



PAM WAECHTER:

Okay, welcome to the Thinking About Law workshop. My name is Pam Waechter, and I'm one of the career advisors that specialized in Further Education for the Centre for Career Action.

ALICIA STUART:

My name is Alicia Stuart and I am a personal injury lawyer here in town. I'm a UW grad; I did my undergrad here before I went to law school at the University of Ottawa.



JD vs. LLB

- » JD
- » LLB
- » Dual JD programs
- » Other combined programs
- » ABA approved in US

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ALICIA STUART:

So, the first thing to talk about is just sort of an overview of the different law programs or the degrees that you receive in law school. Currently, the vast majority of law schools in Canada offer a JD program, which is a Juris Doctor. That's sort of a recent change as of about 6 years ago. Prior to that, the law degrees in Canada were called an LLB or a Bachelor of Law. The reason for the change was to keep some international consistency. So in Canada, we consider a law program to be a graduate program, something that you typically do after your undergrad, whereas in the UK, an LLB would be something you do out of high school. So there was a little bit of confusion on an international scale. Canada decided for the most part to make that change so that everything was consistent across the board, the exception being that McGill still offers the LLB as their law program, but it is still a graduate program, it's just called an LLB.

The other programs that are offered include dual JD programs and other combined programs. So a dual JD program is where you receive a law degree to practice in both Canada and the U.S. That is currently offered by Windsor, which partners with the University of Detroit, as well as Ottawa, which partners with either Michigan State University or Washington College of Law in Washington, DC. They are three-year dual programs, so you can accomplish having the ability to practice in both Canada and the U.S. in the same time that it would take you to

complete a JD. A JD is three years also. The other combined programs - many of the schools will offer them, so you can take a look at the OLSAS booklet to see what's offered, but you can get your law degree at the same time as doing a Master's or an MBA. You have to keep in mind that you have to apply separately to each of those programs and be accepted into both of the programs if you want to apply. The ABA approved programs are the American Bar Association programs that you can take in the USA, and one word of caution with those is just to make sure that if you're going to a law school in the States you look for a program that is ABA approved. There are a lot of schools that offer a law program that are not approved by the American Bar Association, and it makes it very difficult for you to practice if you want to come back to Canada.



Law Schools in Canada

- » http://www.oxfordseminars.ca/LSAT/lsat_profiles.php
- » **Ontario:**
 - » [Lakehead University: first intake 2013](#)
 - » [University of Ottawa](#)
 - » [Queen's University](#)
 - » [University of Toronto](#)
 - » [University of Western Ontario](#)
 - » [University of Windsor](#)
 - » [York University \(Osgoode\)](#)
- » **Out of Province**
 - » [University of Alberta](#)
 - » [University of British Columbia](#)
 - » [University of Calgary](#)
 - » [Dalhousie University \(Schulich\)](#)
 - » [University of Manitoba](#)
 - » [University of New Brunswick](#)
 - » [University of Saskatchewan](#)
 - » [Thompson Rivers University](#)
 - » [University of Victoria](#)
- » **Civil**
 - » [University of Ottawa](#)
 - » [McGill University](#)

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ALICIA STUART:

This is a list of the law schools in Canada. Ontario has 7 of them now; Lakehead started their first intake in 2013. Before that, none of those schools were new, so it took a long time to get a new school. So in Ontario there's University of Ottawa, Queen's University in Kingston, University of Toronto, University of Western Ontario in London, University of Windsor, and York, or Osgoode, which is in Toronto. Then out of Province, there's U of Alberta, UBC, U of Calgary, Dalhousie, University of Manitoba, University of New Brunswick, University of Saskatchewan, Thompson Rivers which is in BC, and University of Victoria.

So, those all offer your typical common law programs. There are also civil law programs through the University of Ottawa, as well as McGill. At the University of Ottawa you can take a common law program in English or French, or a civil law program in French, as well at McGill. The civil program allows you to practice in the province of Quebec or in other countries where a civil system is in place. Most of Europe, Asia, and a lot of the countries that are outside of the Commonwealth have a civil law program, and so a civil law degree will allow you to practice there. University of Ottawa also has a combined program where you can do the common law and the civil law program if you're interested in that. A lot of the schools will have their own area of specialty or their own area that they like to focus on. For example, Western has a tax stream and the University of Ottawa focuses on alternative

dispute resolution or social justice. So you want to take a look at, if there's a certain area of law or if there's a certain focus that you want to do, if there's a school that offers that specialty.



