to the Law Society in the Annual Declaration Form.**

### 3.4 Individual Course Information

Each Accredited Program curriculum must include all Compulsory Legal Courses and teach, practise and assess all competencies as set out in Form 3. Programs that include legal courses that fall outside of the permitted paralegal scope of practice will not be approved. *Please see By-Law 4 under the Law Society Act and relevant Law Society policies for areas within the permitted scope of practice.*

Individual Course Information Forms must be completed for each Compulsory Legal Course as well as for each course that is not a Compulsory Legal Course, if any, that will be taught as part of the Core Program.

#### 3.4.1 Course Outlines

Institutions must provide to the Law Society a detailed Course Outline for each course that will be offered in the Core Program, as well as all non-Core Program courses offered to satisfy the requirement for 120 additional course hours.

Each Course Outline must include the following:

- an explanation of how students are assessed within the course and how each Law Society competency set out in Form 3 is assessed;
- a detailed list of all topics covered and resources to be used in teaching each course (e.g., name and publication date of each textbook);
- if the course mark includes a percentage allocated for participation, an explanation as to the activities that will be considered for this grade; and

Where not developed by the Faculty Member who is teaching the course, Institutions must, sufficiently in advance of the course beginning, provide the Course Outline to the Faculty Member who is teaching the course to allow the Faculty Member time to prepare. Institutions must also make course outlines available to students enrolled in the course prior to, or during the first class of, the course. Where an Institution divides its Course Outline into two or more separate documents, the documents together shall be considered the Course Outline.

Where a course upon delivery will deviate from the Course Outline, the Program Coordinator must notify the Law Society in advance. Such notification must be made through a Major Change Form. Despite the foregoing, minor changes to a Course Outline do not require a Major Change Form. Examples of minor changes include changes to the edition of the textbook, moving coverage of a topic from one class to a different class and minor changes to an assessment approach (e.g., changing the weighting within a given assessment across question types). By contrast, examples of changes that require a Major Change Form include making a material change to the textbook (such as ceasing to use a textbook or using a textbook not designed for paralegals or lawyers), eliminating coverage of a topic, changing the number of assessments or significantly changing an assessment approach (e.g., from all multiple choice to long answer or *vice versa*). Where an Institution is not certain as to whether it must notify the Law Society of a change, the Institution should send an email to [paralegaleducation@lso.ca](mailto:paralegaleducation@lso.ca) describing the proposed nature of the change, and the Law Society will advise as to whether a Major Change Form is required.

### **3.4.2 Program Assessment Plan**

Institutions must have an overall Program Assessment Plan that provides a general overview of the tests and assignments that will be used for the Compulsory Legal Courses during the Accredited Program, when the tests and assignments will normally occur and how the results will be interpreted and used. The Program Assessment Plan must also provide guidelines on the development of individual tests or assignments, procedures for testing and the means by which results are to be recorded. A Program Assessment Plan may comprise multiple documents, with some being general Institution policies and some being Program-specific documents. A Program Assessment Plan must be provided along with an Application for Accreditation or Reaccreditation.

Specifically, a Program Assessment Plan must set out

- a concept for the formative testing of learner progress within a course;
- a concept for the summative testing of learner performance on the competencies for a course; and
- the Institution or Program's policy for
  - the assignment and interpretation of grades (letter grades, percentages, pass/fail, what percent or letter grade constitutes a pass, etc.);
  - the maximum time afforded to Faculty Members to mark and provide feedback following formative and summative assessments;

- the manner in which course pass or failure will be determined;
- invigilation of tests and exams;
- ensuring the integrity of assessments; and
- the maintenance of assessment records.

A minimum of one sample assessment, preferably a final exam or a major assignment, must be provided with the Application for each Compulsory Legal Course. Course assessments will be reviewed to determine whether they reflect assessment best practices for design and length, are sufficiently detailed, reflect an appropriate level of difficulty to test the student's knowledge and test the mandatory competencies using fact scenarios and examples that are within a paralegal's scope of practice.

Assessments used in the Accredited Program must

- have an appropriate marking rubric;
- have a companion answer key;
- state the maximum time allotted for completion of each assessment (excluding individual cases where additional time is allotted pursuant to an accommodation for a disability);
- **not** contain true-or-false and fill-in-the-blank type questions; and
- specify a timeframe for return of the marked assessment.

Students must be provided with marks and appropriate feedback in a timely manner (e.g., on mid-term assessments, students should receive feedback before they write their final exam for that course; for final assessments, students should receive feedback in sufficient time to enable them to re-register for the same course when it is next offered by the Institution in case the student does not receive a passing grade and in sufficient time to be of value when taking a subsequent course that may build on the competencies associated with the earlier course).

Students must be afforded the opportunity to review graded assignments and tests with the Faculty Member who instructed the course or, where that is not possible, with a Faculty Member who has familiarity with the subject matter.

