

Labour Market Outlook–LAW

Outlook for Law School Students

- In 2011, in response to an ever increasing number of students unable to get articling positions, the Law Society of Upper Canada (LSUC) established a task force to study the so-called “articling crisis”. The Law Practice Program (LPP) was born out of those consultations as a three year trial.¹ The LSUC put out a Request for Proposal (RFP) to the legal community in Ontario to develop and deliver a first of its kind LPP to provide Licensees with practical skills development through a simulated practice setting and a work placement. Ryerson University was selected as the sole English provider and University of Ottawa selected to offer the program in French.²
- According to the LSUC, rather than taking articling positions, law students who follow the LPP path, do 4 months of coursework and 4 months in a work placement. The training course component of the LPP at Ryerson is largely offered online. However candidates are required to attend in person in Toronto for approximately three weeks. The LPP at the University of Ottawa provides intensive, hands-on training in a smaller group format. Candidates are required to attend in person in Ottawa for the duration of the four month training course. Traditionally, law students have been required to complete a 10 month **paid** articling position in a law firm in order to become licensed to practice. In 2015 approximately 30% of the positions available through the LPP were still unpaid.³
- The introduction of the LPP has not solved the problem of a shortage of articling positions for students. Students are concerned about the stigma and worry that there is a perception that they ended up in the LPP because they were not good enough to get into the preferred articling program. Racial minorities, particularly black and aboriginal people are at a disadvantage when it comes to being able to find articling positions and are likely to be over represented in the LPP program. Firms that take on articling students traditionally cover their licensing costs which now sit at around \$5000. Some LPP students worry that employers taking them on for

¹ Chiose, S. (2015, April 21). Shortage of articling positions for students up for debate in Law Society elections. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com>

² Bacchus, A. (2016, February 16). The Law Practice Program (LPP) in Ontario: A Practical Path to Lawyer Licensing. *Ryerson University*. Retrieved from <http://lpp.ryerson.ca>

³ Mojtehdzadeh, S (2015, January 2). Ontario Law Practice Program leaves some students in financial limbo. *The Toronto Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.thestar.com>

just four months, sometimes unpaid, will not make the same offer. ⁴ LPP candidates are not eligible for government financial assistance through OSAP. ⁵

- The Bora Laskin Faculty of Law at Lakehead University is the first law school in Canada to be approved to have an [integrated practice curriculum](#) (IPC) - so their students will not need to article and will be eligible for licensing in Ontario right after graduation. The proposal to integrate practice training and placement into the JD program furthers the mission of the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law to serve Northern Ontario and to provide better access to justice in rural Canada as rural communities are underserved for lawyers. The program saves students time and money, and is completed over 6 semesters (typically three years) in small classes. ⁶

- Although there has been an increase in the number of students unable to find articling positions after law school, students at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Law enjoy an excellent success rate in securing summer and post graduate employment with Canadian law firms, including full-service firms, boutique firms, government agencies, and other organizations. Each year, approximately 90 - 95% of the graduating class has secured an articling placement by June. The average number of students that have participated in the Law Practice Program instead of the traditional articling route, has so far, been only 1%. ⁷

	Class of 2015	Class of 2014	Class of 2013	Class of 2012
Total Graduates	200	215	207	210
Position Secured at Graduation	189	191	198	190
Seeking Position at Graduation	7	6	5	13
Other Plans (e.g. further study, non-legal employment)	3	14	3	4
No response	1	4	1	3

⁴ Chiose, S. (2015, April 21). Shortage of articling positions for students up for debate in Law Society elections. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com>

⁵ Law Society of Upper Canada. Retrieved from <http://www.lsuc.on.ca> on February 8, 2016

⁶ Lakehead University Faculty of Law. Retrieved from <https://www.lakeheadu.ca> on February 8, 2016.

⁷ University of Toronto Faculty of Law. Retrieved from <http://www.law.utoronto.ca/student-life/career-development-office/career-statistics> March 29, 2016.

