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Faculty of Law

Centre des carrières et du développement professionnel
Career and Professional Development Centre

CAREER PATHS FOR GRADUATE LAW STUDENTS



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INTRODUCTION

Regardless of your reasons for going back to school to earn a Master of Laws (LLM) or a Doctor of Laws (LLD), you have a number of career options when you graduate. Many students earn a graduate law degree to simply enhance their knowledge about a specific area of law, and will continue practicing law after graduation. This will allow them to feel better equipped to handle difficult or specialized cases. If you are interested in becoming a partner or starting your own firm, you can certainly benefit from this advanced and detailed knowledge in a chosen field. Obtaining a graduate law degree can also differentiate you from an increasingly large and competitive pool of qualified candidates. It can also give you an advantage if you can demonstrate familiarity with legal systems outside of your own country, as the legal profession is becoming more internationalized. Whether you complete it right after your JD or after years of work experience, your postgraduate legal qualification can support your ambition to make a subtle change in career direction or leap into a completely new and exciting field.

CHAPTER 1: WHAT SUPPORT IS OFFERED BY THE CPDC?

The Career and Professional Development Centre (CPDC) aims to support undergraduate students, graduate students and alumni in their job search. Securing employment, however, remains the responsibility of each student. You must take the necessary steps to ensure your integration into the job market. The CPDC acts as a liaison between students and employers and provides resources and counselling to better prepare students for their career endeavours.

1.1 The Source

The Career and Professional Development Centre [website](#) and [The Source](#) contain useful information for students. All students, including graduate students, have access to detailed and up-to-date career information, including current job postings for entry level (articling) and associate positions, as well as information about events, recruitment processes, as well as resources on a variety of topics related to career options and job preparation.

We recommend that you consult [The Source](#) regularly, as it gets updated daily. For any issues logging into [The Source](#) or to obtain your login information, contact our Coordinator of Career and Professional Development at 613-562-5800, ext. 3121.

1.2 Resume and Cover Letter Reviews

Your resume and cover letter serve as a writing sample for an employer. Together with the rest of your application package, they are a reflection of you and demonstrate that you are capable of following specific instructions.

There are key differences between legal and non-legal resumes. The [Naked Resumes and Cover Letters guide](#), available on The Source, is an excellent starting point in helping you draft your documents. For examples of academic resumes, which are more focused on research and teaching experience in view of applying for academic positions, consult [Creating your academic cv for Masters and PhDs](#), developed by the University of Toronto's Career centre.

To make an appointment to have your documents reviewed, contact the CPDC reception at 613-562-5800, ext. 2514, or visit us in person at FTX 233. We do not book appointments by email.

1.3 Mock Interviews

The purpose of an interview is to allow both you and your potential employer to meet and assess whether a working relationship may exist between you. Your goal at the interview should be to convince the employer that there is a strong connection between your skill set and the requirements of the position. A master interview guide is available in [The Source](#) Document Library.

Once your interview has been scheduled, it is important to prepare. The first step is to gain a comprehensive understanding of your own experiences. Review your resume - mentally assess every one of your experiences in order to formulate in advance what you accomplished in that role and which skills you developed as a result. Then, practise, practise, practise! The CPDC can help you rehearse by asking you some common interview questions and providing feedback and tips on how to improve. To set up an appointment for a mock interview, contact us at 613-562-5800, ext. 2514, or visit us in person at FTX 233.

1.4 Workshops

We offer law students a variety of workshops, on a variety of topics, throughout the school year. As a graduate student, you may find that some of these sessions are relevant to your professional development. For more information or to register to attend an upcoming presentation, consult the *Events* section of [The Source](#).

uOttawa's [Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#) also offers a variety professional development programming and resources:

[My Grad Skills](#) offers a free series of self-paced, online modules aimed at providing information about professional skills. The workshops cover a variety of topics, such as:

- Academic and Professional Communication for New Researchers
- Research Management
- Academic and Research Integrity
- Lesson Planning

- Teaching Online
- The Versatile Graduate: Exploring Diverse Career Paths for PhDs

Altitude offers a variety of events and workshops which help hone particular skill sets, such as communication, teaching, and writing. These free workshops allow students to not only improve their academic success, but also to gain an extensive understanding of the job market. Altitude takes learning beyond the classroom, bringing the graduate experience to greater heights.

Mitacs Step is Canada's only comprehensive program providing business-ready skills to up-and-coming researchers. Mitacs Step trains graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in essential interpersonal, project management and entrepreneurial skills required for them to succeed in their future career.

Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) is an academic competition developed by The University of Queensland in Australia for research students. The exercise challenges graduate students to present their thesis topic and its significance in a compelling way in just three minutes. 3MT® develops academic, presentation, and research communication skills and supports the development of research students' capacity to effectively explain their research in language appropriate to a non-specialist audience.

