

# Western Canada Competency Profile

Competencies for Entry to Legal Practice



Law Society  
of British Columbia





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# Competency Domain 1: Ethics and Professional Responsibilities

Demonstrate ethical and appropriate behaviour in all professional matters and respect equality and diversity.

## Competency

## Performance Indicators

- | Competency   | Performance Indicators  |
|--|---|
| 1.1 Fulfill ethical obligations and abide by professional standards  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adhere to provisions of applicable statutes, rules and codes that govern the legal profession</li><li>• Recognize ethical issues and exercise good judgment in addressing them</li><li>• Protect client confidentiality</li><li>• Identify potential conflicts of interest and take action to avoid them</li></ul>  |
| 1.2 Conduct oneself professionally   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate honesty, integrity and trustworthiness</li><li>• Demonstrate professional courtesy, candour and civility in all dealings with clients, colleagues, the courts and others</li><li>• Use the internet, social media and digital platforms appropriately</li><li>• Demonstrate respect for the administration of justice and the rule of law</li><li>• Engage in self-reflection to identify gaps in knowledge, skills and abilities</li><li>• Recognize when tasks or matters fall outside one's own competence and respond appropriately</li><li>• Seek out mentorship, professional development and experiential learning opportunities to maintain and enhance professional practice</li></ul> |
| 1.3 Respect the rights of all people to the equal protection and benefit of the law, and acknowledge the diversity of Canadian communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate awareness of how own values and conscious and unconscious biases affect one's perspectives and actions</li><li>• Respect the diverse cultures, perspectives, backgrounds, experiences and identities of clients, co-workers and colleagues</li><li>• Identify tools and services to facilitate access to justice</li><li>• Act in accordance with principles of applicable human rights legislation</li></ul>   |

## Competency Domain 2: Communication

Deliver clear, accurate and well-reasoned communications that support the advancement of matters.

### Competency

### Performance Indicators

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|---|---|
| 2.1 Deliver clear and audience-centric communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adapt communications to different contexts and audiences, adjusting for tone and formality as suitable to the circumstances</li><li>• Use plain language</li><li>• Use appropriate and logical organization and structure for communications</li><li>• Express concepts concisely, precisely, clearly and logically</li></ul>                                   |
| 2.2 Create quality legal documents                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prepare a variety of accurate legal documents (for example, transactional document, contract, opinion letter, pleading)</li><li>• Draft effective, clear and well-organized legal documents</li><li>• Identify, critically evaluate and adapt relevant document precedents and templates</li><li>• Review legal documents for errors and inaccuracies</li></ul> |
| 2.3 Communicate in a timely manner                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Respond to communications within reasonable time frames</li><li>• Communicate status updates on an ongoing basis to all relevant parties</li></ul>  |

## Competency Domain 3: Truth and Reconciliation

Understand the historical and current impacts that Canadian law has on Indigenous Peoples in Canada and how reconciliation can be incorporated into practice.

### Competency

### Performance Indicators

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|---|--|
| 3.1 Understand the experiences of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate understanding of how colonial laws have impacted the Indigenous Peoples of Canada</li><li>• Demonstrate understanding of systemic discrimination and its intergenerational impacts</li></ul>             |
| 3.2 Understand how reconciliation with the Indigenous Peoples of Canada can be incorporated into legal practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate understanding of Calls to Action and Calls for Justice applicable to working with Indigenous Peoples</li><li>• Consider applicability of Indigenous principles, laws, culture and perspectives</li></ul> |

# Competency Domain 4:

## Professional Relationship Management

Establish, maintain and conclude relationships with others in a professional and civil manner using a client-centred approach.

Competency	Performance Indicators
4.1 Determine suitability of establishing lawyer-client relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess own competency and capacity to undertake the matter</li><li>• Assess need for appropriate mentorship</li><li>• Assess risks or barriers, including potential conflicts, associated with potential client relationship</li><li>• Ascertain language needs of client and ability to communicate</li></ul>
4.2 Establish client relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take steps to gain client confidence (for example, use active listening, communicate respectfully and empathetically)</li><li>• Confirm scope of client retainer</li></ul>
4.3 Manage client relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Obtain and confirm client instructions on ongoing basis</li><li>• Proactively and regularly communicate to keep client apprised of progress in their matter</li><li>• Manage client expectations by clearly and honestly addressing time frames, fees, risks and possible outcomes</li><li>• Conclude or discontinue client relationships as appropriate</li></ul>
4.4 Establish and maintain professional relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate understanding of mentorship and building professional networks</li><li>• Demonstrate ability to collaborate</li><li>• Recognize external resources needed (for example, accountants, social workers, realtors) to support client or own professional needs</li><li>• Navigate relationships with other professionals supporting clients</li></ul>
4.5 Demonstrate emotional intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate awareness of the impact of emotion in interactions with others</li><li>• Engage in self-reflection to identify how own emotions may impact behaviour</li><li>• Engage in empathetic communication</li><li>• Engage in reflective listening</li><li>• Understand the applicability of trauma-informed approaches</li></ul>