Employment Types of Employed Graduates				
	Class of 2015	Class of 2014	Class of 2013	Class of 2012
Clerkship	6.9%	6.8%	5.6%	6.8%
Government and Public Interest	13.8%	14.7%	11.6%	12.6%
Private Practice	79.4%	77.0%	81.8%	80.5%
Law Practice Program	-	1.0%	-	N/A
Unknown Type	-	0.5%	1.0%	-

What the Government is saying

The Ontario Government has listed the Labour Market Outlook for Lawyers and Quebec Notaries as “Average” through to 2017. This indicates that jobs are expected to be more difficult to find; the probability of unemployment is higher; and wages and salaries have increased at a slower pace than those occupations that are listed as Above Average. Employment prospects for this occupation were listed as “Average” as well in the previous 4 years (2009-2013). The Government of Canada’s Job Bank site (<http://www.jobbank.gc.ca>) rates the employment prospects for Lawyers and Quebec Notaries as “Fair” to “Good” for the 2014-2016 period across most regions of Canada.

What Professionals in the field are saying

Of the 1,750 students that graduated from Ontario law schools in 2013, *one in seven* was expected not to find an articling position. That’s up from 12% of unplaced grads in 2011, and only 6% in 2008.⁸ Lawyers in the field believe that the LPP is only delaying the real problem that faces law school graduates. Once candidates emerge from the licensing process, whether having articulated or completed the LPP, they will still need jobs. Simply said, the number of law graduates continues to outpace the market demand.⁹

What students can do

According to ZSA Legal Recruitment’s (www.zsa.ca) article entitled *Alternative Career Paths for Junior Lawyers*, students can do the following to improve their chances of securing jobs after graduation and fulfilling the licensing requirements:

⁸ Urback, R. (2013, September 23). Here, Ontario — Have some more law school grads. *The National Post*. Retrieved from <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/robyn-urback-here-ontario-have-some-more-law-school-grads>

⁹ Bongard, W. (2015, May 5). Articling Crisis Continues, Despite Pilot Program. *ZSA Legal Recruitment*. Retrieved from <http://www.zsa.ca/blog/2015/05/articling-crisis-continues-despite-pilot-program/#.VvFbM3oYHgz>

- Students can look to smaller or more rural communities to practice in. Many of these communities are facing a shortage of lawyers as older lawyers retire, and insufficient numbers of young lawyers take their place. Compared to urban areas, hardworking, entrepreneurial young lawyers can make a name for themselves relatively quickly. Lawyers in smaller communities can take advantage of lower overhead costs and easier networking opportunities, as well as better work-life balance.
- Students can consider becoming sole practitioners. Sole practitioners grew by 33% in Ontario between 2007 and 2012. This rate of growth outpaced both large firm (20%) and small firm growth (27%). Practicing law is primarily a referral business so networking is crucial, as is putting in the time to build a solid reputation. One key to succeeding as a sole Practitioner is to streamline operations and reduce costs.
- Students can consider Legal Process Outsourcing (LPO). LPO is when a law firm, corporation or government agency obtains legal support services from an outside agency. LPO providers help their clients reduce their legal spending by outsourcing certain legal processes. Traditionally, these have mostly been non-core, labour intensive activities. Companies like LexLocom (lexlocom.ca) go beyond this by also providing innovative legal project management and providing flexible temporary and intermittent staffing solutions. LexLocom helps their clients cut costs without cutting corners. Clients get to depend on the work of qualified Canadian lawyers, at a fraction of the cost of what traditional law firms charge.

Career Alternatives for Lawyers

There are many interesting, non-legal careers available to lawyers. Business is the most obvious, where skills like problem solving, analysis, negotiation, and conflict resolution are highly transferrable. The Canadian Bar Association lists the following as possible alternatives for lawyers¹⁰ :

Education and academic administration

Opportunities exist to teach in paralegal colleges and continuing legal education societies, without requiring a Masters degree in law. Legal knowledge is also useful in non-teaching positions at universities, such as a ***Student Complaints Officer, Disability Services Coordinator***

¹⁰ Mucalov, J. (2014, September 1). Career Alternatives for Lawyers. *The Canadian Bar Association*. Retrieved from <http://www.cba.org>.

or **Student Affairs Director**. Law schools, in particular, welcome legally-trained individuals to work in **admissions, alumni relations, career services and law libraries**.

Banking and finance

If you have experience in securities, trusts and estates, tax or banking law, you can parlay that into a career in the banking and finance industry. Positions include: **Risk Manager, Estate Planning Advisor, Trust Officer, Financial Planner, Commercial Loans Officer and Mutual Fund Administrator**.