### **3.5 Faculty Information**

An Accredited Program must have a minimum of two Full-Time Faculty Members per campus location. These two Full-Time Faculty Members must each be a Licensee and neither can teach more than 50% of the Accredited Program's courses that form the Core Program. This obligation is in addition to the obligation, as set out in the definition of "Full-Time Faculty Member," that such Full-Time Faculty Members be either (a) full-time employees of the Institution who dedicate the majority of their employment time to the Accredited Program; or (b) contractors or part-time employees of the Institution who each perform a combination of instructional and non-instructional duties in respect of an Accredited Program for no fewer than 532 hours for each Accredited Program offered to each Cohort. (For clarity, hours counted in respect of one campus cannot also be counted for another campus and hours provided for one Cohort cannot also

be counted for a separate Cohort. If an Institution seeks to have a given individual be considered a Full-Time Faculty Member for two Cohorts, the individual would have to perform 1064 hours of duties and if an Institution seeks to have a given individual be considered a Full-Time Faculty Member for two Cohorts at two campuses, the individual would have to perform 2128 hours of duties.)

### **3.5.1 Faculty Qualifications**

Faculty Members who teach a Substantive Law Course or other course in the Accredited Program that contains a material amount of information related to substantive law are required to be Licensees or Exempted Individuals. Faculty Members are required to maintain Active Good Status and Institutions must ensure that Faculty Members are in and maintain Active Good Status. Institutions should also be aware that some individuals, despite meeting the Active Good Status requirement and other requirements set out in the PEPAP, may not be suitable Faculty Members within an Accredited Program. Exempted Individuals must be actively engaged in the provision of legal services during the period when they are acting as Faculty Members. When the Exempted Individual ceases to work in the relevant area, as in the case of retirement, the Exempted Individual is no longer qualified to instruct in an Accredited Program. An example of an Exempted Individual under By-Law 4 would include an individual performing the duty of prosecutor as defined by the *Provincial Offences Act*, RSO 1990, c. P.33.

Faculty Members who teach a Compulsory Legal Course or other course in the Accredited Program that contains a material amount of information related to substantive law must have at least one year of teaching experience or have formal training in education that has resulted in a degree, diploma or certificate being awarded by an institution accredited, authorized or designated by a governmental authority to offer such degree, diploma or certificate. Teaching experience means having instructional responsibility for a class of students in an educational program where delivering assessments forms part of the instructional responsibilities of the Faculty Member. Acting as an occasional lecturer, a presenter, a trainer, an articling principal or a Field Placement Supervisor is not considered teaching experience.

Despite the foregoing, if a prospective Faculty Member lacks the required teaching experience or formal training in education, the individual may instruct in the Accredited Program if the individual participates in formal training courses in education within six months of being hired and continues such activities while engaged as a Faculty Member until the individual receives a degree, certificate, diploma or similar award from an accredited, authorized or designated institution.

When an Institution retains a Faculty Member who does not have teaching experience or formal training in education to teach a Compulsory Legal Course or other course that contains a material amount of information related to substantive law, the Institution must notify the Law Society upon hiring that Faculty Member and must submit a plan outlining the courses that the prospective Faculty Member will take. Such plan must include course names and dates, the name of the institution(s) offering the course(s) and the anticipated date the academic award will be granted.

Proposed Faculty Members who do not meet the above criteria may be approved upon application to the Law Society. Such application should include a recent résumé, copies of academic articles authored by the proposed Faculty Member and other relevant information.

Faculty Members who are Exempted Individuals must have at least one year of practice experience in the subject matter area they will be teaching.

Concurrent experience does not count toward the one year practice experience requirement.

### **3.5.2 Monitoring of Faculty Member Qualifications**

Institutions are responsible for conducting proper due diligence regarding Faculty Member qualifications and credentials before a Faculty Member is hired to teach in the Core Program. Institutions are also expected to routinely monitor the status of each Faculty Member after the Faculty Member is hired and implement the administrative measures necessary to address the occasions when a Faculty Member's status (e.g., a Licensee's status with the Law Society) changes. When a Faculty Member ceases to meet the definition of Licensee or Exempted Individual or ceases to be in Active Good Status, such Faculty Member is no longer permitted to instruct a Substantive Law Course. In such cases, the Institution shall advise the Law Society of its plans for addressing instructor scheduling and instructional continuity.

Institutions must advise Faculty Members of the above requirements and must require Faculty Members to report immediately to the Institution and the Law Society any status change that may affect their ability to instruct in an Accredited Program. Should any question or concern arise as to the status or suitability of a Licensee or Exempted Individual to perform instructional roles within an Accredited Program, the Institution must investigate any question or concern raised and take appropriate action in accordance with the results of the Institution's investigation, including notifying the Law Society of the action to be taken. Additional information on the Law Society's resources to review the status of a lawyer or paralegal can be found on the Law Society's website at [www.lso.ca](http://www.lso.ca) in the Member's Directory section or by contacting the Law Society directly.

