# OLSAS – Bora Laskin Faculty of Law (Lakehead University)

## **About the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law**

Located on the breathtaking shore of Lake Superior in Thunder Bay, Ontario, the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law is no ordinary law school.

Established in 2013 as the first law school to introduce the Integrated Practice Curriculum (IPC), the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law has a proven track record of producing practice-ready graduates. With an incoming class of only 90 students, we provide an intimate and personalized legal education that allows our students to thrive.

Our JD program focuses on the realities of living and working in the North, as reflected in our 3 mandate areas:

* Aboriginal and Indigenous Law
* Natural Resources and Environmental Law
* Sole/Small Town Practice with the IPC

**Our advantages are:**

* The IPC fuses practice with theory and exempts our law students from the Law Society of Ontario’s (LSO) articling requirement.
* Opportunity for Specialization in Aboriginal and Indigenous Law.
* Land-based learning opportunities through our Indigenous Law and Justice Institute, Mino-waabandan Inaakonigewinan.
* Small class sizes with professors who have a passion for teaching and who challenge and engage our students.

### **Experiential Learning Opportunities Through Clinic Courses**

#### Lakehead University Community Legal Services (LUCLS)

Students can engage with our student-led clinic, [**LUCLS**](https://www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/departments/law/clinic/node/43074). Founded in 2015, in partnership with Legal Aid Ontario and Lakehead University’s Bora Laskin Faculty of Law, one of the main goals at LUCLS is to provide a practical clinical education program for our law students.

Second- and third-year law students can work in the clinic, under the direct supervision of experienced staff lawyers (Review Counsel), for academic credit. Students have full carriage of files. Their work in the clinic allows them to gain valuable experience interviewing clients, drafting legal documents, negotiating with opposing parties and conducting motions, hearings and trials.

In addition to LUCLS, the Newcomer Legal Clinic was established with a grant from The Law Foundation of Ontario to serve the legal needs of migrants and refugees in Northwestern Ontario. It is the only legal clinic offering free immigration and refugee law services in our region. Students have the opportunity to work with and learn about the unique legal needs of migrants living in northern and remote communities.

In addition to LUCLS, the Newcomer Legal Clinic was established with a grant from The Law Foundation of Ontario to serve the legal needs of immigrants and refugees in Northwestern Ontario. The Newcomer Clinic operates at the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law and welcomed its first for-credit clinic course students in September 2021.

#### **The Mino-waabandan Inaakonigewinan Indigenous Law and Justice Institute**

The Mino-waabandan Inaakonigewinan Indigenous Law and Justice Institute is an academic research unit based out of the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law at Lakehead University. The Institute was launched in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action #50, which calls for the creation of Indigenous law institutes to support access to justice for Indigenous people and to revitalize Indigenous laws.

The Institute works with Indigenous communities and organizations by invitation to:

* identify, articulate and develop Indigenous laws, legal principles and systems;
* promote access to both Indigenous legal systems and the Canadian justice system by developing and delivering public legal education;
* develop and strengthen curriculum at the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law by promoting land-based teaching practices and increased cultural competency; and
* produce academic research, including tools and publications, that supports the revitalization of Indigenous laws and access to justice.

### **Career Services**

Our mandate is to prepare graduates for the practice of law in smaller centres and in rural regions of Canada where there is a shortage of legal practitioners. However, with a focus on skills training and practical application of the law throughout the 3-year program, our graduates will be assets to any firm or legal office, big or small.

Our Student Services department works closely with students to develop their resumés and cover letters, practice interviewing and networking skills, and promote professionalism.

The Student Services department keeps students up to date on job postings and professional development opportunities in the region, in the province and across Canada.

## **Program Information**

The Bora Laskin Faculty of Law offers a 3-Year Full-Time Juris Doctor (JD) Degree.

### **Integrated Practice Curriculum (IPC)**

The Bora Laskin Faculty of Law’s innovative IPC model of legal education fuses the theory of law with the practice of law. Students not only develop substantive legal knowledge, but also learn the necessary practical legal skills to use that legal knowledge effectively. IPC legal skills are taught progressively so that they build one upon the other, course by course, year by year.

