



Principal Guide to Articling Requirements in Saskatchewan

Introduction

A Principal is generally the most influential person in the life of an articling student. A Principal will often play many roles during the articling year: mentor, role-model, manager, counsellor, and friend. Generally, Principals are meant to oversee and facilitate the process that enables students to apply their formal learning and develop skills and professional judgement to serve as new lawyers competently and ethically. A Principal's level of involvement throughout a student's articles will often correlate directly with the student's success, both in the office and in the bar admission process.

This handbook sets out the key topics to successfully serving as a Principal, and outlines policies, procedures, and guidelines associated with them. You should use this document to better understand your role and responsibilities as a Principal, to ensure that you provide your student with the skills and knowledge necessary to competently serve the public upon admission to the practice of law in Saskatchewan.

PREP Bar Admissions Course

Students are required to complete the Practice Readiness Education Program. PREP, in combination with the articling process, forms the licensing process for students-at-law. PREP is multi-jurisdictional program required in the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia. PREP builds on the training and education obtained through a law degree and helps develop and assess the skills necessary to competently serve the public upon admission to the practice of law.

The Canadian Centre for Professional Legal Education administers PREP and communicates to Principals as needed on their own behalf. To learn more about PREP please visit www.cpled.ca. Questions regarding PREP registration, schedule, program, or payment may be directed to admin@cpled.ca.

Becoming A Principal

To serve as a Principal, you must meet certain eligibility criteria and ensure that you have been approved by the Law Society prior to taking an articling student.

Eligibility Criteria

The Law Society of Saskatchewan regulates who can act as a Principal ([Rule 704](#)). In order to be approved as a Principal, the lawyer must currently be:

- practising full-time in Saskatchewan, and
- have practised in Saskatchewan for at least the past 5 consecutive years.

The lawyer must also meet the requirements of [Rule 729\(2\)](#).

The Law Society has the discretion to approve a lawyer to act as a Principal who does not meet the qualifications stated in [Rule 704](#), but who satisfies the Law Society that he or she is suitable to act as a Principal ([Rule 704\(6\)](#)). However, if you have significant history of (or ongoing) discipline or professional standards matters with the Law Society, your application may not receive approval (see [Rule 729\(2\)](#)).

Supervision By the Courts

There are many different practice settings that can support an articling student: firms, sole practitioners, government offices, in-house departments, and courts.

As a Justice of the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal or the Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench; the Supreme Court of Canada or any Federal Court of Canada; or as a Judge of the Provincial Court of Saskatchewan – you may serve as a Principal ([Rule 707](#)). The student, however, must serve not less than two months (of their articling term) to a member who has been approved as a Principal in another practice setting.

Application To Act as Principal

A Lawyer seeking to act as a Principal must complete and submit to the Law Society the Application to Act as Principal (Form A-17). This form must be submitted and approved before taking an articling student.

Approval to Act as Principal is valid for one year from the approval date. A lawyer must re-apply each year an articling student is hired.

Mandatory Principal Training

Under Rule 704(1)(d), a lawyer seeking to act as principal must complete a mandatory [Principal Training Course](#) prior to the start of the articling term. The training course was developed to ensure that every principal has a baseline understanding of the program and a mentorship toolkit before undertaking the responsibility of supervising and teaching an articling student.

The course consists of 6 self-directed lessons covering topics such as principal/student obligations and responsibilities, effective mentorship, setting and managing expectations, providing feedback, and communicating in a culturally safe manner. While some of the course speaks specifically to the articling relationship, most of the content is suitable for anyone in a leadership or mentorship role. Anyone who completes the course is entitled to report up to 3.5 CPD hours, including 1 Ethics hour. The Principal Training Course is available for free to all members.

Filing and Other Requirements for Students and Principals

Before a student can be admitted as a lawyer the Law Society requires them to:

- file certain applications, agreements, and reports, and
- complete both a New Student Orientation and a New Lawyer Orientation.

A student is not eligible for admission to the Bar until they have successfully completed the articling term, PREP, the New Student Orientation, the New Lawyer Orientation, and have filed all required forms, agreements, and reports. These requirements appear in list form on the following page. Unmet obligations may delay call to the bar.

