

# Pathways to the Profession: Year 4 Evaluation Summary Report



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## Executive Summary

This Year Four (Y4) report is a summary of trends from Years One through Three in program data and Years One and Two of post-call data, specifically calling out any departures from those trends in the Y4 program data or the Y3 post-call data. The Pathways Evaluation Reports for each of the first three years of the evaluation are more fulsome and should be referred to for greater detail, especially regarding methodology and background. See Appendix 1 for the **Pathways Evaluation Interim Results: Years One to Three**. See Appendix 2 for **Programme de pratique du droit** - data collected about the Programme de pratique du droit for the Evaluation of Pathways: Years One to Four.

## *About the Candidates*

Enrollment in the LPP/PPD and Articling has fluctuated over time, and thus the size of the evaluation cohorts has done the same. The Year Four evaluation cohort for the LPP/PPD is the smallest in four years at 214 candidates, but the evaluation cohort for the Articling Program is the largest in four years at 1,514. Fifteen percent to almost 20% of candidates continue to withdraw from the LPP/PPD on a yearly basis, compared to less than 1% annually for Articling.

There have been notable increases in the Year Four cohorts from the first three years average in the percentage of females and Racialized candidates. All other demographic categories were stable in comparison to the average for the first three years.

The LPP/PPD continues to show greater proportions of internationally-educated, Racialized and Age 40+ candidates than the Articling Program, and recently a greater percentage of Francophones, as the proportion of Francophones increases in the LPP/PPD and decreases in Articling over the four years of the evaluation.

## *Evaluation of the Keys to Transitional, Experiential Training*

*Fairness of the process to secure a work placement* remains the aspect of LPP administration with the least amount of satisfaction among candidates, but *Fairness of the admission process* continues to be the most satisfying. Further, *Relevance of the work at the placement* continues to garner the greatest satisfaction from candidates in the Articling Program. However, less than 50% of respondents to the Y4 Principals Survey indicated the Law Society's Articling Program is *Accessible* or *Objective in the appraisal of candidates' competency development and performance*.

Just over half (55%) of respondents to the Articling Program Survey reported that they were involved in the preparation of their Experiential Training Plan.

*File and Practice Management* show the most growth for candidates in the LPP and *Fact Investigation and Legal Research*, as well as *Drafting and Legal Writing* show the most growth for candidates in the Articling Program. The Y4 LPP Exit Survey data shows us that growth in skills competencies received the highest ratings across the board since the inception of the LPP.

Over four-fifths of LPP Work Placement Supervisors reported that their candidate(s) had ample/tremendous ability to practice at an entry level in the *Ethics and Professional Responsibility* and *Fact Investigation and Legal Research* competency areas.

In the Performance Appraisal of Competencies (PAC) the proportion of articling candidates “significantly exceeding expectations,” “exceeding expectations,” and “meeting expectations” has remained incredibly consistent in each of the competencies over the four years of the evaluation.

*Quality of feedback* and *Timeliness of feedback* from Mentors in the LPP and from Principals in the Articling Program continue to be sources of concern for candidates with the lowest effectiveness ratings, though the Y4 data show a slight increase in overall effectiveness in this aspect. Specifically, for example, *Ability of Principal or other individual to engage you in experiential learning* has been rated “Effective,” or “Most Effective” by an increasing percentage of respondents over time, from 64% in Y1, to 71% in Y2, to 72% in Y3 to 74% in Y4. Further, in the LPP, all aspects related to the Virtual Firm Mentors are rated with an average of 4 out of 5 for the first time – the highest ratings for the Virtual Firm Mentors in the 4 years of the program.

### ***Search for a Placement, About the Placements, Financial Impact and Effect on Career Goals***

Internationally-educated or out-of-province candidates in the Articling Program continue to feel disadvantaged in access to articling placements, as timing of applications does not align with their law school year and they are not able to attend on-campus interviews (OCIs) due to their location.

In the LPP, focus group participants indicated they perceived the work placement process to be unfair.

From program delivery statistics, we know about 71% of the work placements in the LPP/PPD were paid in Year One and 73% were paid in Years Two and Three, and this figure has jumped to 82% in Year Four. According to survey data, 97% of the articling placements in both Year One and Year Two were paid and 98% in each of Year Three and Year Four.