Additionally, through the IPC (including the Practice Placement program), our students develop the various competencies required by the LSO of all lawyer licensing candidates, including but not limited to:

* Ethics and Professional Responsibility
* Fact Investigation and Legal Research
* Drafting and Legal Writing
* Planning and Advising
* File and Practice management

As part of the IPC, our students participate in a 4-month, unpaid Practice Placement in their third year.

The Practice Placement component of the IPC places students in law firms and organizations across Ontario, allowing them the full experience of working as a law student in an area of law that interests them. Throughout their Practice Placement, students will be given the opportunity to develop and refine, in a practice setting, the relevant competencies and skills developed throughout the IPC law program in first and second year.

#### Articling

Students will have the option to article after graduation if they wish; however, upon the completion of the IPC and Practice Placement, and graduation from the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law, students can sit for bar exams and be called to the bar without the need to article.

### **First-year Curriculum (1L)**

The first-year program for all students is mandatory. Core mandatory law courses include:

* Foundations of Canadian Law
* Contract Law
* Criminal Law
* Torts
* Property Law
* Constitutional Law
* Legal Research and Writing
* Indigenous Law
* Indigenous Perspectives

Bora Laskin Faculty of Law students complete IPC skills-based exercises in all mandatory courses in first year, second year and third year.

By the end of first year, students will have:

* written a factum and completed an oral submission in Constitutional Law;
* argued a bail hearing and a sentence hearing in Criminal Law;
* negotiated and drafted a contract in Contract Law;
* drafted a research memorandum in Legal Research and Writing;
* conducted a client interview and drafted a memorandum to file in Tort Law;
* completed a case brief in Foundations of Canadian Law; and
* participated in a sharing circle in Indigenous Law.

Throughout all 3 years, these assignments will be in addition to other tasks that professors may assign throughout the academic year.

### **Upper-year Curriculum (2L and 3L)**

#### Mandatory Courses

* Aboriginal Law
* Professional Responsibility
* Civil Practice
* Business Organizations
* Administrative Law
* Evidence
* Wills & Estates
* Family Law
* Real Estate Law

#### Elective Courses

In addition to mandatory courses, students will take upper-year elective courses available to both second- and third-year students. These courses cover a broad spectrum of interests, such as:

* Environmental Law
* Animals, Environment & Law
* Alternative Dispute Resolution
* Tax Law
* Public Health
* Human Rights and International Law
* Labour and Employment Law
* Insurance Law
* Remedies
* Advanced Criminal Law
* Other topics focused on issues pertaining to the North

Bora Laskin Faculty of Law students complete IPC skills-based exercises in all mandatory courses in first year, second year, and third year. By the second and third year, students will have:

* participated in a multi-party negotiation in Aboriginal Law;
* drafted various litigation documents and completed an entire mock trial in Civil Practice;
* drafted a will or power of attorney in Wills and Estates;
* reviewed an agreement of purchase and sale in Real Estate Law;
* drafted an opinion letter in Business Organizations;
* drafted various litigation documents in Family Law; and
* participated in various files and skill development exercises, including file management, legal research, drafting and oral advocacy throughout Practice Placement.

Throughout all 3 years, these assignments will be in addition to other tasks that professors may assign throughout the academic year.

#### Upper Year Writing Requirement

To graduate from the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law, all students must complete the Upper Year Writing Requirement in either their second or third year. The Upper Year Writing requirement is a scholarly paper between 7,500 and 10,000 words (including footnotes) with a value of at least 50% toward the final grade in a course.

The paper is supervised by a faculty member and is usually completed in a seminar-type elective course. The student must receive a minimum of 60% on the paper for it to qualify for the Upper Year Writing Requirement.

### **Aboriginal and Indigenous Law Specialization**

All students have an opportunity to specialize in Aboriginal and Indigenous Law. The specialization is designed to provide students with the specialized knowledge and skills necessary to understand Indigenous peoples’ beliefs, cultures, histories, and legal and governance practices, as well as the sets of laws and legislation that govern Indigenous peoples’ lives.

To meet the specialization requirements, students must take 2.5 full-course equivalents (FCE), which include 1.5 FCE in mandatory courses and 1.0 FCE in approved upper-year electives.

## **Admission Requirements and Supporting Documents**

The Bora Laskin Faculty of Law takes a holistic approach to admissions. This means that there are no specific weights put on individual components of the application, nor are there minimum grade point average (GPA) or LSAT scores. Every piece of the application contributes to the bigger picture of who you are as an applicant.

