



BEST PRACTICES FOR TORONTO SUMMER AND ARTICLING RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES (updated August 2026)

1. Introduction

These “*Best Practices for Toronto Summer & Articling Recruitment Activities*” (“Best Practices”) were prepared by the Summer and Articling Working Group of the Canadian Section of NALP (the “Working Group”). The Working Group consists of recruitment professionals including legal employers in various sectors and career development officers from several law schools and advisors for internationally trained lawyers (“ITL” or “ITLs”) participating in these recruits.

The Law Society of Ontario (“Law Society”) regulates summer recruitment in Toronto and articling recruitment across Ontario. The Law Society outlines specific procedures and guidelines regarding recruitment in the following documents:

- 1) [Toronto Summer Student Recruitment Procedures](#)
- 2) [Articling Recruitment Procedures](#) (items 1 and 2 are referred to collectively as the “Recruitment Procedures”); and
- 3) [Fair Practice Hiring Guidelines](#) (the “Guidelines”).

The Recruitment Procedures and the Guidelines are on the Law Society’s website at:

<https://lso.ca/becoming-licensed/lawyer-licensing-process/experiential-training/recruitment>

<https://lso.ca/becoming-licensed/lawyer-licensing-process/experiential-training/principals-and-supervisors/fair-hiring-practice-guidelines>

The Recruitment Procedures are binding on employers and applicants (includes students and ITLs; hereafter referred to as ‘students’).

The purpose of these Best Practices is to provide further clarity with respect to certain aspects of the recruitment process that are not directly addressed by the Recruitment Procedures and/or the Guidelines. Accordingly, it is important that these Best Practices be read in conjunction with the applicable Recruitment Procedures, as well as the Guidelines. For ease of reference, these Best Practices cross-reference the applicable Recruitment Procedures and the Guidelines. However, employers and students participating in the recruitment process should also review the Recruitment Procedures and the Guidelines separately. JD Students who have questions or concerns at any stage of the recruitment process are encouraged to seek guidance from their Career Development Office (“CDO”). For ITLs in graduate programs at Canadian law schools, please refer to your graduate CDO. For ITLs who are not in graduate programs Canadian law schools, you may refer to the [ITLNCA NetworkS](#) (“ITLNCA”) for guidance and resources.

2. The Application Process

Q. Can students submit additional application materials not mentioned in an employer's posting?

A. Students are encouraged to read each job posting carefully. While there are standard application materials most employers require (such as a cover letter, resume, transcripts, and in some cases a course list), students should not submit additional material, such as a writing sample, unless specifically requested to do so by an employer. The exception is letters of reference which in many cases are optional. Students should exercise their best judgment to ensure any optional references add value to their application. Employers prefer to receive a complete application package at the time of submission. So where possible any letters of reference (whether required or optional) should be submitted as part of the student's application materials via the application method indicated in the employer job posting.

Q. What form of transcripts will employers accept?

A. Employers prefer to receive a copy of an **official transcript** from the Registrar's office. If using an e-transcript students must submit the screenshot or PDF file that shows their grades as part of the student's application materials via the application method indicated in the employer job posting. Employers will not accept links to transcripts.

Alternatively, students can provide an unofficial transcript, screenshot or web-printout of their academic record/grade report from their university's student portal, provided the document is legible and contains the student's name and preferably student number.

ITLs submitting international (non-Canadian) transcripts, to the extent possible, provide employers with each school's grading scheme or key. This is most often found on the back of the transcript or at the end. You may also find the school's grading scheme or key from the Registrar's office. If the transcripts are not in English, official translations should be provided with the official transcript.

For greater clarity, any grade report must be provided by the student's academic institution and may not be a document created by the student.

Q. What if I am participating in the 1L recruit and do not have final grades by the application deadline?

In the case of the 1L recruit, students who have mid-term grades can provide a screenshot or web-printout of their academic record/grade report from their university's student portal OR use the unofficial grade template provided by their law school career office.

Q. Is GPA required? If so, what if my law school does not provide a GPA calculation?

A. Some employers that use the viLaw Portal (<https://recruitcdn.viglobalcloud.com/>) to collect applications require students to include their **cumulative** law school Grade Point Average (GPA). Where a GPA is not provided by the student's academic institution (which will be the case for all ITLs) the student should simply enter "0" which means the information is not available. Students should not calculate their GPA themselves. All applications will be considered equally regardless of the availability of a student's GPA.

3. Communication during the “Recruitment Suspension Period”

Q. Can students communicate with employers (e.g. recruitment professionals, lawyers and articling students) during the “Recruitment Suspension Period” from the application deadline to the commencement of the interview period?