The GSAED is the student association that represents the graduate students at the University of Ottawa. It offers different services and activities like a Writing Consultation Program and interdisciplinary conferences. The GSAED also works in partnership with other services at the University of Ottawa such as the Graduate Studies Mentoring Centre and the Career Development Centre.

1.5 Career Counselling

Career planning and exploration is a complex and multi-dimensional feat. Communicating with your mentors, advisors and with a career counsellor can be an effective way to reflect on your options, set some goals, and make a plan for your next steps. If you would like to consult with a Professional Development Counsellor as a way of helping you clarify and orient your career direction, you can book an appointment by contacting reception at 613-562-5800, ext. 2514, or at FTX 233.

1.6 Resources

Dozens of career guides and career resources are available in the Document Library section of [The Source](#). These valuable reading materials provide you with meaningful insight and information on a variety of topics, including:

- Practical experience and active learning opportunities
- Networking tips and prospects
- Career option and exploration

You may also find the following list of external resources helpful in supporting your career preparation and planning efforts, including career path exploration, the academic resume and interview, postgraduate fellowships, and funding sources:

[Entering the Law Teaching Market](#) - Yale Law School Career Development

[Public Service Legal Careers \(PSJD\)](#) - Resource Center

[Mygradskills.ca](#) – Online workshops

CHAPTER 2: WHAT CAN I DO WITH A GRADUATE LAW DEGREE?

2.1 Academia

If you feel at home in a university setting, an academic career might be for you. One of its greatest advantages is the flexibility it allows in setting your own research agenda and work schedule. For most professors, this benefit is worth the difference in salary compared to private practice.

It's uncommon for a part time practising lawyer to also work as a part time law professor. However, it's possible for practicing lawyers to teach a course at a law school as a sessional lecturer. It's also possible to combine an academic job with a certain amount of consulting work, either at law firms, with the government, or non-governmental agencies. This promotes exposure to a variety of enriching career activities.

Research and publication, teaching and administration are the three main parts of an academic job. Administration duties include serving on various committees and sometimes taking on certain offices, such as Directorship, or Associate Dean. Teaching and research take up the bulk of your time as law professor. Teaching takes different forms: large lectures, seminars, small tutorials, helping with mootings and graduate student supervision. Research ranges from legal theory, to doctrinal research, to analysis of law through any number of frames of reference.

If you are interested in pursuing an academic career, as are many students doing advanced research, there are many processes to consider, from securing an interview to negotiating an offer.

It is increasingly common for new professors to hold Doctorates, although it is possible to obtain a job with a Master's degree, depending on the particular circumstances of the law school. Still, many larger law schools try to hire the most promising scholar they can, regardless of expertise and areas of interest. Generally, you also need to have excellent academic results to be competitive. A call to the bar does not necessarily assist you in getting an academic job in North America. For that reason, you should address whether you want to be a member of a bar before beginning your job search. Many students who want to keep their options open will decide to qualify for a bar – you

may wish to qualify immediately after graduation if there is a reasonable chance that you will practise law at some point in your career.

Although many positions in academia are posted online and in journals and magazines read by law professors, networking remains the best way to find out about many unadvertised opportunities. Expand your network by going to conferences and meeting with academics. Prepare a 30-second introduction that describes your research, teaching interests and career goals. You should begin your search at the beginning of the summer for academic positions to be filled the following academic year. The [NALP Directory of Law Schools](#) is a great starting point, as it has a thorough list of law schools around the world. From there, you can consult individual university websites to find job postings.

The Canadian Legal Career Development Network also suggests the following list of websites where academic positions are commonly posted:

- [Universities Canada](#) advertises academic positions at Canadian universities.
- The [Chronicle of Higher Education](#) advertises academic positions at American universities. It is published 48 times per year.
- The [Times Higher Education Supplement \(THES\)](#) advertises academic positions in the UK.
- [American Association of Law Schools](#): For more information on recruitment in the US.
- The [Canadian Association of University Teachers](#) website.
- The [Social Sciences Research Network](#) – especially the [Legal Scholarship Network](#)'s Professional Announcements list-serve.

If you have been working with colleagues and academics on projects at different institutions, request that they forward any job postings to you that you may not otherwise have access to. Academic positions are limited and you may find that being flexible will help you secure your first post.

Should you get an offer for an interview, be prepared to discuss the following:

- Any aspect of your resume; in particular, prepare a short and interesting synopsis for each of your publications
- Your 'scholarly agenda'. What are you working on? What's next? What themes bind your work?
- Courses you would like to teach, while keeping in mind the school's needs
- Teaching methodology or style, including which textbook or materials you would use

Also, make sure you research the school in depth:

- How they view themselves, their students, their mission
- Areas of interest, tenure, recent publications of all the people who will be interviewing you

Prepare at least three questions about the school to show your sincere interest.