We are not currently accepting applications from international students. Applicants must have either Canadian permanent resident (landed immigrant) status or Canadian citizenship

We recognize that every applicant is unique and complex, and the Admissions Committee is looking for academically strong, well-rounded and diverse candidates to make up our next class.

### **Academic Requirements**

You must successfully complete a minimum of 3 years of full-time undergraduate studies at a recognized university to be considered for admission (unless you apply under the [**Mature category**](https://www.ouac.on.ca/guide/olsas-lakehead/#mature)). Preference is given to those with a 4-year undergraduate degree. You may apply in the third or final year of your undergraduate degree program.

Competitive applicants will typically have a 75-80% or higher average in their overall undergraduate programs.

Admission is competitive as we receive many applications each year.

### **Law School Admission Test (LSAT)**

You are required to take the LSAT, which is administered several times throughout the year in several locations across Canada and the United States, or remotely as the currently offered LSAT Flex option. It is not necessary to apply to the Faculty of Law prior to registering for the LSAT.

[Upcoming LSAT Test Dates and Registration Information](http://www.lsac.org/)

You must take the LSAT by January 2026; however, you are highly encouraged to write the LSAT by November 2025 to have the score reports available for the first round of offers.

If you write the LSAT more than once, the highest test result reported by the Law School Admission Council in the year you apply will be used for admission. LSAT scores from within the past 6 years (on or after June 2020) may be used.

Lakehead University does not set a minimum LSAT score requirement. The weight given to the LSAT varies depending on fulfilling other elements of the application.

### **Personal Statement**

You must complete the Personal Statement within your OLSAS application.

The Bora Laskin Faculty of Law is committed to the following 3 mandate areas:

1. Aboriginal and Indigenous Law,
2. Environmental Law and Natural Resource Law and
3. Sole Practitioner/Small Town Law practice, including the IPC.

Discuss how any or all of our mandate areas fit in with your goals as a future lawyer. If applicable, also discuss any connection or previous experience you have with any or all of our mandate areas.

We recognize that it may be more difficult for Black and racialized applicants to situate their connection to the mandate areas given the long history of conceiving Indigenous-settler relations as a relationship between Indigenous people and white people.

In light of this history, we want to clarify that we invite reflections on Indigenous-Black relations and the role of racialized people in reconciliation and decolonization. We welcome the thoughts of applicants on the historical exclusion of Black and racialized communities from environmental protection and natural resource development. We also welcome applicants’ thoughts on the challenges and contributions of Black and racialized communities in small town practice or as sole practitioners.

The Personal Statement also provides you with the opportunity to discuss your strengths, capabilities and achievements that distinguish you as a desirable applicant. You may wish to include information about what led you to apply to study law, your preparedness for the study of law and your interest in the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law.

You may also wish to include information about any anomalies within your academic performance, highlight non-academic achievements and note any special circumstances that have contributed to, or adversely affected, your academic and non-academic success.

Your Personal Statement will be considered in the context of the rest of your application. It must be authored entirely by you and must not exceed 8,000 characters in length.

#### **Autobiographical Sketch (ABS)**

The ABS is a detailed and comprehensive list of your activities since high school (do not include high school activities), within any of the following categories:

1. Employment
2. Volunteer Activities
3. Extracurricular Activities
4. Awards and Accomplishments
5. Research

The ABS is meant to complement your Personal Statement by providing extra background information about your involvement in various activities. You will need to know the start and end dates of all your activities and provide verifiers.

### **References**

You must provide **at least** 2 letters of reference, preferably academic.

Carefully consider your referees. Referees should have extensive personal knowledge of you to make statements about your character, personal qualities, academic competencies, employment performance, volunteer contributions and other areas that may be of interest to the Admissions Committee.

Letters of reference must be confidential and submitted directly by the referee to OLSAS. You need to arrange for your referees to use the OLSAS Confidential Assessment Forms that are provided with the application.

### **Transcripts**

Official transcripts are required for all postsecondary institutions you attended, including transcripts from studies as a visiting or exchange student. You must order all transcripts and they must be sent directly to OLSAS from the host institution.

Current and previous Lakehead University students must also provide official transcripts to OLSAS.