Accredited Programs whose Faculty Members do not meet PEPAP requirements are considered to not be in compliance with the Accreditation Documents.

### **3.6 Field Placements**

As part of the Accredited Program requirements, each student must complete a minimum of 120 hours of field placement/practicum work. Field placements can be completed in entities such as

- paralegal or law firms;
- administrative tribunals;
- government agencies;
- regulatory bodies;
- legal aid clinics;

- courts; and
- legal departments (government or commercial).

Students must be exposed to areas within the permitted paralegal scope of practice throughout the course of their field placement and must meet the competencies set out in Form 3 for field placements.

Each field placement must be approved by the Institution prior to the student undertaking it, and a Field Placement Supervisor must be associated with each field placement. The Field Placement Supervisor must supervise and review the student's field placement activities. A Field Placement Supervisor must not supervise more than two paralegal field placement students at a time. The field placement program must be supervised by a Field Placement Coordinator (who may also supervise other field placement programs within the Institution), but the Program Coordinator is ultimately responsible for ensuring that each field placement is appropriate.

The student and Field Placement Supervisor must evaluate the competencies met by way of a report prepared by the Field Placement Supervisor and signed by both the student and Field Placement Supervisor. The Institution must require that this report be submitted to the Institution, and the Program Coordinator must ensure that these reports are received and maintained in the student's file for at least two years.

Each Institution must have a paralegal field placement policy that sets out key issues, such as:

- how field placements are chosen;
- how field placements are assessed;
- whether field placements are paid or unpaid, or both;
- when field placements for a given Cohort will be secured;
- what students can expect regarding the location and type of field placements and what options are available to them;
- what measures will be taken in respect of students who are removed from a placement or remove themselves from a placement (e.g., for performance or conduct deficiencies on the part of the student or for other reasons);
- what deadlines exist;
- what students are required to do to secure a placement and by what date;
- what the "critical path" procedure is for placements;
- what happens where a student does not secure any interviews despite the Institution securing potential placements;
- what happens where a student fails to receive any placement offers; and
- how the Institution finalizes arrangements with Field Placement Hosts (including verification of the Field Placement Supervisor's status with the Law Society or other relevant status).



When calculating the number of field placement hours, Institutions should not include any in-class sessions related to the field placement. In-class sessions related to field placement should be delineated separately.

### **3.6.1 Monitoring Field Placement Supervisor Status**

Institutions are required to ensure that Field Placement Supervisors maintain Active Good Status throughout the duration of a field placement. Institutions are required to ensure that prospective Field Placement Hosts have been confirmed as appropriate for a field placement and to implement procedures to monitor a Field Placement Supervisor's suitability to supervise students during the field placement. Institutions must undertake verification of the status (with the Law Society or other relevant entity) of a Field Placement Supervisor no less frequently than at the start of each student's placement. Where any contact with the Field Placement Supervisor occurs during the field placement, the Institution must also verify the Field Placement Supervisor's status at the time of the contact. Should any question or concern arise as to the status or suitability of a Field Placement Supervisor prior to, during or after a field placement, the Institution must investigate any question or concern raised and take appropriate action in accordance with the results of the Institution's investigation, including notifying the Law Society of the action to be taken.

### **3.7 Multiple Campus Locations Guidelines**

If an Institution wishes to offer an Accredited Program at more than one campus location, a new set of forms must be completed for each campus location; however, if the only change to the Program at the additional campus locations is the complement of Faculty Members and Field Placement Hosts, then only Form 1A, Form 1B, Form 4A, Form 4B and Form 5 must be completed for each additional campus location that will offer an Accredited Program, and these documents must be provided in a separate binder. The Institution is required to declare the common elements of the Program's delivery at the different locations, and which policies are applicable to each location. An Application fee is due for each campus location seeking Accreditation or Reaccreditation, in accordance with the Fee Schedules set out in the Accreditation Documents.

### **3.8 Prior Learning Assessment and Transferring Credits**

Prior learning assessment may be conducted by an Institution as a means of granting advanced standing within an Accredited Program. The development and articulation of prior learning assessment and advanced standing policies, including in respect of transferring course credits from another Institution, is the responsibility of each Institution. Each Institution must have an appropriate policy in place that is specific to the Accredited Program regarding the provision of prior learning assessments or advanced standing course credit to paralegal students.

