

BECOMING A LAWYER

WHO ARE LAWYERS?

WHAT DO THEY DO?

HOW TO BECOME ONE?

This issue of The PLEA helps answer these questions and may set you on a career path as a lawyer



WHO ARE LAWYERS AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

Lawyers are licensed professionals authorised to engage in the practice of law. They are also sometimes known as attorneys, barristers, or solicitors. Lawyers are trained to understand and apply the law to help others solve their problems.

Through years of schooling and practice, lawyers learn how to conduct legal research, understand legal language and processes, communicate effectively, and apply the law in different types of situations.

Lawyers may work to resolve disputes in many different ways...

Advocacy, arbitration, mediation, litigation in court, negotiation, etc.



Lawyers can work by themselves or in partnership with one or more other lawyers at a law firm. Lawyers can also work for a variety of other employers...

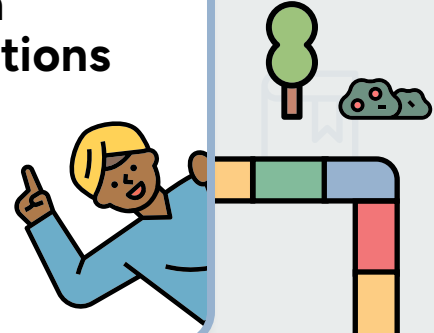
Government, crown corporations, labour unions, private sector companies, universities, etc.





Lawyers practice law in a variety of areas and situations where legal needs arise...

Aboriginal, corporate, criminal, employment, environment, family, immigration, intellectual property, real estate, tax, wills and estates, etc.



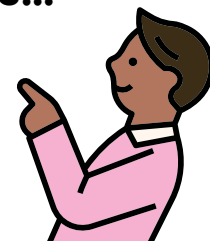
Lawyers work on behalf of their clients which can be...

Individuals, families, businesses, corporations, organizations, non-profits, etc.

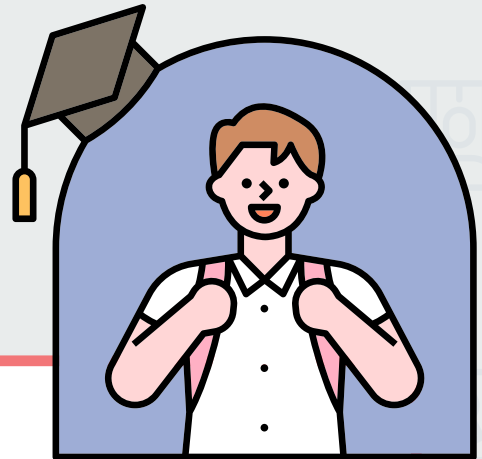


Some law graduates choose not to become a lawyer and practice law and instead obtain further education or apply their knowledge in other ways. A law degree is a useful stepping stone to many other careers...

Academic administration, banking and finance, conflict resolution, human resources, legal writing and journalism, legal consulting work, policy advisor, politician, etc.



HOW CAN I BECOME A LAWYER?



STEP 1: LAW SCHOOL

To become a lawyer in Saskatchewan you must obtain a law degree from a recognised law school. Saskatchewan has one law school—the College of Law at the University of Saskatchewan—but you can attend any authorised law school.

To be admitted into the College of Law, you must:

- complete at least two years (60 credits) of university in any program; and
- write the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT). The LSAT is a test that measures certain abilities considered important to the study of law, including reading comprehension, analytical and logical reasoning, and writing skills.

For a list of all authorised law schools in Canada and details on the LSAT, check out the Law School Admission Council at www.lsac.org.

LAW SCHOOL

Saskatchewan's College of Law admits around 120 students every year in one of three application categories: Regular, Discretionary, and Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, Métis).

For more information on the application process and categories, check out the University of Saskatchewan's College of Law at <https://law.usask.ca>.

Students accepted into law school are required to complete a three-year degree which requires hard work and commitment. Law students must read, understand, and remember a large amount of material on a variety of legal topics and apply this information to legal problems. When they graduate, students receive a Juris Doctor (JD) degree.



STEP 2: LAW SOCIETY LICENSING

Law is a regulated profession. This means that, by law, an organisation is assigned to govern lawyers. In Saskatchewan, the Law Society of Saskatchewan regulates the practice of law in the public interest.

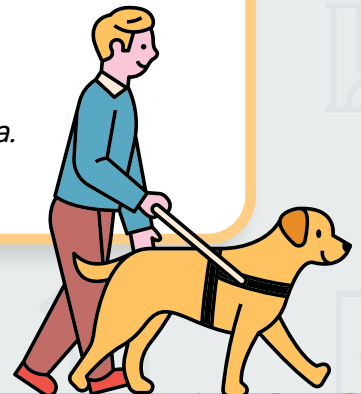
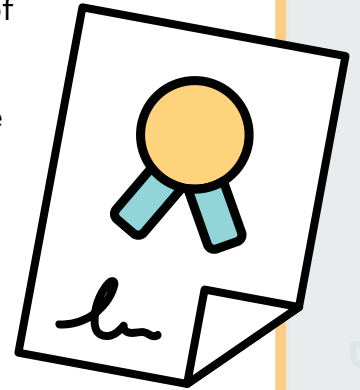
To become a licensed lawyer in Saskatchewan you must undertake several additional steps after law school:

- Complete the Practice Readiness Education Program (PREP) bar admissions course;
- Complete 12 months of articles (apprenticeship with an approved lawyer or a judge); and
- Apply to the Law Society of Saskatchewan and demonstrate suitability to practice (honest, governable, financially responsible, and show respect for the rule of law and the administration of justice).

