
CPLED Alberta
Student Handbook
2010-2011 Program



CANADIAN CENTRE
FOR PROFESSIONAL
LEGAL EDUCATION

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Welcome to the Canadian Centre for Professional Legal Education (CPLED) Program. The CPLED Program marks the next phase in your education, in your professional development, a process that will continue throughout your career. The goal of the CPLED Program is to bridge the gap between law school and practice.

The CPLED Program was developed by the Law Societies of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Each province delivers the Program in its jurisdiction. In Alberta, the Legal Education Society of Alberta delivers the Program on behalf of the Law Society of Alberta.

The Program creates a blended learning environment, with a mix of online and face-to-face modules. In each environment you will have the benefit of working with practitioners who will share their experience with you and provide you feedback as you make the transition from law school to practice. Take advantage of this opportunity.

The Program is one of the cornerstones of the qualification process in Alberta. It is based on a set of criteria that defines a competent, entry-level lawyer. These are the competencies upon which you are evaluated in becoming a lawyer. Become familiar with them. Let them guide you through the Program.

We hope that you will find the Program to be helpful to you at this critical point in your professional development. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions that you may have.

Paul F. Wood

Executive Director
Legal Education Society of Alberta
Director, CPLED Alberta

Introduction

This Handbook contains many of the rules, policies and procedures for the CPLED Program in Alberta (“the Program”). Please read it carefully and keep it for your reference. You are also referred to Part 2 of the Rules of the Law Society of Alberta and the Law Society of Alberta’s Articling Handbook and Articling Manual.

In addition to other Law Society requirements, Rule 60² requires students seeking admission in Alberta successfully complete the Program, which includes:

- Attendance;
- Participation;
- Professional behavior;
- Academic integrity; and
- The demonstration of competence in all requirements of the Program.

The Program and Articling complement one another. During the Program, students must take responsibility for their own learning. Students do this by:

- Effectively managing and scheduling their time to ensure the demands of the Program and Articling can be met;
- Managing stress in a healthy manner;
- Reading and understanding the Rules of the Law Society of Alberta, the Law Societies Articling Handbook and Articling Manual, this Handbook and any policies and procedures.
- Knowing when to seek help and obtaining it;
- Accessing the resources provided by the Law Society and CPLED.

1. The CPLED Program

The Program is one of the cornerstones of the qualification process in Alberta. It is based on a set of competencies that defines an entry-level lawyer. These are the competencies upon which a student is evaluated. The competencies are set out in CPLED’s Competency Profile.

The Program is based on learning activities that mirror those students will encounter in their articles. The Program emphasizes student involvement and participation within these activities. Subject to the Professional Integrity Policy, collaboration among students, and between students and their principals and other lawyers in their firms is encouraged. It is an essential part of the learning process and a hallmark of practice as a lawyer.

The Program consists of nine modules – three face-to-face modules and six online modules. Two of the online modules have three assignments and four of the online

² All references to “Rules” in this Handbook refer to the Rules of the Law Society of Alberta.

modules have two assignments. There are fourteen assignments and nine required competency evaluations to be completed during the session.

2. Face-to-Face Modules

The face-to-face modules involve full day classes. Attendance is compulsory Punctuality is expected. It is unprofessional to keep other students or instructors waiting, or to disrupt a class by arriving late.

Please wear business casual attire to class. Business attire is required for competency evaluations.

Please sign in each day on the attendance lists that will be posted outside the Program office or in the classroom at each location. Please ensure that your BlackBerry, cell phone and other devices are turned off during the sessions.

You are encouraged to participate fully in class and to complete all background readings, learning exercises, and assignments. Each module will conclude with a competency evaluation that will determine your standing in the program.

The Program is intensive and demanding. Involvement in other work, regardless of its nature, will not constitute adequate reason for non-attendance, failure to participate or failure to satisfactorily complete program requirements. Please do not schedule work meetings, court appearances or other firm related activities during this time. You will not be granted an excused absence for these types of matters.

Volunteer lawyers serve as face-to-face facilitators and evaluators and are responsible for:

- Participating in plenary session or demonstrating skills;
- Leading in-person sessions for a small group of students, including discussions and learning exercises; and
- Evaluating student performance during competency evaluations.

Facilitators use their practice experience to develop and evaluate the skills of the students.

3. Online Modules

For the online modules, you will be assigned to a learning group of approximately twelve students. Once you have a learning group number, please refer to that number in all correspondence with CPLED staff.

Each learning group is assigned an online learning group facilitator (“LGF”). The LGFs are lawyers who guide students to find answers, and help them acquire the competencies they need to be successful in the practice of law. They interact with students in their learning group by responding to their discussion or email questions on the Desire2Learn website, providing feedback on assignments, and marking student competency

evaluations. Please limit your communications with your LGFs to the Desire2Learn website.