Though professors are not required to be certified teachers to teach or to have a successful academic career, it's a good idea to get involved in teaching opportunities to demonstrate your commitment and interest in legal pedagogy. Teaching experience can come in many forms, including working as a teaching assistant, giving a guest lecture, taking a course or participating in a workshop on pedagogy. You can also read law journals on the topics of legal education and pedagogy to stay up-to-date on current legal academia trends, or ask a professor to lead, or simply audit a class to observe teaching methodology. Whether or not these are related to teaching law, participating in these types of professional development activities shows that you are keen to reflect on ways to be an effective professor by stimulating law students to think and learn.

Publishing papers and presenting at conferences are two ways you can reach a broader public.

2.1.1 Publications

As an academic, you will be expected to make meaningful contributions to scholarship in your area of interest. Your contributions will be measured by publishing articles and books. You will need to start working on publishing during your graduate studies, as your chances of obtaining an academic position will be greatly increased if you publish a piece in a prestigious journal. To ensure that your work is well-received, consider these strategies as recommended by the Canadian Legal Career Development Network¹:

- Focus on topics that have not yet been covered as well as you believe they ought to be;
- Try to explore an issue from different points of view;
- Present shorter papers at conferences in order to flesh out your ideas and vet your work before publication;
- Try to publish in journals where the best conversations are taking place about the topic you have chosen, i.e. publish in places where people interested in your topic are most likely to come across your paper;
- When possible, opt for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. With books, opt for a well-reputed academic press. Keep in mind, however, that you may not have many choices for your first few publications;
- Publish substantive research pieces. In academic circles, opinion pieces and other short format writing are not always counted for credit as publications.
- Quality of publication compensates for quantity. If you cannot publish in an international journal, try to publish in one of the faculty journals. You may also want to consider co-authoring a paper with an accomplished scholar;
- It is not, however, advisable to sacrifice timely completion of your thesis in preference for spending the months necessary to produce publications.

¹ Canadian Legal Career Development Network (CLCDN), *Careers in Legal Academia*, p. 12.

You can save time and effort by adapting work you originally wrote for another purpose, such as during the course of your graduate courses, an externship, or a summer legal position. 'Adapting' work requires a four-step approach²: extract (remove portions that are older or not academically interesting – only keep what would be a valuable addition to the literature), deepen (confront the hard questions that the original work avoided), broaden (make it more useful and relevant to others by broadening the facts, jurisdiction, or procedural posture), and connect (draw links between what you've written and broader academic debates). It is good practice to obtain permission from your employer before turning a memorandum into an article, as the employer might not want you to share work that they paid for or ensure that you're not including any confidential client material. Taking part in writing competitions can be another effective way to get your paper published. Several opportunities arise throughout the year for entering writing contests.

The following list can serve as a starting point for finding legal writing competition opportunities:

[Concours de rédaction juridique de la Chaire du Notariat de l'Université de Montréal](#)
[CBA NEERLS Law School Essay Contest – David Estrin Prize](#)
[Human Rights Essay Award](#)
[Harvey T. Strosberg Essay Prize](#)
[International Association for Defense Counsel \(IADC\) Legal Writing Contest](#)
[Concours Minerve](#)
[NACLE Paper Competition](#)
[The Marc Lalonde Prize for Excellence in International Commercial and Investment Arbitration](#)
[American Judges Association – Annual Law Student Essay Competition](#)
[Sir John A. Mactaggart Essay Prize in Environmental Law](#)
[Ronald St. John Macdonald Young Scholars Award](#)

Resources and links to academically-oriented Canadian law journals for submissions:

[Advocates' Society Journal](#)
[Alberta Law Review](#)
[Annual Conference of the Canadian Association of Law Teachers](#)
[Appeal](#)
[Berkeley Electronic Press's ExpressO](#)
[Canadian Bar Review](#)
[Canadian Foreign Policy](#)
[Canadian Legal Education Annual Review](#)
[Canadian Journal of Family Law](#)
[Canadian Journal of Law and Jurisprudence](#)

² Eugene Volokh, *Academic Legal Writing, Law Review Articles, Student Notes, Seminar Papers, and Getting on Law Review*, 3rd Edition, Foundation Press, New York, 2007, pp. 69-70.