Principals, in their role as supervisors of articling students, should be aware of these filing obligations, which are listed and detailed below. Several of these require the participation and/or signature of the Principal.

Enter the requirements and deadlines that appear on the following page into your calendar.

Requirement	Deadline	Fee	Responsible Party
Application to Act as Principal (Form A-17)	Before the start of the articling term	No charge	Principal
Principal Training Course	Before the start of the articling term	No charge	Principal
Application for Admission as a Student-at-Law (Form A-1)	Before the start of the articling term	\$175 plus GST	Student
Articling Agreement (Form A-2) or Articling Agreement (Joint) (Form A-2.1)	Before the start of the articling term	\$175 plus GST	Principal and Student
Articling Plan	Within 30 days of your articling start date	No charge	Principal and Student
New Student Orientation	Within 30 days of your articling start date	No charge	Student
Mid-term Articling Report	Within 30 days of the six-month anniversary your articling start date	No charge	Principal and Student
New Lawyer Orientation	No later than 30 days before your last day of articles	No charge	Student
Final Articling Report	No later than 30 days before your last day of articles	No charge	Principal and Student
Application for Admission as a Lawyer by a Student-at-Law Member of the Society (Form A-8)	APPLY EARLY (i.e. at least 30 days before the end of your articling term).	\$175 plus GST	Student
Affidavit of Lawyer or Supervising Judge with Whom Student has Served under Articles (Form A-9)	On the last day of your articling term	No charge	Principal

**** All applications, forms, and reports can be directed to [Cheryl Eberle](#), Membership Officer**

Articling Agreement

Once you have been approved as a Principal and have found an articling student, and before the articling student's start date at the firm, you must enter into an [Articling Agreement \(Form A-2\)](#) with your student. For consistency, this agreement has been drafted by the Law Society.

The Articling Agreement defines the parameters of your relationship with your student and sets out your duties as a Principal as follows:

- to use your experience and expertise to help the student learn how to practice law;
- to be responsible for the supervision of the student at all times; and
- to help your student be admitted as a lawyer in Saskatchewan.

In return, your student promises:

- to keep private the affairs of the Principal, the firm, and the firm's clients;
- to follow the Principal's instructions and to be reliable; and
- to be honest, to work hard, and to act professionally.

*In addition to the traditional articling program, the Law Society welcomes (and in some cases, encourages) **Joint Articles**. A Joint Articling placement requires the Principals to enter into a Joint Articling Agreement with their student. The [Articling Agreement \(Joint\) \(Form A-2.1\)](#) is found on the Law Society website and should be submitted in the place of the regular Articling Agreement.*

Articling Plan and Reports

The [Articling Plan](#) is designed to assist with planning activities that provide a comprehensive articling experience to students. The plan is a guide and should not be treated as exhaustive as there will be other valuable educational experiences that come up during an articling term.

In addition to the Articling Plan, Principals and students complete a [Midterm Articling Report](#) and a [Final Articling Report](#) during the articling year.

Principals and students are encouraged to review the Articling Plan together as they complete the Articling Reports as these documents are essential in planning an effective work program that maximizes the educational aspect of articling.

Affidavit Of Lawyer or Supervising Judge with Whom Student Has Served Under Articles

Your final filing obligation as a Principal is to provide the Law Society with an [Affidavit](#) on the student's last day of articles swearing that your student has completed his or her articles and is suitable to be admitted as a lawyer.

Guidelines For the Education and Guidance of Articling Students

To assist in your role as Principal, the Admissions and Education Committee of the Law Society passed the following Guidelines for the Education and Guidance of Articling Students, as follows:

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. 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:

- 1) Remuneration, including bonuses;
- 2) Vacation time (students are entitled to three weeks’ vacation within the articling year);
- 3) 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;
- 4) Responsibility for articling expenses such as student-at-law admission fees and PREP Bar admission course fees;
- 5) Benefits or privileges offered by the firm;
- 6) 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:

- 1) The responsibilities of office personnel;
- 2) Lines of authority and supervision;
- 3) Procedures for requesting work assignments;
- 4) Accounting billing and timekeeping procedures;
- 5) Special policies or practices regarding correspondence, trust conditions, admission of service, etc.;
- 6) Policies and safeguards respecting client confidentiality, including destruction of documents;

