



## LAW SOCIETY OF SASKATCHEWAN

### Guidelines for the Education and Guidance of Articling Students

The articling experience is a cornerstone in the development of competent young lawyers. Throughout their articles, students learn from their Principals as well as the lawyers with whom they work. While Principals have the primary obligation to supervise their students, every lawyer who works with a student shares in that obligation. The Law Society of Saskatchewan (the Law Society) relies on both Principals and firms to ensure students become competent and ethical professionals. In order to ensure this goal is met, Principals and firms that wish to take on an articling student are asked to implement policies and measures to ensure the following guidelines are met:

#### I) Terms of Employment

Pursuant to *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, a student-at-law is an employee and, therefore, entitled to the benefits and protections afforded by the Act. The terms and conditions of employment should be discussed and settled with the student both when the student is hired and again when the student commences articles. The firm and its students should have a common understanding on issues such as:

- “ Remuneration, including bonuses;
- “ Vacation time (students are entitled to three weeks vacation within the articling year);
- “ Reasonable time away for illness or personal reasons as may be approved by the principal, so long as the principal is satisfied that it is not detrimental to the student's articling experience;
- “ Responsibility for articling expenses such as student-at-law admission fees and CPLED program fees;
- “ Benefits or privileges offered by the firm;
- “ The amount of time the student is expected to work.

#### II) Orientation to the Firm

Upon commencement of a student's articles, a member of the firm should review:

- “ The responsibilities of office personnel;
- “ Lines of authority and supervision;
- “ Procedures for requesting work assignments,

- “ Accounting billing and timekeeping procedures;
- “ Special policies or practices regarding correspondence, trust conditions, admission of service, etc.;
- “ Policies and safeguards respecting client confidentiality, including destruction of documents;
- “ Procedures for opening, maintaining and closing files.

### **III) Ethics and Professionalism**

- 1) Students must become intimately familiar with the ethical obligations placed on members of the legal profession. Students should be impressed with the importance of becoming familiar with the *Code of Conduct*, the Law Society Rules and the *Legal Profession Act*.
- 2) Every effort should be made to ensure students are sensitive to ethical issues arising in practice and practical examples should be identified and discussed with students whenever possible.
- 3) Efforts should be made to identify and discuss the courtesies and civilities that are expected of lawyers. Principals and other firm-members should, in all matters, display the highest levels of professionalism.
- 4) Extra effort should be made to demonstrate professional communications, whether in meetings or telephone discussions with clients or other lawyers, appearances before courts or tribunals or daily encounters with office staff or the general public. Students should be shown the importance of acting in a professional manner in every situation.

### **IV) Mentoring and Teaching**

Students will learn primarily through the daily handling of files. Principals and firm-members must help foster this learning by:

- 1) Providing appropriate supervision and ensuring that students are not overwhelmed by the complexity of the tasks provided to them.
- 2) Taking the time to provide rich feedback, including both constructive criticism as well as encouragement.
- 3) Describing to students the background of a file, including the client's interests and objectives and the reasoning behind the tasks they have been assigned. Students will learn more effectively if they understand how their work fits into the overall context of a file.

- 4) Leading by example (e.g. demonstrating how best to complete a task; including students in meetings, interviews, hearings, etc.).
- 5) Providing students with opportunities to practice and develop their lawyering skills.

#### **V) Workload and Expectations**

- 1) Principals should take the lead in monitoring their students' workload but all lawyers should be cognizant of the number of files on a student's desk. Students are generally hesitant to say no to anything asked of them and are often asked to do work by more than one lawyer.
- 2) Delegate effectively. Ensure that instructions are clear and allow the student to see the project through to the end.
- 3) When assigning a task, ensure to provide students with a timeline for completion. Students should be given guidance as to the priority of the work assigned, particularly when work is assigned by more than one lawyer.
- 4) Repetitive or routine professional duties and mundane tasks should be minimized, particularly when they provide little to no educational value.
- 5) Every attempt should be made to ensure students receive the broadest experience possible. Principals and firm-members should actively work to provide students with exposure to as many different experiences and areas of law as possible.

#### **VI) CPLED Bar Admissions Program**

Articling students must enrol and take part in the CPLED Bar Admissions Program. During the Program firms must provide students sufficient time to:

- 1) Attend and participate in CPLED face-to-face sessions (which is not to be considered vacation time); and
- 2) Complete all assignments and competency evaluations (each of which will require approximately twelve (12) hours of the student's time).