Each online module has assignments that lead up to a competency evaluation. The assignments are a critical part of the learning process. If completed and submitted, students will be provided feedback from their LGF to assist them in their learning and preparation for the competency evaluation that determines standing in the Program. Competency evaluations are mandatory.

Each online unit has instructions, background readings and a learning exercise or discussion. Please follow the instructions, assimilate the information and facts, and complete the assignment or competency evaluation.

Facilitators will assess and evaluate the level of competency demonstrated by the student based on assessment criteria provided to both the facilitator and the student.

Please submit all assignments and competency evaluations in accordance with the CPLED Program instructions, Submission Protocol, and the Program Schedule.

Logging on

You will be provided with a username and password to access the online portions of the CPLED Program's Desire2Learn learning system. Your username is case sensitive. Please retain your username and password throughout the Session.

Email and Online Communication

You can communicate with other students, your LGF and CPLED staff via Desire2Learn Mail and the Discussion Tool. The Desire2Learn program is a web-based learning delivery system designed to enable students to manage their own learning. Group discussion is a critical part of learning.

The purpose of the Discussion Tool is to provide messaging opportunities to all of the CPLED students. Check it regularly for any messages from CPLED, your LGF or other students. Within the Discussion Tool there is a Bulletin Board that CPLED staff will use to provide information of an administrative nature. Please check it regularly.

All communication with the LGFs is restricted to the Desire2Learn system unless the LGF indicates otherwise.

The Desire2Learn Mail is web-based, similar to Hotmail or Gmail. As with any other form of communication, the Desire2Learn Mail should always be used in a polite and professional manner.

Submission Protocol

You must follow the Submission Protocol when saving and submitting assignments and competency evaluations. Failure to comply with the Submission Protocol may result in an assignment or competency evaluation not being accepted and a grade of Competency Not Yet Demonstrated on the competency evaluation.

The “Dropbox”

You are required to submit your online assignments and competency evaluations to your LGF through the Desire2Learn system by using the Dropbox function.

Deadline for Submissions

The deadline for all online assignments and competency evaluations is 4:00 p.m. MDT/MST on Thursdays. The Dropbox will close at 4:00 p.m. Late submissions will not be accepted and will result in a grade of Competency Not Yet Demonstrated for the competency evaluation. It is your responsibility to ensure that you submit your work before the deadline.

Please make sure that you submit your final version of your answer for the assignment or competency evaluation. This is important because the version that is in the Dropbox at the time of the deadline will be the one which is assessed, regardless of whether it is a draft.

Information Retention and Storage Policy

Ensure that you retain a backup of your work in case of a system failure. There will be no extensions to submission dates granted due to the loss of data.

Viruses and Macros

Work that is submitted and contains a virus or macros will not be accepted or marked.

4. CPLED Materials and Resources

Face-to-Face Modules

You will receive a CPLED binder together with the Student Materials for the first face to face module. Other face to face Student Materials will be emailed to you at a later date. You may also wish to keep this Handbook, the Law Society materials and any other materials you receive during the Program in the binder.

CPLED’s Desire2Learn site also contains Resource Materials, learning exercises, other materials and links to other sites.

Online Modules

For each unit (assignment or competency evaluation) in each learning module, you will be required to access Resource Materials, as well as background readings, learning exercises, fact scenarios and client information.

The CPLED materials are provided to you as a starting point to assist you in preparing your answers for the assignments and competency evaluations. You will have to determine for yourself (based on your own knowledge and comfort level) whether you need to do additional research or find supplementary materials. The assignments and competency evaluations are not a test of your knowledge of the materials or the materials themselves.

5. Professional Behaviour and Professional Integrity

The CPLED Program is part of the Law Society's admission program. The CPLED Program is a critical element of the qualification process in Alberta and depends on the integrity of each student.

It is expected that all communication between individuals will be professional and courteous at all times. Please maintain the highest standards of integrity in meeting the CPLED Program requirements, including full compliance with CPLED's Professional Integrity Policy. Review the CPLED Program Agreement that you signed and submitted. The Professional Integrity Policy is attached to the CPLED Program Agreement. Pay particular attention to the provisions dealing with collaboration, original work and plagiarism.

If you have any doubt about whether there may be an issue regarding any particular conduct, you should contact a CPLED staff member. It is always better to err on the side of caution with respect to these matters.

6. Rules and Policies

Excused Absences

Absences may only be excused with prior approval of the Director. The Director's decision is final (Rule 64.1(2) (a)). To obtain prior approval to be absent from any part of the Program, send a letter or email to the Director explaining when you are requesting to be absent as well as the reason for the absence. Excused Absences will not be granted for work related matters.

Deferrals

You must apply to the Director in advance for a deferral of a competency evaluation. A deferral is available for medical or other personal circumstances, and must be documented in writing within seven days of the date of the assignment or competency evaluation for which the deferral is sought. Further information is contained in the Law Society's Articling Handbook.