[More About OLSAS Transcript Requirements](https://www.ouac.on.ca/guide/olsas-transcript/)

#### Transcripts from Foreign and Private Universities

You must have all official transcripts translated (if applicable) and evaluated by [**World Education Services (WES)**](http://wes.org/ca) if:

* you were educated outside Canada or the United States,
* you obtained a degree outside Canada or the United States or
* you are currently completing an undergraduate degree from a foreign country.

A course-by-course evaluation specifying Canadian degree, grade and credit hour equivalency is required.

You are responsible for the costs associated with the transcript evaluation and any required translation.

WES evaluations are not needed for coursework completed on exchange or Letter of Permission if transfer credits for courses are recorded on the home university transcript.

### **Language Proficiency**

An excellent command of spoken and written English is essential for success. If English is not your first language, and you cannot verify having completed at least 1 year of full-time study at an accredited postsecondary institution where English is the official language of instruction, you are required to present proof of English-language proficiency by achieving appropriate standing on one of the tests listed under [**Lakehead’s English Language Proficiency Requirements**](https://www.lakeheadu.ca/studentcentral/applying/english-language-proficiency-requirements). Ensure you review the requirements specifically listed for the Juris Doctor program.

## **Admission Categories**

There are 4 application categories:

### **General Category**

Use this category to apply, unless you feel that you qualify to apply in the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Category (EDIA), Indigenous or Mature categories.

### **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Category (EDIA)**

The Bora Laskin Faculty of Law encourages applications from candidates with diverse backgrounds and experiences, including equity-deserving groups. This category is designed to identify outstanding applicants whose skills, abilities and experiences may not be fully recognized in the General category.

We acknowledge that traditional approaches to assess suitability for law school may not consider systemic and personal barriers an applicant may face. We invite applicants to apply under this category who have faced obstacles and inequities that may have affected their academic history, including, but not limited to, socio-economic factors, mental and/or physical disability, culture, creed, race, sexuality, family status and gender, among others.

Although all applicants are considered holistically, special attention will be given to this category to review files through an anti-racism and decolonizing lens, being especially attentive to unconscious biases. Applicants should explain why they are exceptional candidates for the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law and how their experiences and/or barriers have impacted them. This can be done through the Personal Statement or by attaching an additional Statement.

If possible, provide supporting documentation to support your statement. We understand that documentation may be difficult or impossible to obtain, depending on the circumstances. We ask applicants to exercise their best judgment when deciding what documentation is appropriate and important for the Admissions Committee to consider. We do not require confidential and private medical records to confirm a disability or medical condition; the documentation need only confirm the functional limitations, as it relates to the candidate’s application.

You must have a minimum of 3 years of university (unless you also apply under the Mature Category) and take the LSAT.

### **Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) Category**

We strongly encourage Indigenous applicants from across Canada to apply to our program. We are committed to improving Indigenous representation in the Canadian legal community.

To apply under the Indigenous category, you must be of Indigenous ancestry: First Nations, Inuit or Métis.

We understand that Indigenous applicants may not have documentation to demonstrate evidence of Indigenous ancestry. In those circumstances, we engage in a holistic process and ask that you provide a written statement outlining your relationship to an Indigenous community (or communities) and any other information demonstrating Indigenous ancestry and identity.

In undertaking any assessment of Indigenous ancestry and identity, we respect Indigenous laws and customs, including adoption and membership practices. As part of the holistic process, we may reach out to you to discuss your written statement and any other information you provide.

You must have a minimum of 3 years of university (unless you also apply under the Mature Category) and take the LSAT.

### **Mature Category**

We encourage applications from candidates with diverse backgrounds and experiences. You may be considered under the Mature applicant category if:

* you do not have a completed undergraduate degree or a university track record of academic performance that is normally competitive for law school admission.
* you have 10 or more years of relevant work or non-academic experience since completing high school, which demonstrates that you have a strong potential to succeed in the program, despite not meeting the academic requirements of the General Application Category.

As with all applicants, your file will be reviewed holistically, taking into consideration your capacity for academic success and contribution to the law school and broader community.

As a mature applicant, you must submit an up-to-date resumé along with your Personal Statement.

You are required to submit 2 letters of reference, preferably at least 1 from an academic source. If you are unable to obtain an academic letter of reference, choose a reference that can speak to your abilities as they relate to law school, such as conducting research, writing, critical thinking, ability to work with others and time management.