[Canadian Journal of Law & Society](#)
[Canadian Journal of Law and Technology](#)
[Canadian Tax Journal](#)
[Constitutional Forum](#)
[Dalhousie Journal of Legal Studies](#)
[Journal of Legal Education](#)
[Journal of Sustainable Development Law and Policy \(JSDLP\)](#)
[Les Cahiers de Droit](#)
[Manitoba Law Journal](#)
[McGill Health Law Publication \(MHLP\)](#)
[McGill Law Journal](#)
[Osgoode Hall Law Journal](#)
[Ottawa Law Review](#)
[Queen's Law Journal](#)
[Review of Constitutional Studies](#)
[Revue Québécoise de droit international](#)
[Saskatchewan Law Review](#)
[Social Science Research Network \(SSRN\)](#)
[The Indigenous Law Journal](#)
[University of British Columbia Law Review](#)
[University of New Brunswick Law Journal](#)
[University of Toronto Faculty of Law Review](#)
[University of Toronto Journal of Law and Equality University of Toronto](#)
[Windsor Yearbook of Access to Justice](#)

2.1.2 Conferences

In addition to publishing research, participating in a conference related to your area of research interest is one of the best ways for you to make yourself known within the academic community, not to mention the networking opportunities.

Below is a sample list of popular annual conferences in Canada. We encourage you to research more conferences that are relevant to your area(s) of interest.

[Canadian Council on International Law Annual Conference](#)
[Canadian Law Student Conference](#) – Windsor Review of Legal and Social Issues
[Centre d'études et de recherches internationales de l'Université de Montréal \(CÉRIUM\)](#)
Canada Research Chair in Citizenship and Governance Annual Conference
[Law and Society Association](#)
Canadian Law and Society Association Conference
Conference of the [Canadian Association of Law Teachers](#)
Interdisciplinary Graduate Legal Studies Conference – [UBC Faculty of Law](#)
[Osgoode Hall Law School Graduate Law Student Association](#) (Annual Conference_
[International Conference on Interdisciplinary Legal Studies](#) – International Center for
Research and Development and Unique Conference, Canada
[Interdisciplinary Environmental Association](#) (International Conference)

2.2 Postdoctoral Fellowship

The purpose of a postdoctoral fellowship is to prepare fellows for a career in academia or research.

Postdoctoral fellowships are short term engagements where individuals with doctoral degrees work under the mentorship of a faculty member, at a university, to develop their scholarship in a chosen research area.¹ Generally, fellows are required to undertake full-time research and may be required to teach, depending on the position.

Students may want to pursue a postdoctoral fellowship as a bridge towards a career in academia, to gain more time to complete research and produce publications, to experience another academic institution and work with a particular researcher in an area of expertise, or for other reasons.

Fellowships can last for as little as a couple of months and as long as a couple of years. Most are an average of 1 to 2 years in length, and are considered transitory positions that are relatively short term. Each university has its own requirements to consider in respect to the length of the fellowship.

Ask yourself:

- Why you want to pursue a postdoctoral fellowship;
- What experience, skills, and publications you hope to gain
- Who you will work with
- Where you will work
- How long you will work
- What the fellowship will involve
- Whether you can obtain funding

Postdoctoral fellowships are usually granted by invitation or posted on departmental websites, and therefore not necessarily advertised externally. Even though there may be few advertised positions, many schools are open to, and welcome, your approaching them with funding for a fellowship position.

Here are some suggestions for approaching your search for postdoctoral fellowship positions:

- Research positions listed in several graduate studies offices (not just law schools – other related departments may have postdoctoral fellowships open to law graduates);
- Consult newspapers and websites containing lists of postdoctoral positions (check regularly for new postings);
- Consult websites of different departments to identify specific faculty members with whom you would like to work, then contact them directly;

- Speak with faculty and your peers at various institutions to learn about hidden opportunities.

Be realistic about your applications. The application process is intensive and time-consuming. Allow yourself time to prepare and to gather references, and be considerate of the number of references you're asking your referees to write for you.

Since there is no central administration of postdoctoral fellowship positions, there is also no set application process or deadline, unless the position is listed on a departmental website. Start your search early.

Most schools in Canada have policies outlining a minimum stipend amount the fellows are to receive, but grants will vary in their amount and their eligibility requirements. To be a fellow, you must secure this minimum amount of financial support. Since there is no central funding for postdoctoral fellowships, you may seek and find funding from a variety of sources, including:

- The postdoctoral fellowship program itself;
- Your faculty supervisor, who may compensate fellows from their research grant;
- External agencies

The following external agencies can serve as a starting point in your search:

- [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council \(SSHRC\)](#)
- [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\)](#)
- [Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada \(AUCC\)](#)
- [NALP's Public Service Law Network](#)
- [Canadian Federation of University Women \(CFUW\)](#)
- [Canadian Bureau for International Education \(CBIE\)](#)

2.3 Judicial Clerkships

A judicial clerkship is typically a one year research assignment where you work for a particular judge, for a group of judges, or for an entire court. Although duties vary, essentially the role involves reading and listening to legal arguments, researching the issues, and writing about the issues.

There are many advantages to completing a judicial clerkship³:

- It's a universally-recognized credential. Clerking for a judge is a prestigious opportunity that is highly valued by employers of all types, and it provides you with an extremely useful recommendation and contact.
- The job is very intellectually stimulating, which studies have shown is the single most important determinant of job satisfaction.