Requirements

- » GPA
- » Prerequisites
- » Admission Test
- » Personal Statement
- » Sketch
- » References

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PAM WAECHTER:

So I'm going to talk about the requirements generally for law school in Canada. A lot of the law schools don't provide a minimum or even a competitive GPA, but generally it's an 80 to 84 percent. The two top components of getting into law school are your GPA and your LSAT. A lot of the schools will state that they're very holistic, and they are to a certain degree, but in some cases you need to meet a minimum GPA and LSAT score before they can even read your application. Some schools will read all applications, so they really vary, and that's the type of thing that you could meet with my colleague Katie Denomme or myself to go through that type of information with you. Some of the U.S. law books will say that pre-reqs are required to get admission into law school, and that is not the case at all. They'll talk about pre-law courses that you'll need to complete, so that is not required. But it is helpful if you do courses that involve research or writing, analysis, if you're doing a fourth-year thesis that's a really great thing to be talking about in your application, or if you're part of a debate club; those skills can be helpful.

The admission test is the LSAT, and we'll talk a little bit more about that, but generally a competitive score is 161. Some of the schools' LSAT requirements, like Toronto's I think is a

168 right now, so they really do vary. One thing that you want to be a bit cautious about: in the year that you're applying, try to write the LSAT by the December date. So you could really write it as late as February if you wanted to start the next September; however, that will put you at a disadvantage, because most of the schools are looking at your applications in January or February. Some schools are even sending out offers in December if you have a high GPA and an LSAT score. So try to avoid the February LSAT date; even though some of the schools will say that they will accept it, it really will put you at a disadvantage.

Part of the application process is also writing a personal statement. All the Canadian law schools require you to write a personal statement. Some of them are very specific. They'll have a series of questions that you need to answer; Windsor is like that. Queen's is very open-ended, they just say write a personal statement. I think Ottawa is like that as well. We have created a law school application tips and strategies workshop that is now available online through our CareerHub. So go to CareerHub, Further Education, there's a section on applying, and you can read through that or watch the videos, and we think that will be helpful with your application. In Ontario, there's also a component called the sketch, which is really like a resume, but it is very cumbersome to put together. You have only a certain number of rows that you can complete, you have a certain number of characters that you can input. But again in our video, the law school tips and strategies, we do talk about ways to maximize what you really want to highlight. We talk about key competencies that you want to focus on.

References are also required for all the Ontario law schools except for Toronto. Generally most law schools prefer two academic references if you can get them. Some schools will accept one academic and one non-academic, some will accept two academic and you can submit a third, but because you're doing your application through a centralized application process you only really have two or three opportunities for your referees. They'll only submit one reference letter and those will be sent to all the law schools that you're applying to.



Ontario School Specific Info

School	Competitive LSAT	Competitive GPA
<u>Lakehead</u>	Highest	<u>cGPA</u> :75% Last 2 yrs: 80%
<u>Osgoode</u>	Highest (~161)	<u>cGPA</u> : 80-84%
Ottawa	Highest	<u>cGPA</u> : 80-84%
Queen's	Highest (157 +)	<u>cGPA</u> : 80-84% Last 2 yrs: 80-84%
Toronto	Emphasis on Highest (~160, Median: 167)	<u>cGPA</u> : 80%+ Median 86.1%
Western	Highest (160+)	<u>cGPA</u> : 81% (focus last 2 yrs)
Windsor	All scores written in past 6 years	Holistic

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PAM WAECHTER:

So in terms of Ontario school specific information, I won't read all of this to you, but these are all the Ontario law schools. In the middle section is the competitive LSAT score. All of the schools take the highest score in Ontario, and then the competitive GPA is on the right hand side. Again, you can see that generally it's around 84. Some of the schools would just focus on your last two years, so for some students that's really helpful depending on what your GPA is at the time that you're applying.



Across Canada

School	Average LSAT	Average cGPA
University of British Columbia	166 (min 160)	83% (min 82%)
University of Victoria	164	80%
University of Alberta	160	80%
University of Calgary	158	3.54 (~79%)
University of Saskatchewan	159	80%
University of Manitoba	160	80%
McGill University	No LSAT required (162)	85%
Dalhousie University (Schulich)	149	75%
University of New Brunswick	158	80%

PAM WAECHTER:

And then we wanted to provide you the information of the other law schools in Canada. It's always recommended to apply to as many law schools as you can that you can afford to and that you have the time to apply to. There's no disadvantage to doing that other than the amount of time. One thing you want to consider as well when you're applying to law schools is that some of the schools have application categories. So they might have a mature category, a special circumstances category - U of Ottawa has that - an access category, and what that does is it puts you into another category. So often your GPA and your LSAT scores can be lower, and there's no detriment for you to do that, you're just being compared to other applicants that are in the same pool. An access category could be defined by a school as people with learning disabilities, or if somebody has had mental health issues. Special circumstances: U of Ottawa will define it as if somebody's worked extensively throughout their undergrad, or if you've been on a varsity team and you've had to practice a lot, you've been involved in a lot of sports. I would apply under these categories.