A. The Recruitment Procedures forbid “recruitment activity” meaning “open houses, firm tours, and similar activities held for students, as well as any activity originated by a firm and directed toward specific individuals or targeted groups for the purpose of encouraging employment with that firm.”¹ For clarity, recruitment activity applies to in person or virtual contact. Student-initiated communication is not prohibited during the “recruitment suspension period”. Although it is recognized that students may not meet in person with employers (e.g. recruitment professionals, lawyers and articling students) during the “recruitment suspension period”, they may communicate with said persons by email or phone to ask questions or gain information if such contact is student initiated.

4. Communication regarding on campus interviews (“OCIs”)

Q. Can employers advise students whether or not they have been granted an OCI?

A. Yes, however, many employers prefer not to advise the students directly; they leave it to the CDO or the ITLNCA to advise the students. For those employers who prefer to advise JD students directly, some CDOs may ask these employers to wait until a specified date before providing this information to students. For employers who wish to advise ITLs directly, they may do so, and the ITLNCA will follow-up with candidates as well.

5. Communicating intent to call students on designated call days

Q. Can employers notify students in advance that the employer will call on call day?

A. Yes. While employers are not permitted to schedule (or suggest a time or date for) in-firm interviews with students prior to call day, all employers (whether or not they participate in OCIs) are permitted and strongly encouraged to notify students that they intend to call on call day for the purpose of scheduling an in-firm interview.² While this helps students to plan interview schedules in advance of call day, students are not required to respond to an employer's intention to call or reciprocate their own intention to accept or decline an interview and/or meal invitation prior to call day. This is discussed further in Section 8 of these Best Practices below.

Employers may however advise students following the OCI (and before call day) of any dates of events to which ALL interviewees will be invited (if employers are participating in either virtual or in-person events).

Sample communication prior to call day: "We enjoyed meeting you at the OCI and would be delighted to offer you an

¹ Toronto Summer Student Recruitment Procedures, Part A (definitions), Part C, Section 17; and Articling Recruitment Procedures, Part A (definitions), Part D, Section 2 (recruitment by firms located in Toronto).

² Toronto Summer Student Recruitment Procedures, Part C, Section 11; and Articling Recruitment Procedures, Part D, Section 3 (recruitment by firms located in Toronto).

interview during the designated interview period. In this regard, we will contact you on call day to schedule a mutually convenient time and date. Please note that we are hosting a virtual cocktail reception for all candidates on Monday evening, of Interview Week from 5:30-6:30 p.m. and hope you will be able to join us. There is no need to RSVP at this time and we look forward to speaking with you on call day."

6. Communication regarding employers' recruitment process

Q. How can students find out about an employer's hiring process?

A. Employers are encouraged to be transparent about their hiring process, including interview times, the timing of any Intent to Call (ITC) emails, and the timing and details of any social events held during the Interview Week. Employers are strongly encouraged to share details of their 2L summer hiring process with students by completing the CLCDN 2L Summer Recruitment Process Survey as soon as possible. Students can obtain a copy of the survey from their law school CDO. Internationally trained lawyers not in Canadian law school programs may refer to contact information provided via viLaw Portal's employer job postings and through research on employers' websites.

7. Communication regarding students' candidacy

Q. During in-firm Interview Week, will employers advise students if they are not moving forward in the hiring process?

A. While employers are not required, they are encouraged, to promptly advise students if they are not moving forward in the employer's hiring process. Transparency by employers helps students focus their time and energy on viable opportunities.

8. Declining or cancelling interviews

Q. When should students decline or cancel interviews?

A. If a student has been notified by an employer that the employer will be calling on call day to schedule an interview, and the student has no intention of scheduling an interview with that employer, the student is encouraged to advise the employer as soon as possible before call day to enable that employer to offer an interview to another candidate in advance of call day.

If a student becomes unavailable to attend a scheduled interview, the student should advise the employer immediately. Cancelling interviews in a timely manner is a general courtesy and may provide an opportunity for another student.

9. Gifts / SWAG

Q. Are employers permitted to send gifts, food or beverages to students during the recruitment process?

A. No. Employers are prohibited from sending gifts, employer branded items, food or beverages to students during the recruitment process.

10. Scheduling Social Events

Q. When during interview week do receptions and dinners typically take place?

A. The timing of these events is at the discretion of employers. However, scheduling receptions between 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m., and dinners after 7:00 p.m., allows students to maximize their attendance at events. Students are encouraged by CDOs / ITLNCA to meet with as many employers as possible during recruitment periods to ensure informed career decisions. Employers hosting evening events should make every effort to wrap up their event by 10:00 p.m. at the latest.

