



Frequently Asked Questions

Articling Review Survey

The Law Society of Manitoba, together with the Law Societies of Alberta and Saskatchewan, is launching two surveys to gather feedback from articling students and new lawyers (articled within the last five years) as well as from principals, recruiters and those who mentor articling students or new lawyers. The information gathered will be used by the Law Society to determine if changes need to be made to the articling process.

1. Why do we want to hear from articling students and new lawyers about their articling experiences?

Articling, as a form of applied learning, is part of the traditional journey into the Canadian legal profession. The articling system has been in place for many years in various forms across Canada. A positive articling experience can provide new lawyers with a strong foundation for an ethical and competent legal career. Whereas a negative articling experience can lead to issues throughout the career of a lawyer.

We want to hear from students, new lawyers, principals, recruiters and mentors about their experiences so we can understand any current issues associated with the articling experience and the training of new lawyers generally.

The legal marketplace is rapidly changing due to the emergence of new technologies and increased need from the public for affordable and accessible legal services.

We need to ensure that we are training new lawyers for the 21st century. The skills that new lawyers need to serve the public today are not the same skills needed 10 or 20 years ago. The training of new lawyers needs to be responsive to the changes in technology and the needs of the 21st century client.

These issues have led law societies to question how new lawyers are being prepared for the practice of law. It is essential that we look at both the current articling process as well as the training and support that may be required by new lawyers in early years of practice.

At this stage, we want to gain a more comprehensive picture of the current state of articling by gathering feedback from as many current articling students and new lawyers as possible. We want to hear about the types of training and mentoring articling students are receiving, any issues related to discrimination or harassment and how prepared articling students feel to practice as 21st century lawyers.

2. Why do we want to hear from principals, recruiters and mentors about their articling experiences?



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We want to hear from principals, recruiters and mentors for many of the same reasons outlined above.

Principals, recruiters and mentors offer a mirrored perspective of the articling experience. We want to understand any challenges faced by principals, recruiters and mentors in their roles as well as learn more about how articling positions are structured, how firm culture shapes the articling experience and if harassment or discrimination of articling students is an issue and, if so, how it is being addressed at the firm level.

3. How do I qualify as a mentor of articling students?

Sometimes, someone other than the principal acts as a mentor to an articling student and would have the greatest insight into the articling experience. If you spend a significant portion of your time providing guidance to articling students or new lawyers, we'd like to hear from you.

4. Why can't I participate in the survey if I articulated over five years ago and/or haven't supervised/mentored a law student for over five years?

We are limiting participation in the survey to those who have been involved with articling within the last five years. This will help us capture relevant insight into the current state of articling and support accuracy of information.

5. Why are questions about harassment and discrimination being posed in a survey about articling?

In our role as regulator, we receive reports, both formally and informally, of discrimination and harassment issues in the profession. We also know that discrimination and harassment issues often go unreported.

The Law Society of Ontario survey of articling students and young lawyers conducted in June 2017 revealed that one in five respondents faced harassing or discriminatory conduct during articling.

We want a better understanding of the issues around harassment and discrimination in our respective provinces to support further efforts by local law societies and by the Federation. The law societies are fully committed to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

6. What will we do with the information collected from these surveys?

All information collected through the survey will be analyzed by a third-party research group. They will provide a research report of survey results to each Law Society. The survey reports will be shared with the respective Board of Directors (also referred to as Benchers) and the Federation of Law Societies to inform next steps.



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Collecting information about the experiences of articling is just the first step to help us understand if there are systemic issues within the articling process that need to be addressed, or changes to be made, by the law societies. If it is determined that further steps are necessary, we will continue to engage with articling students and the profession along the way.

7. Why is the same survey being used for the law societies of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba?

It will be beneficial to understand if the same themes are present in other jurisdictions as each Law Society analyzes their own survey data. We can compare information collected and collaborate on possible steps forward.

Our survey covers many of the same topics posed by the Law Societies of Ontario and British Columbia in prior surveys, as well as is responsive to the additional requests by the Canadian Bar Association (CBA) Law Students Section and Young Lawyers Section.

The invitation was extended to all law societies across the country. Some jurisdictions have already conducted surveys and have made decisions about their articling programs or are in the process of doing so. Law societies across the country can learn from each other as we are dealing with many of the same issues.