- 7) 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 Professional 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 student's 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 Admission Course

Students seeking admission to the Saskatchewan Bar must successfully complete the Practice Readiness Education Program (PREP) Bar admission course from the Canadian Centre for Professional Legal Education (CPLED). During PREP, firms must provide students with a computer and programs necessary to meet the technical requirements of the Desire2Learn (D2L) learning platform, as well as sufficient time to complete all assignments and attend the Foundation Workshops and Capstone phases of the program (which is not to be considered vacation time). To view the PREP schedule, which includes detailed information on the different phases of the program and time estimates for each, please visit cpled.ca.

Communications From the Law Society

In addition to the instances outlined in the preceding section, the Law Society may send you communications throughout your term as a Principal to keep you apprised of any matters that may affect you or your student during the articling term. These may include reminders of filing requirements, updates to policies or procedures necessitated by changing legal or regulatory requirements, or issues related to your student. If we contact you in relation to a concern or complaint received about your student, we ask that you work with us in addressing and rectifying the issue with your student. It is always our hope to catch and resolve these issues early before there is any need to engage the complaints/disciplinary process.

Special Circumstances and Challenges as Principal

Secondments of Articles

Under Rule 709 a principal may permit you to work in the office of another member *who has been approved to act as a principal*, or to a court pursuant to Rule 707, for a total of two months during your articling term.

Leaves Of Absence

Should your student request or require a leave of absence, special consideration must be given to how this affects the student's fulfillment of the articling placement and the needs of your practice. We ask that you or your student contact the Law Society to discuss administrative obligations and options, as well as practical suggestions to help resolve issues.

Should you require a leave of absence, special consideration must be given to how this affects your fulfillment of the articling placement and the needs of your principal's practice. Please contact the Law Society to discuss administrative obligations and options. Depending on the length of the leave, we may require that you extend the end date of the articling term to accommodate your time away.

Depending on the length of the leave, we may require that your student extend the end date of the articling term to accommodate their time away.

Your student may also benefit from the services of [Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers](#), a non-profit confidential professional counseling service.

Candidate Performance

We recognize that being a Principal is not easy, that articling is difficult, and that performance issues with your student may arise for a variety of reasons. In those cases, we recommend, as a first step, that the performance issue be addressed with the student promptly and directly. Clear communication and constructive feedback may quickly yield better outcomes.

We also encourage you to contact the Law Society as we may be able to provide tips and guidance on how to address the issue from a best practice perspective.

Withdrawing or Terminating the Articling Agreement

A Principal or student, for compelling reasons, may terminate the Articling Agreement. If such action is being considered, you must notify the Law Society in advance.

Where either party wishes to terminate the Articling Agreement, reasonable notice must be provided. During the notice period both parties must continue the articling relationship in accordance with the Articling Agreement and Articling Plan. It is the student's responsibility to find another articling placement.

Where a Principal must withdraw from their Articling commitments, the Principal should take all reasonable steps to help find an appropriate alternative placement for their student. This may include assisting the student in obtaining interviews and providing the student with a reference letter specifying that the student is looking for a new articling placement through no fault of their own.

Once a new articling placement is secured, the student, the previous Principal and the new Principal must execute and file an [Assignment of Articles Agreement \(Form A-4\)](#). The previous Principal must submit the [Affidavit of Lawyer or Supervisory Judge with whom Student has Served under Articles \(Form A-9\)](#). The fee for the Assignment of Articles Agreement is \$183.75 (\$175 + GST). There is no fee for the Affidavit.

Conclusion

While this document sets out the requirements and responsibilities of being a Principal, we would be remiss if we did not emphasize how rewarding and enriching of an experience it is. It is also a great investment opportunity. As a Principal, you have the opportunity to train a student and gain an associate that has learned the practice of law in a manner that best meets the needs of your firm/organization.

If you are already a Principal, we wish to thank you. If you are considering becoming a Principal, we encourage you to apply!

Contact Us

If you have any questions or concerns that are not addressed by these resources, or we can assist you with any issues related to your term as a Principal, please contact:

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