Admission to the Law Society and practice of law does not require that an applicant has never made mistakes, had financial difficulties, or encountered the legal system (e.g., criminal charges). The Law Society considers all information provided by an applicant, including their circumstances, evidence of learning and change, and honesty and candidness when considering suitability to practice.

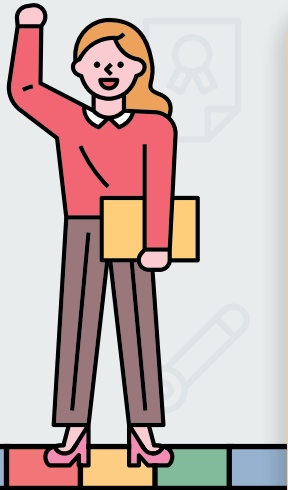
For more information on the PREP, check out the Canadian Centre for Professional Legal Education at <https://cpled.ca>.

For more information on applying to be a licensed lawyer, check out the Law Society of Saskatchewan at www.lawsociety.sk.ca.



TRUTH OR MYTH?

Let's review what we've learned, and find out more about what life is like as a lawyer.



All work that you do as a lawyer looks like a set on an American court TV series.

MYTH

A lot of what happens throughout a legal career happens behind the scenes and not in a courtroom. In fact, you may never enter a courtroom at all. For instance, solicitors help clients comply with their legal obligations and thus avoid legal issues before they get to court. Litigators work to fix legal issues after they have arisen and a court action has been filed. Litigators will usually be the lawyers going to court, but both areas involve lots of research, writing, drafting, and meeting with clients to resolve legal issues and settle disputes.

The legal profession works to advance the administration of justice.

TRUTH

Legal professionals offer a variety of services that contribute to a system of public laws, dispute resolution, and justice for society. Lawyers are essential participants in the legal system. They are members of a profession and are officers of the Court, meaning they have a professional and ethical responsibility to serve their clients, the profession, and the judicial system in terms that protect and promote their clients and the public interest. A lawyer's principal responsibility is to see that each client obtains the benefit of their legal rights and is aware of their legal obligations.

If you struggle with public speaking, you will never find success in the legal field.

MYTH

You do not need to be good at, or even participate in public speaking activities as a lawyer, depending on the type of lawyer you want to be. Regardless, with practice these skills develop. Lots of students go to law school afraid of public speaking and come out as great litigators!

After you graduate law school, you can practice law immediately.

MYTH

Being licensed to practice law requires a few steps. Many people believe you need to take a bar exam, however, this is different in Saskatchewan. You must complete the Practice Readiness Education Program (PREP) Bar admission course from the Canadian Centre for Professional Legal Education (CPLED) and article for one year. After this, you apply for admission to the Law Society of Saskatchewan for a license to practice law, demonstrating that you are suitable to practice.

If you get your law degree at an international university, you can still practice law in Canada, just with some extra training.

TRUTH

To apply for a license to practice law in Saskatchewan, you must be able to provide either your proof of graduation from a common law faculty of a Canadian university or a Certificate of Qualification issued by the National Committee on Accreditation (NCA) if your law degree was acquired outside Canada or in Quebec. The Certificate may require completion of exams or law school courses.

If you have a criminal record, you can never attend law school or practice law.

MYTH

Like many things in law, it depends. Lawyers have a unique and privileged position in society and this comes with responsibilities. Admission to the Law Society of Saskatchewan and practice of law requires suitability to practice which means the candidate is honest, governable, financially responsible, and has respect for the law and the administration of justice. This does not mean that an applicant has never made mistakes, had financial difficulties, or encounters with the legal system such as criminal charges. The Law Society considers all information provided by an applicant, including their circumstances, evidence of learning and change, and honesty and candidness. If in doubt, reach out to the Law Society for further information!

It is challenging to find a job after graduating from law school in Saskatchewan.

MYTH

Finding a job after law school takes hard work and commitment, but it is not because there are no jobs available. About 94% of Saskatchewan law school graduates obtain articling placements in their first year out of law school.



As an aspiring lawyer, you'll be interested in the ways that lawyers and other legal professionals in Saskatchewan are working to advance access to justice. SALI, the Saskatchewan Access to Legal Information initiative, has ongoing events and a regular newsletter to keep you updated on legal information developments and resources.

To find out more or check out and subscribe to the newsletter, head to www.lawsociety.sk.ca/sali.

Are you thinking about studying law outside of Canada? Or considering taking a degree in Canadian Civil Law, the system of private law used in Quebec? Or do you already have a law degree from another country? If so, the Federation of Law Societies of Canada's National Committee on Accreditation (NCA) can help you understand your eligibility to practice law across Canada.

Check them out at nca.legal.



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PRO BONO STUDENTS CANADA
SASKATCHEWAN CHAPTER

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Legal Information for Everyone

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PLEA.ORG | PLEA@PLEA.ORG | 306.653.1868

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