Employers are encouraged to be as transparent as possible and provide students with as much information as possible at each step of the process, including when extending invitations to receptions and/or meals. Where possible, employers should offer flexible options for social engagements—such as the choice to attend dinner on either Monday or Tuesday—to accommodate students' schedules. Employers are also strongly encouraged to clearly communicate whether attendance at a social event is a critical factor in their hiring decisions.

11. Interview Questions

Q. What types of questions are inappropriate for employers to ask during interviews? How should candidates be screened or selected?

A. Employers must conduct interviews (e.g., on campus interviews, interview week interviews, cocktail receptions, dinners with candidates) in accordance with the [Guidelines](#). The Guidelines were created by the Law Society to bring awareness and a better understanding of concerns raised regarding interview questions asked during recruitment, and to assist firms in reviewing their interview and hiring practices. The objective of the Guidelines is to ensure conformity to the ethical standards of the legal profession and with human rights legislation. The Guidelines recommend that screening applicants should be based on the job description and not be discriminatory. Interview questions should also relate to the job description. The Guidelines provide examples of inappropriate interview questions.³

12. Scheduling follow-up interviews and meetings during interview week

Q. When during interview week should follow-up interviews take place?

A. Follow-up interviews typically occur on day two or three of interview week.

13. Split summers

Q. When should students raise the possibility of a split summer with a prospective employer?

³ Fair Practice Hiring Guidelines, section 6.

A. Students are encouraged to discuss with employers the possibility of doing a split summer as early as possible in the interview process, and prior to receiving an offer. For additional clarity, refer to the [Toronto Split Summer Protocol](#).

14. Timing of offers; communication of intention to make an offer

Q. When are employers permitted to make offers to students?

A. Employers are permitted to make offers, or communicate an intention to make an offer, only in accordance with timing prescribed by the Law Society.⁴ All participants in the recruitment process should be aware of the applicable date and time. It should be noted that employers are permitted to communicate their intentions to make offers to their own summer students (for subsequent summer positions or articling positions), prior to the Law Society's prescribed timing.⁵ Where employers choose to extend such early offers, they are encouraged to do so prior to the application deadline, or at least well in advance of Call Day, before interviews are scheduled. This is discussed further in Section 17 of these Best Practices below.

Q. If an employer makes an offer to a student that is contrary to the Law Society's prescribed timing, is it appropriate for the student to accept the offer?

A. The student should not accept the offer until the offer is made in accordance with the Law Society's prescribed timing. The student is also encouraged to advise and/or seek guidance from their CDO if they feel an offer was made contrary to the Recruitment Procedures.

15. "No-Contact Period" Period

Q. During interview week, are there periods in which communication between employers and students is prohibited?

A. The Recruitment Procedures establish a "No-Contact Period", wherein employers are prohibited from contacting students and students are prohibited from contacting employers, which extends from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Offer Day.⁶

16. Improper communications; other inappropriate conduct

Q. Subject to the exception for an employer's own summer students, what are some examples of improperly communicating an intention to make an offer? What are some examples of other inappropriate employer conduct during recruitment?

A. Examples of improper employer communications that could be interpreted as an intention to make an offer include, but are not limited to:

⁴ Toronto Summer Student Recruitment Procedures, Part C, Sections 8; and Articling Recruitment Procedures, Part C, Section 8.

⁵ Toronto Summer Student Recruitment Procedures, Part C, Sections 26; and Articling Recruitment Procedures, Part C, Section 19.

⁶ Toronto Summer Student Recruitment Procedures, Part C, Section 18; and Articling Recruitment Procedures, Part D, Section 6.

- 1) telling a student that he, she or they will receive a call at 5:00 p.m. on offer day;
- 2) telling a student that he, she or they can cancel other interviews; and
- 3) telling a student that he, she or they is invited to a virtual celebratory event taking place after the time offers can be extended.

Examples of other inappropriate employer conduct during recruitment include, but are not limited to:

- 4) pressuring a student to reciprocate and/or express a certain level of interest in the employer;
- 5) pressuring a student to spend an excessive amount of time with the employer to the exclusion of other employers; and,
- 6) asking a student a hypothetical question such as “If we made you an offer, would you accept it?”

Where questions or concerns arise, students are strongly encouraged to seek guidance from their CDO or for ITLs not in Canadian school programs, please refer to the ITLNCA resources.

17. Time to consider offers

Q. Can students take time to consider offers prior to accepting or declining an offer?

A. Yes. The Recruitment Procedures provide time for students to consider offers that have been made to them.⁷ If needed, students are permitted to take this time to consider their options. However, students should consider the “rank order” of their preferred employers prior to the time that offers are to be made, so that they can accept, or decline offers expeditiously. Declining offers quickly allows employers to make offers to other students.

18. Conduct after accepting an offer

Q. After accepting an offer, can students keep other offers open or continue to interview? If an employer knows that a student has accepted a position at another organization, can the employer still offer the student a position?

