



# Canada

The National Committee on Accreditation (NCA) 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 a file is assessed by the NCA, an applicant may be asked to complete one or more exams and/or attend and complete specific law school courses within a prescribed time frame. Upon successful completion of these requirements, the NCA issues a Certificate of Qualification.

Most law societies in Canada require the NCA's Certificate of Qualification to access their bar admissions process. Applicants with internationally-obtained legal qualifications can apply to the NCA regardless of which common law province or territory in which they plan to practice.

The NCA does not assess the legal credentials of individuals who want to apply to and become members of the Barreau du Québec or the Chambre des notaires du Québec. These law societies have their own evaluation procedures.

The NCA assesses the legal credentials of people who have immigrated to Canada, or are considering immigrating. The NCA also assesses the credentials of Canadians who have obtained their legal training in another country and the credentials of Canadian civil law graduates who wish to apply for a license to practice law in a Canadian common law jurisdiction. The NCA does not assess the legal credentials of individuals who want to apply to and become members of the Barreau du Québec or the Chambre des notaires du Québec. They have their own evaluation procedures.

Each application is assessed on an individual basis, taking into account the specific elements of each applicant's educational and professional background, as stated in NCA Policies. The NCA applies a uniform standard on a national basis so that applicants with common law qualifications obtained outside of Canada do not need to satisfy different entrance standards to practice law in the different common law provinces and territories of Canada.

When the NCA assessment is complete, a letter is sent to each applicant describing any further legal education that may be required to demonstrate that their legal education and training is comparable to that provided by an approved Canadian common law faculty.

Once the applicant has successfully completed the assigned requirements, the NCA issues a Certificate of Qualification. That certificate is required to apply to a Canadian law society in a common law jurisdiction.

## How to obtain a Certificate of Qualification in Canada

In order to obtain an NCA Certificate of Qualification, most applicants are required to demonstrate competence in several topics. There are three ways applicants may demonstrate competence in assigned subject areas:

- ✓ Through the NCA examinations;
- ✓ By registering as a special student in a Canadian law program and successfully completing the assigned subjects as part of the program of studies; or
- ✓ A combination of (1) and (2).

If the NCA assessment requires studies at a Canadian law school, the number of subjects will depend on the applicant's legal education and professional experience.

Studies at a Canadian law school are often mandatory for students from non-common law jurisdictions, who have had minimal or no exposure to common law, and to anyone who has completed their qualifying law degree by distance education.

If you are required to attend a Canadian law school to meet your assigned NCA requirements, or if you are considering attending Canadian law school rather than taking NCA challenge exams to meet your assigned requirements, here are some important factors to keep in mind:

**Choice of Law School:** It is the responsibility of NCA applicants to research Canadian law schools and choose the one they wish to attend to meet their NCA requirements. Some schools do reserve spaces for NCA applicants while others do not.

**Application to Law School:** It is also the applicant's responsibility to apply to law school. Any questions regarding cost of studies and admission requirements should be directed to the law school.

**Mandatory Pre-approval:** Applicants who intend to complete courses at a Canadian law school MUST have the NCA pre-approve their selected courses to ensure they satisfy the requirements they wish to meet.

**Requirements upon Course Completion:** Once you have successfully completed courses at a Canadian law school, you must arrange for that law school to send official transcripts to the NCA, so the information can be included in your file.

For further information please contact the Canadian Law Society:- <https://www.lsuc.on.ca/>

Correct as of February 2017

