

Mandatory Principal Training Information

At February 2023 Convocation, the Benchers approved amendments to the Law Society Rules to implement a mandatory principal training course. Amendment to Rule 704 requires that all lawyers who wish to act as principal to an articling student, regardless of previous experience, complete the course. Amendment to Rule 709 exempts lawyers who are acting as principal solely for the purpose of a secondment from this requirement.

Why are changes being made?

The Law Society understands that most principals are excellent lawyers who take care and pride in their role as principal but that not all articling experiences are positive, either for the student or the principal.

To better understand the difficulties that sometimes arise in articles, the Law Society conducted surveys amongst articling students, new lawyers, and principals to elicit information about satisfaction with the articling process and areas for improvement. The resulting [Law Society of Saskatchewan Articling Program Assessment Research Report](#) identified mentorship and guidance as a key challenge for both students and principals. The survey also indicated difficulties in providing meaningful feedback to students and a lack of training on acting as a principal. With these findings in mind, the Law Society developed a training course, the goal of which is to ensure that every principal has baseline training before undertaking the responsibility of supervising and teaching an articling student.

The [Principal Training 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.

Completion Requirement and Process Change

Lawyers are now required to complete the Principal Training Course prior to acting as a principal. If you know you are going to be acting as a principal, it's a good idea to complete the course well before your student commences articles to avoid disrupting their start date. Any principal who voluntarily completed the course in 2022, will not be required to complete the course again.