³ Walton, Kimm Alayne, *Guerrilla Tactics for Getting the Legal Job of Your Dreams*, Thomson West.

- It will allow you to perfect your legal research and writing skills, which virtually every legal employer values.
- It will allow you to have a meaningful input and impact on the lives of people and to experience the unique opportunity to have a real hand in determining justice.
- You'll get exposure to a wide range of cases and issues, which will make you attractive to potential employers.
- You'll have a bird's eye view of the legal community; an unmatched opportunity to get familiar with judges, court personnel, and lawyers.

How to increase your chances of getting a judicial clerkship:

- Mind your grades: although good grades are important no matter what you're going after, they are especially important if you're hoping to secure a clerkship.
- Take seminar courses: seminar papers make good writing samples.
- Get involved in as many research opportunities as possible. Take classes with professors who are former clerks: forge personal relationships with professors who know judges.
- Take part in writing competitions: it will go a long way in demonstrating your writing skills.
- Participate in moot competitions (if you are eligible): they frequently feature local judges. If you do well, introduce yourself to them, collect business cards, and follow up with a thank you note.
- Research judges, then go to their courtroom: watch your target judges interact with their clerks, introduce yourself during breaks if you can, tell them that you were interested in seeing them at work because you'll be applying for a clerkship with them.
- Make every opportunity to meet judges: at school-sponsored events, or through other contacts within your network.

2.4 Private Practice

If you are considering work in private practice as a graduate student, the first step is to find out if you are eligible to practise law. In order to determine how to become a member of the legal profession, you must contact the [law society](#) of the province in which you wish to receive accreditation (the Career and Professional Development Centre cannot confirm your eligibility to get licensed). If eligible, you can participate in organized recruitment activities to find a job in a law firm. Some recruitment processes are more formal: they are governed by [Law Society of Upper Canada \(LSUC\) guidelines](#) and they take place at specific times throughout the year. Others are informal: employers will sometimes advertise available positions on [The Source](#) or other websites, outside of formal recruitment cycles.

You can also be proactive and conduct your own job search. In addition to browsing internet databases for advertised positions, it's important to canvass all avenues for

finding a potential hidden opportunity. Networking efforts are invaluable in finding unadvertised jobs.

Aside from [The Source](#), the following list of legal databases and directories can serve as a starting point to locate firms that are hiring or to search for potential employers by location, size and/or practice area:

- The Canadian Directory of Legal Employers ([NALP](#))
- [viDesktop](#)
- The [LexisNexis](#) Legal Employment Database
- L'Expert Legal Directory
- [Martindale-Hubbell Directory](#)
- [Canadian Law List](#)

2.5 In-house Counsel

In a company, the duties of the person holding the position of in-house counsel typically involve overseeing and identifying the legal issues in all departments and their interrelation. Corporate in-house counsels do not have to solicit business; they have one client: the corporation.

A graduate degree in a legal area related to the employer's industry can provide you with an important advantage when seeking an in-house counsel position, as employers seek individuals who have a particular expertise in their industry. Many corporations wish to hire lawyers with a minimum of 3-5 years of experience.

In-house counsel is therefore a good option if you are looking for an alternative to private practice and are interested in the business sector or a particular industry. Please note that most employers seeking in-house counsel require the candidate to be licensed to practice law.

Expanding or tapping into your existing network of employers, as well as speaking with your cohort of fellow alumni, is an effective way to find a job as in-house counsel.

2.6 Government

Government bodies (municipal, provincial and federal) may seek individuals who can research issues to influence or write laws and amendments. Graduates who have skills in comparative law may have an advantage over other candidates, as they can engage in comparing domestic laws to those of other countries and assess the impact of the laws on various groups. Some government positions may require licensing, while others may not.

Making your name in research by getting your work published and expanding your network by participating in conferences is the key to finding policy research opportunities.

Federal government recruitment websites include the following:

- [Canadian International Development Agency](#)
- [Federal Student Work Experience Program \(FSWEP\)](#)
- [Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada](#)
- [Justice Canada](#)
- [Public Service Commission of Canada](#)

2.7 Intergovernmental Organizations

IGOs are institutions of public international law whose members are other IGOs and sovereign states. Most are global organizations which include specialized agencies such as UNESCO and the International Civil Aviation Organization, working under the United Nations. Others are regional organizations, such as the Asian Development Bank. Their objectives vary immensely, and can include promoting education, economic development, environmental protection, health care, human rights, humanitarian efforts, inter-cultural approach and conflict resolution.

2.8 Public-Interest

Finding an organization or association that specializes in your particular areas of law is a great way to use your specialization on a daily basis.

Connect with people who work in the specific field that interests you as a way of expanding your current network. If you're still a student, it may be worth considering a volunteer work opportunity in this area. Working in the public interest requires passion and dedication.