So for the Canadian schools outside of Ontario, generally they will take your highest score if you write multiple times, but one thing to note is Calgary will average your scores. So

sometimes I hear students who will say I'm going to write the LSAT once and just practice, see how it goes; it's generally not a great idea in case you apply to a school that averages it. This is a little bit more common in the U.S. UBC - the lowest GPA accepted with an LSAT score has been 68 percent in the past, but it really depends on the applicant pool of the year in which you're applying. McGill does not require the LSAT, but you are expected to read texts in both English and French. University of Victoria is kind of interesting. If you are applying with a four-year degree, they will drop some of your lowest courses. So that might be of interest to some students. Dalhousie looks at a cumulative GPA and your last two years. So if you google Oxford Seminars - School Profiles, they have all the Canadian law school profiles. I found that they have pretty interesting information, and they talk a lot about the specializations that schools will offer.



LSAT

- » LSAT sections
 - » Logical reasoning
 - » Logic games
 - » Analytical reasoning
 - » Reading comprehension
 - » Experimental section
 - » Writing sample



ALICIA STUART:

Alright, so the LSAT - I always joke that I'm not the person to talk about the LSAT because I struggled with the LSAT - is a skills based exam, and it's designed to test your critical reading and your analytical thinking skills, which is crucial for success in law school and in fact as a lawyer. It is one of the primary factors in assessing applicants. There are some articles and some research that talk about success on the LSAT not really being indicative of success in law school or success as a lawyer, but it is the only objective standard by which all of the students can be assessed on a level playing field, so that's why it sticks around. There is no legal content on the LSAT. I think that that's a common mistake - that people think there's going to be legal content. It's a test that assesses a wide range of abilities and skills that are central to legal reasoning. Those skills include reading and comprehension of complex texts with accuracy and insight; organization and management of information and drawing reasonable inferences from that information; thinking critically and analyzing; and evaluating reasoning and arguments of others.

So it is a paper and pencil test. There are five sections that you have 35 minutes to complete that are multiple choice. Four of those sections are graded, one is not graded - you don't get to know which one that is, and then there is a sixth writing sample that is not graded but that is sent to all of your law schools with your admissions. The unscored fifth test is sort of used

to pretest new questions that they're going to use the next year, or to pre-equate new test forms. The sections are the two logical reasoning sections, one analytical reasoning section, and one reading comprehension section. The LSAT has a total of 120-130 questions. Your score is determined by the number of correct answers that you receive on those four sections that are scored, and how you do relative to other people who wrote the LSAT. The individual questions will vary in difficulty, and all of the questions have the same weight, so it's randomized in terms of how it's ordered; it doesn't go easy to difficult. You have no deductions for incorrect answers, so you want to make sure that you fill out every single box on the multiple choice. You're not penalized for guessing, so you don't want to leave anything blank.

One of the hardest things about the LSAT, if anybody has already tried to write it or has been practicing, is the timed component of it. You're very limited for time, so you want to do as much practice as possible so that you can complete them faster, and I think there's a whole seminar on the LSAT, so there's not too much more to talk about. But remember that the LSAT is organized by LSAC, and you register through LSAC to write the test. Those seats fill up really fast and the school recommends that you look to register three months before you want to write. For me, and I think for a lot of people, this is the largest emotional factor in applying for law school. This is the most stressful component.



LSAT

- » Offered 4 times a year: June, September/October, December and February
- » Scoring
- » Rewriting
- » Highest LSAT score vs. most recent

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ALICIA STUART:

So this is offered four times a year: the next date is December 3rd 2016 (OUTDATED), and then in the next year there is Saturday, February the 4th, Monday, June the 12th, Saturday, September the 16th, and Saturday, December 2nd. As Pam already said, the school suggests that you write in the September or October sitting. The February LSAT is an undisclosed test, so that you're not going to receive your answer sheet, your score conversion table, and your test book beforehand, and that is often helpful when you're applying to law school. So you're scored on a scale from 120-180. It's an arbitrary scale and again, it's relative to other people who write, in a three-year period. An average score is about 161; that's a good mark to get. With respect to re-writing the LSAT, you want to try to avoid re-writing it. Some of the schools will average all of your scores, so that's one reason. You can't write more than three times in a two year period, and I believe that admissions can have access to all of the scores you write, even though they only consider your highest LSAT mark, they do get to see the other times that you wrote and the scores that you got. Even though that's not supposed to be weighted towards their decision, they do have access to that information.