Placement statistics show that *Corporate/Commercial Law* was reported as the most common area of practice in LPP/PPD work placements in each of the first four years of the program. Comparatively, the largest proportion of articling placement practice areas reported by candidates on the Articling Program Survey was *Civil Litigation – Defendant* in each of the first four years of the program.

Work placement *Remuneration* continues to garner the least satisfaction from all respondents in the pathways. About 40% of respondents in the Articling Program continue to report having paid leave to prepare and write the Licensing exams; however, the numbers are declining over time: 43% in Y1 to 42% in Y2 to 40% in Y3 to 38% in Y4. The candidates in the LPP/PPD do not receive financial support to prepare for the Licensing exams from the work placement organizations.

Effects on career goals tend to be more positive than negative for both pathways. For example, broad exposure to different practice areas helped candidates in the LPP solidify their career trajectories, and in many cases opened new areas for post-license practice consideration. Further,

more candidates in the LPP consider “Private practice” post-licensing, and this proportion grows from program entry to exit. But a greater proportion of respondents in the Articling Program consider “Private practice” consistently in each year of the evaluation.

### ***Call to Bar, Hire-Back and Post License Practice***

In each year about two-thirds of candidates in the LPP/PPD reported on Exit surveys that they expect to be called to the Bar in their licensing year, compared to just over 90% of the candidates in the Articling Program. However, year-end statistics corroborate the Articling Program Survey data, but are not as positive as the LPP/PPD Exit Survey data. For example, in June of the licensing year, typically about 90% of candidates in the Articling Program are indeed called to the Bar, while less than three-fifths of the candidates in the LPP/PPD are. But the percentage of candidates in the LPP called to the Bar in June of their licensing year has steadily increased over time (52% to 60%, Y1 through Y4).

Of those who expected to be called to the Bar in their licensing year, about one-third of candidates in the LPP/PPD expected to be hired back, compared to around half of the candidates in the Articling Program (e.g., 52% in Year Four), and the gap in the expectations for hire-back between those in the LPP/PPD and in Articling is growing over time.

Almost three-fifths (57%) of LPP Work Placement Supervisors indicated their candidate(s) would not be hired back, however 29% of the Supervisors indicated that their candidates(s)’ work placements were extended.

Roughly one-quarter, 25% and 26% of the LPP/PPD new lawyers from Years One and Two, respectively, are *Sole Practitioners*, compared to 6% and 7%, respectively, from the Articling Program. In Year Three post-call data, however, the proportion of new lawyers from who are *Sole Practitioners* is down to 20% for those from the LPP/PPD and 5% from the Articling Program. So, the three-year average for new lawyers who are *Sole Practitioners* is about 24% for those from the LPP/PPD compared to 6% for those who articulated.

Only 16% of the new lawyers from the LPP/PPD were working as an *Associate in a Professional Business*, when 48% of the new lawyers who articulated are working in this capacity in Year One. But in Year Two, these numbers were 23% of those from LPP/PPD and 44% for articling. In Year Three, 20% of the new lawyers from the LPP/PPD are working as an *Associate in a Professional Business*, when 46% of the new lawyers who articulated. The three-year average for new lawyers working as an *Associate in a Professional Business* is about 20% for those from the LPP/PPD compared to 46% for those completed the Articling Program. But, the gap between new lawyers from the LPP/PPD and those from the Articling Program who are an *Associate in a Professional Business* is closing (32% to 26% from Y1 to Y3).

### ***Value of the Law Practice Program/Programme de pratique du droit and of the Articling Program***

Value of the LPP/PPD has consistently been perceived highly by the candidates on the Exit surveys: 81% of Year One candidates, 76% of the Year Two candidates, 88% of the Year Three candidates; and 83% of the Year Four candidates said the LPP/PPD was “of good” or “of great”

value. Further, candidates' perceptions of value for the LPP/PPD increase over time (from Entry to Exit) in all four cohorts. Candidates in the LPP/PPD are beginning to dispel the notion that the LPP/PPD is "second-tier" training, as they see the standardized, broad-scope, hands-on, technology-enhanced training adding much value to their experience in the licensing process.

In the Articling Program, 75% of Year One candidates rated the Articling Program as "of good value" or "of great value." This number dropped to 69% in Year Two and 64% in Year Three, rising again in Year Four to 69%. The source of least value as reported by both candidates and Principals in the Articling Program were the enhancements, such as the Record of Experiential Training and the Experiential Training Plan. However, some candidates voiced that articling would benefit by more broad exposure to practice areas for competencies development, and a greater focus on technology.