

Information for Internationally Trained Lawyers

By Janet Kravetz, internationally trained lawyer

So you are a member of another bar outside Canada and you are moving to Nova Scotia. Welcome!

Accreditation Flow Chart

The Nova Scotia Barrister's Society provides you with information about the accreditation process:

http://nsbs.org/sites/default/files/ftp/EQ012011_ITLCareerPathway.pdf

Starting the Process As Soon As Possible

As you have seen, the process starts at the National Committee on Accreditation (NCA), which is a standing committee of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada. The mandate of the NCA is to help Canada's law societies protect the public interest by assessing the legal education and professional experience of individuals who obtained their credentials outside of Canada or in a Canadian civil law program. An assessment is done before an individual may apply for admission to a law society in a Canadian common law jurisdiction, and is based on the academic and professional profile of each applicant.

Once you receive your NCA certificate of qualification you can apply to the Nova Scotia Barrister's Society and satisfy any requirements they may have, such as articling and writing the bar exams.

The Federation of Law Societies of Canada encourages ITLs to apply for assessment prior to arrival to Canada, as the process of assessment takes up to 3 months:

<http://www.flsc.ca/en/nca/applying-to-the-nca/how-to-apply/>

Information about Exams and Online Study Groups

Once applied you may be asked to complete a Canadian law degree or to write several NCA exams.

You can take the NCA exams through self-study, or you may wish to take those courses at Dalhousie law school. Both options will satisfy NCA requirements.

Once registered to NCA exams contact the Dalhousie Office of the Registrar to set a time to write the NCA exam for a fee of \$50 for each exam - exams@admreg.registrar.dal.ca

Exam Rules and schedules: <http://www.flsc.ca/en/nca/nca-resources/exam-schedules-and-policies/>

NCA syllabi: <http://www.flsc.ca/en/nca/nca-resources/syllabi/>

Dalhousie Schulich Law School: <http://law.dal.ca/>

You can gain access to text books either through studying at the Schulich law library or by purchasing the books at the Dalhousie book store (can be done over the phone. Note: some books are shipped in, so you may want to order in advance): <http://ancillaries.dal.ca/default.asp?mn=1.3.41>

There are some exam preparation programs outside of Nova Scotia, designed to satisfy the NCA exams requirements. These are offered by the University of Toronto and Osgoode Hall Law School (Toronto).

The University of British Columbia offers a Masters of Law (LLM) Common Law program. This is a year-long, course-based professional program that provides foundational training in the common law and in Canadian law for internationally trained or non-common law trained lawyers <http://www.law.ubc.ca/graduate/LLMCL.html> .

Further, we are aware of national online preparatory courses offered through Facebook. We cannot guarantee their quality: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/63908476743/>

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/63908476743/#!/barprep>

Another website that offers the opportunity to practice NCA exams in a community atmosphere is AccreditedReady <http://www.accreditready.com/the-program/benefits/> (again, we do not guarantee quality).

“The National Committee on Accreditation students” is a national Facebook group that has 1,831 members. <http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/42489885315/>

It provides opportunities to network with NCA students across Canada, form online study groups and possibly purchase second hand text books.

The Canadian Bar Association

If you maintain membership with the Bar in your first country, you may join the Canadian Bar Association – Nova Scotia Branch <http://www.cba.org/ns/home> . This will give you access to professional development and other activities.

ISIS Support

Upon arrival be sure to consult an employment specialist from ISIS. There is an ITL Observership Program and a variety of other programs & services to assist you to enter the field of Law. You can also explore employment prospects in possible related careers (legal research, policy analysis, project coordination).

<http://www.isisns.ca/employment/for-immigrants/>

Good luck