Positions within not-for-profit organizations (NGOs) are highly sought after and limited. Factors that could work in a graduate student's favour include relevant prior work and research experience, language skills and an international background⁴.

Keep in mind that you may have to justify to the organization your interest in helping defend a specific cause and demonstrate your dedication and commitment to helping their clients defend that cause.

⁴ https://law.duke.edu/career/resources/2014_llm_career_planning_manual.pdf

For more information about Public Interest opportunities, visit the [Public Service Legal Careers \(PSJD\) website](#).

2.9 US and International Opportunities

When considering US and International legal employment opportunities, the first step is to research the requirements for application and for licensing, as well as the expectations for formatting your resume and cover letter. For tips on how to tailor your application documents for US private sector employers, consult *Sample Resumes and Cover Letters for Students Applying to the US*, available in [The Source](#) Document Library.

For help on drafting an academic CV for positions in academia, consult [Converting Your Resume to a Curriculum Vitae](#).

Some American states, such as New York, allow students from foreign schools to write their bar exams and practise in their jurisdiction without too much red tape. Others, such as Alabama, do not accept that students from foreign law schools write their exams without petitioning the state's Supreme Court. Therefore, many Canadian students will work their way into the New York bar out of convenience. If you have your eyes set on a particular state, you should visit that bar's website to become familiar with their requirements. Unlike Canada, students planning to practise in the US are not required to do any form of internship/articling in order to gain admission to a bar (with a few exceptions), however several states have implemented or are considering implementing a mandatory pro bono requirement before students are able to be called to the bar. This means that once you have passed the bar exam and completed the pro bono requirement (if any), you can join an American firm as a first-year associate.

Consult the [Comprehensive Guide to Bar Admission Requirements](#), published annually by the American Bar Association, which outlines all admission requirements of the various American bars.

There is no standard requirement to practise in a foreign jurisdiction overseas. If you have your mind set on a particular country, the first step is to contact their individual bar to find out more about their requirements.

2.10 JD Advantage Careers

Your graduate legal education can be viewed as specialized training in skills which are transferable to new areas. Once you've made the decision to pursue a JD Advantage career and understand which skills you have, your next step should be to perform a self-assessment in order to gain an understanding of your interests, goals and values. This involves asking yourself some serious questions: what would your ideal job be? You should also seek involvement in groups and organizations which relate to your interests,

both as a means of attaining future exposure to the field, and to meet valuable contacts. The internet, as well as family, friends, professors, and former employers, are all valuable resources for making connections.

For a more detailed list of JD Advantage Career Opportunities, consult [The Source](#) Document Library.

2.11 Special considerations for international students

As a foreign trained lawyer, you may have a few extra steps to take before you are hired by a Canadian employer. You also possess a unique combination of skills and experience that interest them. Converting your experience abroad into an asset for North America employers depends on your ability to market yourself in your documents and during an interview. Your CV should be tailored to match the job description. The employer may be more inclined to interview you, knowing that you are a foreign-trained lawyer, if you are able to fill a specific need.

Becoming a member of a Canadian bar can be a lengthy and costly process, depending on the jurisdiction you choose, your citizenship status, the type of undergraduate law degree you have and where it is from. Keep in mind that you don't automatically qualify to be called to the bar if you have a LLM.

It is in your best interest to prepare yourself to address any potential questions that an employer may have about your foreign studies. Some guidelines to follow include:

- Mentioning in your cover letter why you want to work in the employer's city and country. Specify, if applicable, any bar equivalences, bar exams or transfer exams required by the bar of the employer's jurisdiction. An employer will be more inclined to grant you an interview if you are clear about your interests, intentions and availability.
- Tailor and summarize your credentials to highlight your resume in a way that will spark the employer's interest. Make sure your resume follows the format of a North American legal resume.
- If a reference letter is required, make every effort to obtain one from a local referee, who will likely be known in the local legal community and who will be easier to reach.
- Send a certified translation of any documents not written in English or French, an official explanation of the grading system and your rank in your undergraduate program, as well as the recommendations of the Equivalence Committee of the bar of the jurisdiction or the National Committee on Accreditation of the Law Societies of Canada. These documents will help clarify any issues of equivalences and language.

CHAPTER 3: HOW CAN I FIND WORK?

3.1 Effective networking

Networking means ‘meeting people and having them share with you their thoughts on their career and also seeking their feedback on your own career choices’⁵. This includes increasing knowledge of your chosen career path, the skills you will need to be successful, what changes you can expect, as well as improving your current job search strategies.

Networking can not only help you find hidden job opportunities, but it also gives you exposure and informal insider information about the current job market. When networking with a firm, valuable information can be obtained about its culture and working atmosphere, its clientele, its current or future projects, its hire-back rate, and its opportunities for advancement. The employer can also take notes about your enthusiasm and ‘fit’.