Mature applicants must complete the LSAT exam and ensure that OLSAS receives all postsecondary transcripts.

## **Admission Information**

### **Application Components**

All applications and supporting documentation must be submitted to OLSAS. Documentation sent directly to our institution will not be considered. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Applications open in August and close on November 1, 2025. Late applications will not be considered.

All applications must contain:

1. OLSAS application
2. Official transcripts for all postsecondary institutions attended
3. Personal Statement
4. Official LSAT scores
5. References
6. Autobiographical Sketch (ABS)
7. Supporting documentation, where necessary (Indigenous, EDIA and Mature Applicant categories)

We review files holistically. We assess GPA all transcripts, best LSAT score, Personal Statement, references and ABS to determine the best fit for law and our program.

We usually extend first-round offers in December and rolling admission continues until classes reach capacity, usually in early summer.

## **Additional Information**

### **Fee Waivers**

You may request a fee waiver for the Bora Laskin portion of the application fee. We will assess requests using a fee waiver application form that you can obtain directly from the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law. The basic criterion for granting a fee waiver is the absolute inability to pay for the service.

[Apply for a Fee Waiver](https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/law/admissions/fee-waiver)

#### **Tuition, Scholarships and Financial Aid**

Tuition for 2025-2026 is $19,338.23 plus ancillary fees of $2,428.73.

We offer entrance scholarships to applicants who demonstrate exceptional academic achievement and a strong alignment with our school’s mandate areas. You do not need to apply for entrance scholarships; you are automatically considered.

Lakehead University offers more than $11 million in funding each year through scholarships, awards and bursaries.

Students can complete a general application through our myAwards database, which automatically matches students with applicable awards, scholarships and bursaries. This makes it easy for you to know which financial supports are available to you as an individual. We want to ensure all students have the necessary financial information, support and resources to complete their education.

[Student Central – Financing and Budgeting](https://www.lakeheadu.ca/studentcentral/financing-budgeting)

## **Contact Information**

Use Secure Applicant Messaging (SAM) in the OLSAS application for inquiries about submitting your application and OLSAS receiving your documentation.

For questions about program and admissions requirements, contact us:

[**Lakehead University’s Bora Laskin Faculty of Law**](http://www.law.lakeheadu.ca/)
Telephone: 807-346-7862
Email: **law@lakeheadu.ca**Follow us on Instagram at: [**@lakeheadlaw**](https://www.instagram.com/lakeheadlaw/)

### **Contact in Person**

Bora Laskin Faculty of Law
401 Red River Road
Thunder Bay ON  P7B 1B4

### **Contact by Mail**

Bora Laskin Faculty of Law
Lakehead University
955 Oliver Road
Thunder Bay ON  P7B 5E1

# OLSAS – Program Requirements Overview

<https://www.ouac.on.ca/guide/olsas-program-requirements/>

## **Bora Laskin Faculty of Law (Lakehead University)**

**First-year class size in 2024:** 65

**Number of first-year applicants in 2025 academic year:** 678

**Part-time, half-time, extended-time:**N/A

**Minimum undergraduate academic requirements:**

* 3 years or more
* Undergraduate program completion is preferred

 **LSAT:**

* Test must be taken on, or after, June 2020
* No minimum LSAT score
* Highest score used – the weight given to the LSAT varies depending on the fulfillment of other elements of the application

 **Academic minimums:**Competitive applications have an overall academic standing of B+ or 75% with an A- or 80% in the last 2 years of study at the undergraduate level.

 **School Submissions:**Required from all applicants.

 **Referee forms (letters of reference):**2 letters of reference are required (academic preferred).

 **Programs:**

* JD

 **Categories:**

* General
* Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA)
* Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit and Métis)
* Mature

**Other:**

* Those applying under the Indigenous category are required to submit evidence of Indigenous identity, such as:
	+ a copy of a status card or letter of support from an Indigenous organization, like a band council or Métis community council, and
	+ an outline in the Personal Statement of their relationship to their community, including how they have contributed to, are connected to and identify with that community.
* Those applying under the EDIA category should submit corroborative documents, if applicable.
* Those applying under the Mature category must submit an up-to-date resumé.

[More about Bora Laskin Faculty of Law at Lakehead University](https://www.ouac.on.ca/guide/olsas-lakehead/)