Conflict resolution

Arbitration, mediation and negotiation are growing fields employing individuals with legal backgrounds as arbitrators and mediators. **Labour unions, hospitals, school associations, universities and government agencies** all hire professionals with strong communication and dispute resolution skills. Note that mediation positions may not be full-time – mediators tend to be retained on a contract basis to assist with a specific dispute. Former practitioners also participate in the training of alternative dispute resolution services.

Government and politics

The federal and provincial governments often hire lawyers as **Policy Analysts** to gather and research information, analyze issues in written reports and coordinate the development of strategic policy. Matters involving policy related issues range from health and transportation to education and the environment. Politics is another popular field for lawyers. Positions include **Speech Writer, Political Fundraiser, Campaign Manager, Lobbyist or even Political Candidate**.

Human resources

Companies need talented professionals to recruit new people and oversee their staff. You can work as a **Hiring Coordinator, Human Resources Administrator or Training Manager**. And don't forget working within the legal profession as a non-lawyer – inside knowledge of the legal industry makes you well suited for a job as a **Law Firm Administrator, Head of Associate Recruiting, Marketing Director or Professional Development Manager**.

Legal consulting

Some lawyers consult to law firms in **Law Office Management, Marketing and Client Development**. If you're tech-savvy, you can put your knowledge about legal software to work as an **Information Technology Consultant**. With a nursing background, you can work as a **Legal Nurse Consultant**, reviewing medical records in medical malpractice and personal injury cases, providing advice to the lawyers involved and acting as an expert witness.

Legal writing, editing and publishing

A lawyer's research and writing skills are particularly useful. Several lawyers work as **Freelance Legal Writers and Editors** – contributing articles for legal publications, writing do-it-yourself law books and researching/writing booklets on legal topics like divorce and landlord/tenancy matters for poverty law groups and government-funded organizations. Other one-time lawyers are now **Legal or Business Columnists** for newspapers and magazines. Still others write content for law firm websites or are full-time editors for bar association newsletters and law, business or accounting publications.

Other non-traditional careers for Lawyers include:

Auditor	Immigration Officer or Consultant
Business Analyst	Insurance Broker
Buyer or Procurement Analyst	Investigator
Career Counsellor	Law professor
Claims Advisor	LSAT tutor
Compliance Officer	Legal Technology Consultant
Conference Developer	Management consultant
Consumer Advocate	Ombudsperson
Continuing Legal Education Instructor	Paralegal Instructor
Contracts Administrator	Privacy Law Consultant
Corporate Trainer	Probation Officer
Director of Career Services at a university or college	Project Manager
Editor	Property Developer or Manager
Employee Benefits Manager	Recruiter
Ethics Officer	Seminar Leader
Executive Director of a non-profit organization	Speaker
Financial Aid Administrator	Special Events or Meeting/Conference Planner
Fundraiser	Sports Agent

(list derived from the Canadian Bar Association web page at <http://www.cba.org/Publications-Resources/CBA-Practice-Link/Young-Lawyers/2014/Career-Alternatives-for-Lawyers#listofnon>)

How the UTM Career Centre Can Help

- Use our print library and web site (www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers) for information on considering law, applying to law schools, preparing for the LSAT, and writing personal statements.
- Make an appointment to talk about your personal statement and/or resume.
- Still thinking about that plan B? Talk to a Career Counsellor.
- What Can you Do with a Law Degree? Decision Books.
- Career Cruising Canadian Data Base – Access via CLN → Resources → Career Cruising → Explore Careers → Lawyer.
- Job Shadow a Lawyer and learn with the Extern/Job Shadowing Program. Learn more via CC web site → Career Planning → Career Exploration → Extern.
- Panel Packages on Law and related career areas: via CC web site → Career Planning → Career Exploration → Career Panel Packages and Videos: Careers in Law, Careers in Activism, Careers in the Government, Alternatives to Law.
- Attend the *Law School Information Session* held by the Career Centre a few times per year.
- Attend our *Graduate and Professional Schools Fair* (normally held in September) and speak with admission representatives from Faculty of Law programs in Ontario.
- Attend *Law Schools Admissions: The Inside Scoop* panel discussion with representatives from Law programs in Ontario. (normally held the same week as the Graduate and Professional Schools Fair).