Build your networking strategy by following the following five-step model:

1. Make a list of people you know who can help you identify opportunities and find the right employer: professors, alumni, members of law societies, the staff at the CPDC, former employers, family, friends, and neighbours.
2. Start building towards a more extensive list by asking your initial contacts to recommend other people you can get in touch with. Use summer jobs, volunteer work, and conferences, as well as involvement in student clubs or other associations to meet and greet people.
3. Determine the best way to get in touch with all these people. While face-to-face meetings may be better with certain people, a phone call or email might work best for others.
4. Don’t be shy. You cannot expect the other person to initiate conversation, since you are the one establishing communication. Have a polite introduction and a prepared list of questions ready, and be prepared to discuss your interests and experiences. Mention the name of the person who referred you, if applicable. It’s important to be flexible and adjust to the conversation’s informal nature. Think of the person with whom you are speaking as someone who can provide information, as the purpose of the meeting is an information interview. Look professional and get to the point quickly as to respect the other person’s time. Do not ask for a job! You are simply looking for information.
5. Follow up on your information interview by thanking the person by phone, email or letter. It’s also good practice to keep your contacts informed of any developments following their suggestions, as this will help maintain the relationship throughout your career.

⁵ McGill University Graduate Law Students’ Career Guide, page 104

3.2 Job searching

There are numerous ways for graduate students to find employment – each person’s path is unique. Many students find employment through job postings, networking, personal contacts, and referrals. The most successful students do not rely on a single job search strategy.

3.3 Application package

The standard application package includes a cover letter (3/4 page to 1 page – up to 2 pages for academic positions), a resume (2 pages), and letters of recommendation. You may also be asked to send transcripts, writing samples, or a list of references. Schools may request a statement or research and teaching, or a teaching dossier. Make sure you read the job posting carefully in order to produce a complete application package.

Your application documents should be tailored to the employer. Orient all aspects of your application for the position to which you are applying. Although each school or employer has a different philosophy and different needs, they recognize that you are a young scholar and they don’t expect you to know everything. However, you should demonstrate your competence in your primary area of interest as well as your ability and willingness to reach beyond those core interests.

3.3.1 Cover Letter

Your cover letter, which is arguably the most important part of your application package, is likely to be the first thing a prospective employer will read. You should strive to accomplish two goals with your cover letter: first, to get the reader excited about you - who you are, and why you’re interested – second, to demonstrate to the reader how you are a good fit for the employer’s needs and philosophies and how you anticipate contributing to its goals. If a statement of research is not required as part of the application package, make sure to outline your research agenda in your cover letter. State your interests, describe your dissertation and your methodology, as well as the long term trajectory of your research. If a statement of teaching is not required as part of the application package, make sure you speak to your teaching experience or how you see yourself as an educator in your cover letter. This can include areas you are able to teach (including at least one first year core course).

3.3.2 Resume

The second item reviewed by a prospective employer as part of your application is likely to be your resume. The CLCDN recommends the following order for outlining the different sections on your resume:

1. Academic background: all post-secondary schools attended with dates, degrees granted (or expected) and any awards or scholarships received.

2. Professional work experience: include everything that is relevant. If choosing not to include a particular experience, make sure you can explain any large gaps. If you wish, you can separate academic and non-academic work experiences into two distinct sections.
3. Research and publications: accompany each project or paper (including those presented at conferences) with its proper citation and, if you wish, describe the subject matter in a brief sentence.
4. Teaching experience
5. Extra-curricular and volunteer activities: this section can include affiliations and memberships.

3.3.3 References

Your referees are more likely to make you look good if you make it easy for them to do so. Give your referees copies of your application materials and information about the schools to which you are applying, get permission before using them as a reference, and ask for letters of reference well in advance of any deadlines. The CLCDN recommends that you consider the following before requesting a reference⁶:

- Find someone who knows your academic work, who has worked closely with you and can write in detail about your academic credentials;
- Consider the status and/or reputation of your prospective academic referee. Well-known and highly regarded academics are of course preferable;
- Consider whether a referee is sufficiently acquainted with you and your work to write a meaningful reference. A form letter praising your achievements or your character that uses vague general statements is not helpful, even when coming from a very prominent academic;
- Consider how well a referee knows you. Someone who knows you well is a better choice than someone whom you have just met. In this regard, a letter from a well-known academic who has not worked closely with you may be less preferable than a letter from someone who can assess your academic potential in greater detail.
- Consider whether the referee has any special credibility (or lack thereof) with a particular school. For example, depending on a referee's history with a school, choosing a former faculty member can be either positive or negative;
- Choose referees who will best accomplish the task of proving that you will be a good academic.

3.3.4 Statements of research and teaching

The statement of research and teaching, when required, provides depth and detail to the overview presented in the cover letter.