## Competency Domain 5: Critical Thinking and Analysis

Use critical thinking and analysis to support clients in pursuing their goals, priorities and broader interests.

Competency	Performance Indicators
5.1 Collect and evaluate all pertinent information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gather information through interviews, searches, document review and other due diligence</li><li>• Identify relevant legal, practical or client issues</li><li>• Identify and respond to new information or changes in circumstances</li></ul>
5.2 Conduct legal research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify when research may be required</li><li>• Perform legal research using reasonably available tools and resources</li><li>• Confirm, verify existence of and note up case citations and legal authorities</li><li>• Interpret and evaluate substantive common law, statutes, regulations, rules, procedural matters, policy and theory</li></ul>
5.3 Perform legal analysis and develop strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apply techniques of legal reasoning and argument to the findings or information gathered</li><li>• Draw reasonable conclusions considering the legal issues, relevant facts and applicable law</li><li>• Clearly and accurately report research process and findings</li><li>• Generate matter-specific strategy and options and formulate practical recommendations</li></ul>



# Competency Domain 6: Advice and Advocacy

Represent clients' interests, inform clients and advance clients' positions.

Competency	Performance Indicators
6.1 Ascertain client goals and set expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ascertain and confirm client goals, objectives, interests and expectations</li><li>• Set reasonable expectations with client regarding matter and representation</li></ul>
6.2 Adopt client-centred approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider entirety of client's circumstances (for example, diversity, age, language, disability, socioeconomic and cultural context, business strategies, organizational structure) in all aspects of a matter</li><li>• Verify that client understands information provided</li><li>• Keep clients informed as is reasonable given the circumstances</li></ul>
6.3 Provide legal advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide advice about the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing options or strategies, to support informed decision making or resolve the problem</li><li>• Adapt legal strategy or approach as circumstances change</li></ul>
6.4 Represent client interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Act on instructions to further client objectives within the boundaries of the law and professional obligations</li><li>• Identify and implement strategies that are responsive to client goals, objectives and interests, and that are relevant to the factual and legal context</li></ul>
6.5 Advocate effectively for client interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicate the law and legal issues in language appropriate to the audience</li><li>• Formulate and present persuasive, well-reasoned and accurate legal arguments</li><li>• Identify and use advocacy techniques appropriate to factual and legal context</li></ul>

# Competency Domain 7:

## Practice Management and Well-being

Responsibly manage one's work and practice, including self, files, technology and risks.

### Competency

### Performance Indicators

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|--|---|
| 7.1 Support own well-being and that of others  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage in self-reflection to recognize positive and negative influences on own well-being and professional performance</li><li>• Take necessary actions to support own health and well-being, including seeking resources where available</li><li>• Recognize inappropriate workplace behaviour and contribute to a healthy and respectful workplace culture</li></ul>  |
| 7.2 Manage work activities and files           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prioritize and manage tasks; track and meet deadlines and limitation periods</li><li>• Identify when it is appropriate to delegate tasks and level of supervision needed</li><li>• Ensure quality of work produced by self and work delegated to others</li><li>• Use practice, project and file management systems and software</li><li>• Demonstrate awareness of responsibilities for management, tracking, retention and destruction of files</li><li>• Document matters clearly and appropriately</li><li>• Follow security protocols for information management</li></ul> |
| 7.3 Use technology responsibly                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate understanding of the benefits, limitations, risks and ethical implications of technologies</li><li>• Use appropriate strategies to mitigate cybersecurity risks</li></ul>   |
| 7.4 Understand billing, accounting and finance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate understanding of professional obligations regarding billing and accounting practices and trust accounting</li><li>• Demonstrate understanding of types of billing practices, including retainers and limited scope retainers, fees, and payment models</li><li>• Seek information to fill knowledge gaps related to financial and business management as required by own practice requirements</li></ul>  |



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