LSAT Prep

- » Courses: Are they necessary?
- » Different types offered (company or LSAC)
- » Books available in Centre for Career Action Library
- » Discounts from some companies:
 - » Quantum Test Prep
 - » Kaplan
 - » The Princeton Review
 - » Oxford Seminars
 - » Richardson Exam Preparation
- » Digital proctors



PAM WAECHTER:

So one question we're often asked is whether or not I should do a prep course, and I think that's a really individual choice. We've helped students over the years that have told us they just practiced on their own and they scored very well. Other students have done prep courses. One thing to remember about the prep course is that they're teaching you strategies on how to be effective when you're working through the LSAT, so they're not teaching you content. LSAC, which Alicia mentioned, is the governing body or the body that organized the LSAT. They have lots of really good prep books, and you can go to their website and you can order books, you can order old exams, and that type of thing. In the Centre for Career Action Library, we do have a lot of the LSAT books, in addition to other prep companies' books as well. So if you want to borrow some, you can only take them out for a short amount of time, but sometimes it helps students determine whether or not that's a book that they want to purchase.

But if you are thinking of doing a prep course, I would look at a couple of different things. Generally they're pretty well all the same price; they're not cheap at all. I would look at whether or not they're offered at night, so are you taking it at the end of the day or are you taking it on a work term when you're tired? Are they on weekends? Find out the number of hours that you're being taught versus a lot of the time spent in giving you practice exams. A

good course helps most of the people all of the time, but you don't want to transfer responsibility from yourself to the course. You do have to put in the effort. The key thing with the prep courses is who the instructor is, so you really want to shop for instructors. Try to find a company whose instructors have been doing this for a long period of time, that this is their only role. Sometimes you hear of new companies that are starting out that might have different instructors that did well in different sections, but they might not have a lot of experience in instructing. So I think that's the key thing with the prep courses when you're looking at that.

Some companies do provide Waterloo students with discounts if you are interested in doing a prep course, so if you go to the Centre for Career Action website there's a link to career-related websites. We've got a listing there, and if you can't find it you can come and talk to Katie and I. The other thing that can be helpful for some students is if you just google digital LSAT proctors, you can find some sites that will time you and read you the instructions if you can get your hands on an exam and work through that. One year a student told me that one of the sites that she used actually kind of mimicked the background noise that you'll encounter during an LSAT. So you're going to be stressed the day of the LSAT, I think it's fair to say, and I used to proctor the LSAT and you could hear people shuffling papers and sneezing and coughing and --

ALICIA STUART:

Big Sighs

PAM WAECHTER:

Yeah, and tapping, and so some of these LSAT digital proctors can mimic that. I've heard that that can be helpful as well.



Application

- » Ontario: OLSAS
- » Application categories
- » Out-of-province: individual school websites
- » American: LSAC
- » UK: UCAS or educational consultants

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PAM WAECHTER:

So in Ontario the application is a centralized application through OLSAS. It opens in late August and it's due November the first. One thing that I often recommend is just open an account. Katie and I do it every year; we go through, we look at what it's like, and we fill it in. That just gives you a sense of the amount of time it would take, but if you don't want to do that or you don't have the time, in the Centre we have created an application. It's just in a binder, just ask the staff that work at the front counter for the OLSAS binder, and you can see what the application looks like. We've put in some examples on how to fill out the sketch component, so that can be helpful. Application categories I've already talked about, so the special circumstances, the mature category, which most of you wouldn't fall under. You'd have to be out of school generally for 5 years before you can apply under the mature category.

Out of province applications, so you would need to do an application for each individual school, so that can take some time. One thing I would recommend with the personal statement: generally what people do is they write a master personal statement, and in most cases you can use that personal statement for all the schools, but you're going to tailor a component of it about what do you like specifically about their program, or is there a certain specialization that you're really interested in. So you don't have to rewrite one for each of the

schools. If you want to apply to the American law schools you apply through LSAC, and sometimes it's confusing when you go on the LSAC site. It looks like you also need to apply to the Canadian schools through that, but you don't. So Ontario schools is OLSAS, out of province is the individual schools, and the U.S. schools is LSAC. The UK, if you're looking to do a 2-year LLB, so you fast track a little bit, and the one advantage can be, to a certain degree, that if you're not competitive enough for the Ontario schools they will often take students with a lower GPA. So you can apply through UCAS, or the other thing is there are companies that are called educational consultants, and there's quite a range of them. One example that I can think of is Barkley and Knapp, there's Canada Law Firm Abroad, and what these companies can help you do if you sign up with them and you tell them what your GPA is, they can give you a general sense of which UK law schools you might have a chance of being admitted into.