⁶ CLCDN – Canadian Legal Career Development Network – Shared Resource Collection: Careers in Legal Academia. P. 18

Research: describe a set of research problems that interest you, how you want to approach them, and how they link to previous research projects you've developed. You want the reader to know what your plan is once your current research is complete.

Teaching: describe your method, approach and perspective. Include specific courses you are able to teach, including at least one first-year law course. If you don't have any teaching experience, use more general terms

3.3.5 Writing Sample

Send your strongest writing sample, published or unpublished, if requested. Consider whether your writing sample's subject matter would be of interest to the employer and their current needs, although the strength of your writing is more important than fit.

Before sending your application by mail, email, fax, or other forms of submission, ensure the employer accepts applications in that format. Also have someone look over your documents to eliminate common errors.

For more tips on application documents, including how to format your legal resume and write an interesting cover letter, consult the [Naked Resumes and Cover Letters resource](#), published by the CPDC.

3.4 Interview preparation

If you are one of the most successful candidates after the committee has reviewed the applications, you will be invited to visit the school, usually over the course of a full day. Although the structure of the day varies depending on the institution, common agenda items include a job, an interview, meetings with the dean and other faculty, meetings with students, and invitations to lunch or dinner.

The CLCDN recommends that you do the following to prepare for an interview day on campus:

- Dress professionally.
- Check the school's website. This is often an easy source for identifying a school's mission statement, priorities, etc. Keep in mind the way that the position is advertised. Use this information to determine how you may fit there. How would you fulfill their needs?
- Find out how decisions are made at the school. Not everyone has the same influence over hiring decisions. If possible, try to figure out who you really need to convince. It could be the dean, members of the appointments committee, a particular high-profile professor, or maybe even the students.

- Most schools will inform you in advance about which faculty members you will meet during your visit. Look them up to try to find a way to connect with each of them.
- Find out about significant issues that face the school. There is an off chance that you may be asked about them. However, even if you are not, it may still impress your interviewers that you are aware about certain issues when and if they come up in conversation. The school newspaper can be a good source for locating these kinds of information.
- Speak with new faculty members. Try to find out about their own experiences during their interviews.
- Practice your job talk over and over again; especially the Q&A, perhaps using fellow graduate students or mentors as a mock audience.

3.4.1 The job talk

Job talks do not follow a particular model; make sure you ask what format to expect if the interviewing school doesn't brief you in advance. Commonly, you will be asked to do a 20 minute presentation followed by a 30 minute discussion on a paper that you will have submitted and that will have been circulated to the attendees in advance. The type of paper you choose should be relevant to the school's focus, goals, and audience.

Keep in mind:

- The presentation style is as important as the content, and is an opportunity to demonstrate what kind of teacher you are.
- Prepare for a variety of questions and unexpected situations, such as persistent questioners, 'experts' trying to show you up in front of a crowd, or intentionally disruptive people.
- Consider arranging a mock job talk with your supervisor or other faculty members to test-drive your presentation.

3.5 Offers and decisions

It is appropriate to ask for time to consider an offer, to mention other job talks that you have scheduled, as well as any outstanding offers. The job market and appointment process being highly competitive, you might find yourself in the position of not securing a position after graduation. If you don't get any offers and are still set on pursuing a legal academic career, seek feedback from the schools at which you interviewed, which can often give you a sense for where you could improve. You also want to continue demonstrating your commitment to teaching law by further developing your research and teaching credentials. The CLCDN recommends the following activities:

- Keep writing and try to get published. If you find that you don't have the time to write full scholarly articles, you could try writing book reviews to fill the gap, although this could be just as time-consuming as an article to do well;

- Apply for post-doctoral fellowships and research positions at universities or apply to policy positions within government. These types of jobs all have a significant research component to them and will likely make it easier to find the time needed to get published. You might also consider working part-time at a legal clinic.
- Approach law faculties about adjunct teaching positions. This is an excellent way to build some contacts as well as developing your teaching record and collecting some teaching evaluations.
- Try other non-law faculties at universities, such as Ryerson University. Keep in mind that such positions tend to be heavy on teaching duties and make it harder to develop the scholarly record needed for a tenure stream job.
- Teaching in the UK, Australia or the US may be a good option for many new academics. The caveat is the same as above, as UK schools, for example, tend to require a heavy teaching load and are paid less than in the US or Canada. If your goal is to return to Canada, you need to think about this option strategically.
- Continue to network. Keep in touch with people you have met. Use every opportunity to make new contacts in the academic community. Present research and writing at conferences. Attend events at local law faculties.

3.6 Booking an appointment with the CPDC

To book an appointment with a counsellor, please contact us in person at FTX 233 or by phone at 613-562-5800, extension 2514. We look forward to meeting with you.

ⁱ CLCDN – Canadian Legal Career Development Network - Shared Resource Collection: Postdoctoral Fellowships.