Accommodation

CPLED is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities are accommodated, while maintaining the integrity of the CPLED Program and materials. Any accommodation requested must not compromise the public interest in ensuring that lawyers are qualified to provide competent legal services. For further information contact CPLED Alberta or review the material at www.cpled.ca.

Contact Information

It is critical that you provide and maintain a current and alternate address, phone number and email address to be included in your CPLED file. All changes must be sent to the CPLED Program Coordinator, Cindy Gorgichuk. The Law Society of Alberta should also be advised of all such changes.

Late or Incomplete Submissions

Unless the Director has granted a deferral, answers for assignments and competency evaluations will not be accepted after the indicated deadline. An answer for a competency evaluation that is submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of Competency Not Yet Demonstrated.

Exchange of Information

The Director may collect and use the personal information of students for the purpose of preventing, detecting, sanctioning or reporting any breach of the requirements of professional behaviour, professional integrity and academic integrity.

Information, including personal information about students, may be exchanged between the Law Society and CPLED Alberta (including those who administer the CPLED Program in Alberta) where the exchange of that information is made for the purpose of monitoring student performance, assisting in the operation of the CPLED Program or governing the articling process (Rule 63.2(2)).

Principals will be advised of students' grades at the end of the Program. All other information concerning a student will not be shared with a Principal unless otherwise permitted by the student in question or the Law Society of Alberta.

Suspension from the CPLED Program

The Director may expel a student from the CPLED Program and take such action as is appropriate, including referral to the Executive Director of the Law Society of Alberta (Rule 61). There is a right of appeal of the Director's decision (Rule 64.1).

7. Successful Completion of the CPLED Program

Successfully meeting the requirements of the CPLED Program requires a grade of Competency Demonstrated on all competency evaluations. A student who does not meet the requirements of the CPLED Program must repeat the entire Program.

8. Grades

Possible grades are:

- Competency Demonstrated – the student has satisfied the assessment criteria for the competency evaluation;
- Competency Not Yet Demonstrated – the student has not demonstrated the minimum acceptable level of competency on the competency evaluation;
- Deferred – the student has been granted a deferral of the competency evaluation by the Director;
- Incomplete – only available to be granted by the Director after the deadline for submission of an answer for a competency evaluation and will be graded only in the most exceptional circumstances.

The grade on your competency evaluation will be posted on the Desire2Learn website.

Receiving Feedback

You will receive feedback by email or through the Dropbox from your LGF on all assignments.

You will receive feedback on all assignments submitted by the deadline. Feedback on competency evaluations is a copy of your Marking Sheet. Assignments serve as learning activities to allow you to develop your competency. Competency evaluations serve as evaluation tools for the Law Society of Alberta to determine your competency.

9. Remarking

If you receive a grade of “Competency Not Yet Demonstrated” on any competency evaluation, you are entitled to apply for a paid remarking. Application for a remarking is to be made to the Director, accompanied by payment of a non-refundable re-marking fee for the competency evaluation to be remarked. **The fee is \$78.75 (including GST) and is payable to the Legal Education Society of Alberta.** Application for a remarking must be made in writing and be received in CPLED’s office, together with the fee, within seven days of the date the grade is issued by CPLED or when indicated by the Director.

10. Supplementals

A student who has not demonstrated competence on a competency evaluation is entitled to a supplemental subject to the limitations in Law Society Rule 63(1).

A student who exceeds the maximum number of grades of “Competency Not Yet Demonstrated” will be required to repeat the Program. The maximum is three.

A student must demonstrate competency in all supplementals in order to successfully complete the CPLED Program.

11. Appeals

A student may appeal only:

- A requirement to repeat the entire CPLED Program;
- A suspension or expulsion from the CPLED Program;
- A denial of admission to the CPLED Program;
- An inability to repeat the CPLED Program due to the number of past attempts, where the student has made no more than two attempts.

For further information, see Part 2 of the Rules of the Law Society.

Other than set out above, there is no appeal of any decision of the Director or in respect of the marking of competency evaluations. See Rule 64.1(2).

12. Repeating the Program

For information about repeating the CPLED Program, refer to the Rules of the Law Society.

13. Questions or Concerns

CPLED Alberta invites you to offer constructive written comments and criticism about the CPLED Program. You are also encouraged to take any questions or concerns at any time to Christine Staley.

14. Alberta Lawyers' Assistant Society (Assist)

Assist is designed to provide assistance, counselling or referral to all Alberta lawyers, students-at-law and their close family members for all manner of personal problems including, but not limited to, stress, burnout, depression, marital issues, financial issues, chemical dependencies and other addiction issues.

Services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Professional counsellors, employed by the Assist Program's outside service provider, respond to all calls. The person seeking the treatment or assistance is not identified to the Law Society or the CPLED Program. Assist is strictly confidential.

The number to call from anywhere in Alberta is 1.877.498.6898.