Saying that though, one thing I do want to recommend is: if you do a law degree outside of Canada, you will have to do an application to the National Committee on Accreditation, the NCA, and what they will do is they will look at the courses that you completed and they will and in most cases you'll have to do additional courses because you need to have Canadian content. Doing the 2-year LLB can save you a year, but you still have to come back and do additional courses. Then you have to get into the whole process of doing your exams and articling.

ALICIA STUART:

Our firm had the experience where we had a lawyer from the States who practiced for a number of years there, and when he decided to make the move to Ontario he had to article again. So he articulated at the same time as me. So there was some sort of re-education that he had to do in order to be accredited by the Law Society of Upper Canada and to practice in Ontario.

PAM WAECHTER:

One thing that we're a bit concerned about is that it's so difficult for students that are in the province to find articling opportunities that if you go outside of Canada, it can just be a little bit more challenging. But there are things that you can do to try and make a difference that way.

ALICIA STUART:

The slight benefit could be that if you're looking to work in international law or in a conflict of law area, having a background in another country or having an education outside of the country could be a benefit. But if you're not intending to do that, then it might disadvantage you.



Law school

- » Length of program
- » Courses
- » Specializations
- » Summer jobs (summering)

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ALICIA STUART:

Alright, so after the whole application process, then you have to get through law school. So law school is typically 3 years. There are no summer courses, so you go to school in your typical fall to spring. In terms of the courses that are offered, all of the schools have a very wide variety. You'll have core courses that everybody takes in first year, and that's your criminal law, property law, tort law, constitutional law, and every school does it differently. Some of the schools, if they have a focus - for example Ottawa, we were all required to do an alternative dispute resolution program in our first year - some of the schools might have specific requirements for the first year. After that you have your second and third year, your upper year courses, and there's a huge variety in terms of what you can take. Some people will take their courses catered to passing the solicitor's and barrister's exams, so they'll take corporate law or tax law, and others consider it the only opportunity you have to take things that you're interested in before you start practicing in one field. So you can take animal rights, and you can take reproductive rights, and you can take really interesting advanced tax courses. There's lots of really interesting courses to take in your upper years.

Some of the schools will also have requirements about completing a major paper, a major research paper, or completing some type of ethics or professional programs. Every school is different though, not all of them have those prerequisites. Another common mistake is that

you specialize when you go to law school. You don't necessarily have to specialize. There are definitely specialty programs out there, for example Western has a business or a tax program, and you can receive a specialization or some type of proficiency on your law degree, but that's not required if you want to work in a specialized area. As well, you can specialize in law school and then have a general practice once you're done and never work in those areas that you specialized in.

Summer jobs, or what we call summering, is working in between your summers of law school. Very few people do this after their first year, I think particularly because first year is very difficult and some of the schools will have higher course content in their first year. For example, at Ottawa, we had 8 courses in our first year versus 4 or 5 in our upper years. So that first year is particularly brutal, so a lot of people choose not to work; they want to take a break and travel, and in fact something like 4 percent of students actually find a job after their first year. So there's an issue with finding jobs once you've completed law school, and there are firms that don't even consider summer students at all, but there's higher rates for the second year. A lot of people will look for second year summer jobs because that will often turn into an articling position once you've established that relationship or that reputation.

One thing to note about Lakehead, which is the newest law school in Ontario, is that their rates for students getting summer jobs after first year are 50 percent. Now these are people who are working in more rural communities, but the advantage to that is you're getting more hands-on experience, you're actually allowed to speak at motions and you're allowed to attend trials, and you're doing actual legal work as opposed to a lot of summer jobs that involve just doing research or writing memos or writing correspondences. So there's definitely some really interesting things happening at Lakehead on that end of things. Your first year you'll find that you'll have a small group. It might be in one of your core topics or elsewhere, but there'll only be about 20 students in that core group or that small group, and then the rest of your courses, depending on the size, will be 100 or 150. Lakehead has very small courses - all of their courses are very small, so you have a very small, close-knit group of people that you're going to law school with. It's really a good idea to visit the school that you're thinking about attending if you have the opportunity to have multiple offers. Go to the school, visit the campus, visit the culture, talk to students; see if it's a culture that you'd fit into. They are very different, all of the schools. You may find that you live in that building and that faculty for the entire 3 years that you're there, so you want to make sure that it's somewhere that you're comfortable.