The Institution and its policy must comply with the following requirements:

- advanced standing course credit can only be given for a maximum of 40% of an Accredited Program's total courses (i.e., Compulsory Legal Courses and other Accredited Program courses); and
- except as specifically provided below, **advanced standing cannot be used to reduce the number of hours established under the Accredited Program for field placements, nor can advanced standing be given for prior work experience.**

Prior work experience may be counted toward field placement hours where an Institution requires more than the minimum number of field placement hours set out in the Accreditation Documents; however, under no circumstances shall the number of field placement hours completed by the student under the supervision of the Field Placement Supervisor during the course of the Accredited Program be less than that set out in the Accreditation Documents. The Institution must provide a copy of the prior learning assessment and advanced standing policies to the Law Society as part of its Application and upon request by the Law Society following accreditation.

### **3.9 General Institution Policies**

If an Institution engages in practices that may reasonably be expected to affect a student's relationship with the Law Society (e.g., the submission of documents required to be remitted to the Law Society for examination, licensing or other purposes), the Institution must provide a copy of the policy containing such practices to the Law Society (in the Application or, if the Institution has already received Accreditation, at the request of the Law Society) and provide a copy of the policy containing such practices to each student who enrolls in the Accredited Program. Such policy must set out all relevant details regarding such practices.

### **3.10 Marketing of the Paralegal Education Program**

The Institution must ensure that all marketing associated with the Accredited Program is

- demonstrably true, accurate and verifiable;
- not misleading, confusing or deceptive; and
- not likely to mislead, confuse or deceive.

Institutions are not permitted to use the Law Society's logo in their marketing materials.

### **3.11 Contact Information**

If an Institution has any questions about the PEPAP, the Institution may contact the Licensing and Accreditation department at [paralegaleducation@lso.ca](mailto:paralegaleducation@lso.ca).

## **4. Preparing and Submitting the Application**

The procedures set out below for preparing and submitting the Application must be followed.

## 4.1 Preparing the Application

1. The following forms must all be completed in their entirety: Form 1A, Form 1B (if applicable), Form 2A, Form 2B, Form 3, Form 4A, Form 4B and Form 5.
2. The hard copy of the Application must be contained in a 3-ring loose-leaf binder with sequential and numbered tabs. If all the documents do not fit in one binder, the Application may be split into two binders, ordered sequentially.
3. The name of the submitting Institution must be on the spine and the cover of the binder(s).
4. The Application must be prepared using standard 11-point font size and standard weight 8 1/2" by 11" paper.
5. A dated cover letter prepared by a senior administrator or the (proposed) Program Coordinator confirming that one hard copy and one electronic copy of the completed Application are being sent to the Law Society must be included.
6. A table of contents must follow the cover letter indicating the contents of each tab and sub-tab.
7. The Application must be prepared using the standard Accreditation Forms provided by the Law Society.
8. Where indicated, the standard Accreditation Forms must be accompanied by supporting attachments, including the Course Outlines, course assessments, policies and Faculty Member résumés.
9. The contents of the Application must be tabbed numerically according to the Accreditation Forms. For example, Tab 1 should include Form 1A and Form 1B, Tab 2 should include Form 2A and Form 2B and the Program Assessment Plan, etc. Required additional documents must be included. For Tab 3, each course must be separated by a labelled sub-tab with the course's identifying name/number on the tab, with the relevant Course Outline and assessment(s) inserted after each Individual Course Information Form. Tab 6 must contain the prior learning assessment and advanced standing policies and any relevant general Institution policies.
  - Tab 1
    - Form 1A, Application for Paralegal Education Program Accreditation
    - Form 1B, Payment Remittance Form
  - Tab 2
    - Form 2A, Paralegal Program Course Overview
    - Form 2B, Course Sequence
    - Program Assessment Plan (see "Individual Course Information")
  - Tab 3
    - Form 3, Individual Course Information Form
    - Detailed Course Outline for each course
    - Proposed course assessments, including the marking rubric and answer key, the maximum time allotted for student completion and the maximum timeframe permitted for the Faculty Member to return the marked assessment

- Tab 4
    - Form 4A, Faculty Member List
    - Faculty résumés
    - Form 4B, Faculty Member Course Chart
  - Tab 5
    - Form 5, Field Placement Form
    - Field placement policy (see “[Field Placements](#)”)
  - Tab 6
    - Prior learning assessment and advanced standing policies
    - General Institution policies (see the [General Institution Policies](#) section), if applicable
10. Electronic submissions should be delivered to the Law Society on a USB flash drive, along with the hard-copy of the Application.
11. The electronic version of the Application must be organized in the same manner as the hard-copy (i.e., electronic documents must be combined and organized either as a single PDF document that has been electronically tabbed or with each tab provided as a single document).

Each Institution must prepare **two** complete copies of its Application for Accreditation, one copy in a paper format and the other copy electronically.

## 4.2 Submitting the Application

Submit one hard copy and one electronic copy of the Application on a USB flash drive to

Paralegal Education Program Accreditation  
Licensing and Accreditation  
Professional Development and Competence  
Law Society of Ontario  
130 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N6

[Back to top](#)