Ontario Licensing Process

- » Graduate from law school
- » Barrister Licensing Examination
- » Solicitor Licensing Examination
- » Articling Term
- » New: Law Practice Program (LPP)
- » Call to the bar

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ALICIA STUART:

Alright, now the process to becoming a lawyer: so you've finished your undergrad here at Waterloo, or if you do a Master's, you write the LSAT, you do your personal statements, you get your letters of reference, and you are accepted. Then you have to survive the first year of law school, and then after you graduate from law school, you're not done yet. You have to write the Barrister's exam and the Solicitor's exam, or the licensing exams. We call them the Bar Exams for short. They are 2 days - they currently are 2 days, they might change by the time you guys are writing - but it's currently 1 day for the Barrister's and 1 day for the Solicitor's exam. They are open book exams, multiple choice, self-taught. You will receive a package in the mail about 2-3 weeks before you write the first one. They're 2 weeks apart, so before you write the first one you'll receive a package in the mail and it's about 850 pages, it's very small print, and you have to teach yourself everything in there. That's why some people will take courses that are geared towards the topics that are on the Barrister's exam or the Solicitor's exam. The exams each are about 7 hours long of actual writing. In my experience, we were there both those days closer to 12 hours in terms of registering, and they're very strict - just like the LSAT - in terms of what you can bring in, and having a clear plastic bag. You write the Barrister's and Solicitor's in June, November, or March; those are the sittings. You can rewrite.

Most people will graduate law school in the spring and then they will write the June sitting, and then will start their articles thereafter. Most articling principles or most firms want you to complete your Barrister's and Solicitor's before you start working so you're not having any gaps or time off in your articles. The exams cost approximately 3,000 dollars. Some firms cover it, I think the majority don't cover it. There are no prep courses; there used to be, but there are no prep courses anymore that you can take for the Barrister's and Solicitor's. You really are on your own to teach yourself all of this material. Most people don't learn all of the material. What you do for 2 or 3 weeks is just index the binder that you get so that you can find the material when you need to on the examination. The questions are all legal content, somebody coming into your office and you have a scenario and you have to give them advice, or you have to know what the rules are with respect to certain professional codes of conduct or ethics, so this is very much legal content. You have to be proficient in every area of the law, even though you have no intention of practicing. For example I'll never practice tax law, but I had to be competent to pass the bar exams. So once you do that, you find out whether you passed or failed. You don't find out how you did, or you don't get access to what questions you got wrong or what sections you got wrong, but if you pass the Barrister's but not the Solicitor's you only have to rewrite the one.

So once you do pass both of those, typically you'll start your articling term, assuming you haven't done it in a different order. That's 10 months. They're usually paid; because there is an articling position shortage right now, students are offering to do their articles unpaid. You have to be supervised by a principal, which is basically like a co-op supervisor; it's the same sort of idea. There are certain tasks you're expected to complete: there's a checklist at the end that the principal has to sign off on saying that you've completed all of these tasks, or that you've tried all of these areas. You can have very different experiences depending on what your articling position is. You can work in small rural areas, or even a place like Kitchener Waterloo where, if you're at a firm that's small enough, you have access to do trials, you have access to do motions all the time, you're always at hearings, you're at mediations, that sort of thing. Or you might never see outside of your office and just do research the entire articling term. There's also the opportunity to clerk for a judge. You can do a clerkship, and that is typically reserved for people with very high averages in law school, they're very competitive and hard to get, but the experience that you get from a clerkship is amazing.

So, because the Law Society recognized that there was a problem filling articling positions once students graduated from law school, they developed this new Law Practice Program. It was a pilot that started in 2014. It's still in the pilot phases now, and it is 4 months of coursework and 4 months of an articling position. That costs money - the coursework that you have to do for the LPP - and I think it's about 5,000 dollars. The recent stats are that 15 percent of students could not find an articling position after they had graduated from law school. So that's the Law Society's way of dealing with it right now. There is also some talk about getting rid of articling altogether; the idea always comes up within the profession, but so far we're holding onto articles. You learn so much about articles. To me, it's inconceivable to come out of law school and then practice without having somebody supervise you and help you out along the way.

So after you complete all of that, you are then called to the bar. That moment, you become a lawyer; you walk across the stage, you sign the rules, and you receive the Law Society's certificate as a barrister as well as a court certificate making you a solicitor. You have to be called to the bar in the province that you want to practice. So if you want to be in Ontario, you have to be called into the Ontario bar, if you decide to move to Manitoba, you'd have to rewrite the bar exams in Manitoba. The ceremony for being called to the bar includes an oath that you say, and it's 3 different locations - Toronto, London, and Ottawa - I believe, for the call to the bar ceremony.



Law career paths

- » Mediators
- » Consultants
- » Judges
- » Law Librarian
- » Legal writing, publishing, etc.
- » Politician
- » Non-traditional roles
- » Own business
- » Women leaving profession
- » Culture



ALICIA STUART:

So, law career paths. Once you're done all of that, you can practice as a lawyer. You can open your own firm, you can work as in-house council in a corporation, or you can work in a traditional firm as an associate role. Beyond being a lawyer, a lot of retired lawyers or lawyers who are more experienced will become mediators later in their practices. You can become a consultant to a corporation, to an organization, to a government agency. Judges are lawyers at some point. You can become a law librarian. So there's lots you can do without being a lawyer first; a law librarian for example, most of them have graduated from law school but are not licensed to practice anymore. There are roles in legal writing and publishing. Politicians often have law degrees, and some of them still have a license to practice. Other non-traditional roles include being a professor, an LSAT tutor, an immigration officer, an ombudsperson, a compliance officer, in-house council.

And then I always like to talk about women leaving the profession. I really should talk about just the work-life balance of being a lawyer. It's something that I know I didn't consider before I was applying to law school and I didn't think about the impact that the profession has on your work-life balance and particularly on your family. There is an issue with women leaving particularly private practice after 5 years. It's something that the Law Society has identified, and they have tried to figure out ways to retain women within the profession

because most are leaving private practice. It's very stressful, and it's hard to maintain that work-life balance, so I always mention it just as something to consider because I didn't consider it beforehand. I think it's hard after maternity leaves, when you are off for a period of time and your files or your cases or your clients are being handled by other lawyers. It's hard when you come back to reestablish yourself, to reestablish that upward growth within a firm or within a company, and to expect to get all of that work back. You sort of are starting fresh if you take time off for having babies or for any other reason really.

Smaller markets, in terms of the culture, are not like what you see in TV. The only part that's probably realistic is in lawyer shows people are always in the office and it's pitch black outside because it's night time; that's probably the only realistic thing is that people are there all night. But smaller markets will have a more balanced work-life ratio. There's more money in bigger firms, but I know that I joke with some of my friends who, after we were articling, made 2 or 3 times what I was making, but when we figured out how many hours they were working every day they were actually making less than minimum wage because they were putting in so many hours over the weekends, and they were there until 2 in the morning and expected to be there again at 7 in the morning. So something to consider when you are applying for jobs after this whole process.



Volunteering

- » Community Justice Initiatives - <http://www.cjiwr.com/>
- » KW Volunteer Action Centre: www.volunteerkw.ca/
- » Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support - <http://www.mcrs.ca/>

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ALICIA STUART:

Alright, volunteering. It's really a good idea to get law-related experience in volunteering. It helps with your application, but it also helps to get you a little bit of exposure into the legal field. The Community Justice Initiatives, the KW Volunteer Action Centre, and the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support are all areas where you can get some legal volunteering experience. Their websites are there. It's a good idea to try to build a relationship or try to build a role within one volunteering field. I think that you want to remember when admissions people are looking at your application, whether it's transparent or whether they're able to see through the fact that you just started volunteering at the time that you were volunteering for law schools just to get it on there. There's an expectation that you are going to be involved in your community or that you're in some way contributing to your community, and I know from my experience that I worked full-time while I was here at Waterloo and I didn't do any volunteering. So when it came time to apply to law schools, I panicked and I didn't know what to do. So what I talked about was how the job that I was working at gave me a lot of access to the community, a lot of access to helping people who were in need, so I talked about how that bridged that gap. It's not necessarily fatal to your application if you don't have volunteer work, but it does help. Like I said, it does help to give you exposure to what it's like to work in the legal field.

Another thing that is recommended is that you go to the courthouse; if you haven't been in the Kitchener Courthouse, go. It's beautiful, it's newly constructed, and you can sit and listen to motions. There's a daily court document that you can find online that goes up at 4pm every day and it tells you what's being heard the next day. You can't get it before 4pm, but you can see what kinds of cases are going to be heard, you can sit in most - they're open unless there's a publication ban - and see what it's like to do the daily grind, because it's not at all what you're seeing on TV. That's for sure. There are other hearings that you can attend: the landlord and tenant hearings are open to the public. There are also criminal injuries compensation board hearings that are open to the public. Every once in a while they have publication bans as well, but those types of hearings are held and the general public is welcome to attend those. The other thing to do is if you know any lawyers or if you have friends of friends who are lawyers, you can ask to do an interview of what it's like for the day to day. Particularly if there's a type of law that you want to work, for example if you want to do IP and you want to work on drug patents; find whoever the specialist is in this region and shoot them an email. For the most part, lawyers in Ontario are very friendly and approachable and would welcome the opportunity to give you any information about what their path was like, what their career path was like, what their educational path was like, and give you any pointers as to what it's like for them day in and day out, so you can see if it's something that you really are interested in doing.



Next Steps

- » Volunteer
- » Job shadowing
- » Informational interviews
- » Program research
- » Employment
- » Research experience
- » Career Development appointments/workshops

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PAM WAECHTER:

I think we've covered most of this, the only point I am going to speak to is if you're still not sure what you want to do with your life and that's very plausible, we do have career advisors that you can meet with to do career development appointments - individual appointments - or we do have workshops. So you can meet with an advisor up to 5 times. You would meet with the same advisor, so they would get to know your history. They might get you to do some self-assessment and try to help you manage what would be the best fit for you based on your interests, skills, personality, and that type of thing.



Resources available

- » Centre for Career Action
 - » Books
- » uwaterloo.ca/career-action
 - » Career-related websites
- » Appointments
 - Professional/Graduate School Planning
 - Professional/Graduate School Application Review
 - Professional School Mock Interview
 - Career Development
- » Drop-in hours: 12-1 all term
- » CareerHub > Further Education

PAM WAECHTER:

So in the Centre for Career Action, we do have some books that I did speak about. We've got LSAT books, we have books about how to write a personal statement - although we have that information in our CareerHub through the Law School Applications Tips and Strategies workshop, and we also have a specific personal statements section that might be helpful as well. What we did is we took all the information that we've gathered over the years and tried to compile it in one area to make it a bit easier for students. Something else that we have at our front counter is we have a letter of intent for law school binder. So students that have been accepted into law school, if they've agreed and are willing, they have shared their documents with us. We ask at the end of every application cycle, and we do have quite a few law school applications. We strip off identifying information. So you can read personal statements. We do have some OLSAS sketch examples, although it's changed a little bit this year in terms of how it's been set up, but sometimes students like to see what other students have been admitted with.

Also off of our website, we have a link to career-related websites, so there's the prep courses there, there's a list of those education consultants that I mentioned that might be helpful if you're looking to apply to the UK law schools. In terms of individual appointments, there's three that are related to further education. So there's professional/graduate school planning,

so that's where you could come in and we could talk about what your GPA is. We could look at what schools might work for you in terms of applying, and what their LSAT scores are like. The professional/grad school application review: that's where we'll review your personal statement and your sketch. And then for law schools in Canada, generally students do not require a professional school mock interview. I've only ever helped one student, and she applied under a special category for 3 universities in Saskatchewan and she did have to do an interview, so we helped her practice for those.

So for all of these workshops, you're entitled to three per appointment type while you're a university student. Except for career development - you can have up to 5. Once you're graduated, you get 3 free appointments, and then every appointment after that is 40 dollars if you're interested in doing that. Generally we're booked up 2 to 3 weeks in advance in the fall term, so I think we're booking into the second week of November now. We do hold drop-in hours every day from 12 till 1. They're just 4 15-minute time slots, so that's for you to come in if you have a quick question. We cannot read an application in 15 minutes; it just takes too long to read it, process it, and give you solid information to help you make a difference. But if you're stuck on a certain area, sometimes students want to know "how should I talk about lower grades, or a personal issue," - we can help you with that, so that's the type of thing we can do in a drop-in. In our CareerHub, as I mentioned before, we have a further education section. We have a handout on law school, we have the law school strategies and tips, and we have a section on personal statements. So all of those sections would be helpful to you.

Professional School & POST - DEGREE

day

- » 100+ booths
- » Canadian and international institutions
- » Program information and funding options

MONDAY, OCTOBER 24

10:00 am - 1:00 pm | SLC

- » Education
- » Health
- » Optometry
- » Pharmacy
- » Social Work
- » Various college programs

MONDAY, OCTOBER 24

2:00 pm - 5:00 pm | SLC

- » MBA
- » Law
- » Engineering
- » Various university graduate programs
- » Veterinary

uwaterloo.ca/career-action



WATERLOO | CENTRE FOR CAREER ACTION





Centre for Career Action

- » We work with:
- » Regular & co-op; undergrad & graduate; all levels

- » On:
- » Job search tactics (e.g. résumé, interview, networking)
- » Career strategy (e.g. career exploration)
- » Grad school prep (e.g. application review, admission interview practise)

- » Through:
- » Individual advisement (full-length appointment or drop in), workshops, events, print & online resources (e.g. Career Development eManual), job postings

- » uwaterloo.ca/career-action/ .



PAM WAECHTER:

And then finally, just a reminder that we work with all students - regular, co-op, undergrad, and graduate - on job search, career search, grad school prep, and through appointments and workshops.



TAKE
YOUR
nextstep

Thinking about Law?

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PAM WAECHTER:

Okay, so that is the end of "Thinking About Law School"