A. No. Students who accept an offer must immediately notify employers from whom they have an outstanding offer or with whom they have scheduled interviews. Students who accept an offer must honour that commitment, regardless of what offers are subsequently received, and must not thereafter interview with other prospective employers. An employer must not knowingly make an offer to a student who has already accepted a position at another organization.⁸

⁷ Toronto Summer Student Recruitment Procedures, Part B, Table Key Recruitment Dates and Times; and Articling Recruitment Procedures, Part B, Table Key Recruitment Dates and Times (for firms located in Toronto).

⁸ Toronto Summer Student Recruitment Procedures, Part C, Section 23-25; and Articling Recruitment Procedures, Part C, Section 16-18.

19. Notifying summer students of offers to return

Q. When should employers extend offers to hire back their own summer students for a subsequent summer position or an articling position?

A. The Recruitment Procedures provide that employers are not permitted to extend offers of employment until a prescribed date.⁹ However, with regard to an employer's own summer students, an employer is permitted to communicate, prior to the prescribed date, an early offer of employment. Employers are encouraged to communicate these early offers to their own summer students regarding returning employment (for articling or a subsequent summer) before the application deadline. Summer students who receive early offers must respond within two business days by notifying the employer that the student accepts, rejects or is holding an offer. Holding an early offer means that the offer remains open until either the student notifies the employer of acceptance or rejection of the offer or the earliest time until which offers of employment for that recruitment process must be allowed to remain open. Employers are not permitted to put undue pressure on students to communicate an acceptance or rejection of an early offer.¹⁰ Once an employer communicates an early offer, the student is entitled to rely upon that communication, regardless of whether the student applies to other employers and participates in the recruitment process, provided the student has notified the employer that he, she or they is holding the offer. Employers are encouraged to advise their students accordingly.

These Best Practices are reviewed annually prior to the summer/fall recruitment period by the NALP Summer and Articling Recruitment Group. If you have comments or suggestions, please contact your CDO or the ITLNCA for ITLs not at Canadian schools.

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⁹ See Notes 4 and 5, above

¹⁰ Toronto Summer Student Recruitment Procedures, Part C, Section 26(f); and Articling Recruitment Procedures, Part C, Section 19(f).



APPENDIX “A”

EMPLOYER: BEST PRACTICES FOR CONDUCTING REMOTE INTERVIEWS FOR TORONTO SUMMER AND ARTICLING RECRUITMENT

1. Before the Call:

- Send the interview link (a calendar invite is recommended) to the candidate. Provide candidates with information about the virtual platform they will be using including:
 - o Software name
 - o System requirements, including required downloads and internet speeds
 - o Log in instructions/links
 - o Instructions and recommendation to download and test functionality of the system in advance.
- Identify and share the contact information for a key technical person for students (and interviewers) to call if they are experiencing any technical issues on interview day.
- Establish and communicate a protocol to be followed, if either you or the student are running late for the interview, or there are technical difficulties that impede the interview.
- It is the employer’s responsibility to ensure their interviews start and end on time and adhere to the OCI schedules provided by the law schools or by the [ITLNCA NetworkS](#) in the case of internationally trained lawyer (“ITL”) candidates. It is recommended that employers assign one individual on each interview team to be responsible for monitoring the time and providing a 2-minute warning to the candidate.

2. During the call:

- Be on time and be mindful of time: you will be in charge of keeping track of the interview length.
- Do not keep the students beyond the scheduled length of the OCI.
- If possible, have the interviewer(s) names displayed on the screen.
- Recording or transcribing interviews, including through the use of AI-powered notetaking or transcription tools, is prohibited.

3. Technical Emergencies:

- If you experience a technical emergency, please remember that it is you (or your IT team's) responsibility to address it.
- Before the interview, ask the interviewee for a phone number where you can reach them if you experience technical difficulties. If the video cuts out, call them at that number to continue the interview by phone or discuss the interview needs to be rescheduled.
- If technical glitches occur, the employer will determine on an individualized basis (taking into account the reason for the glitch and the impact of the glitch on the technical quality and timing of the interview), whether to reschedule the interview.



APPENDIX “B”

CANDIDATE: BEST PRACTICES FOR CONDUCTING REMOTE INTERVIEWS FOR TORONTO SUMMER AND ARTICLING RECRUITMENT

1. Before the Call:

- You should receive an interview link from the employer, confirming the time of your interview and information regarding the virtual platform they will be using including:
 - o Software name
 - o System requirements, including required downloads and internet speeds
 - o Log in instructions/links
 - o Instructions and recommendation to download and test functionality of the system in advance
 - o A key contact (interviewer/IT person) at the firm should you experience technical difficulty during your scheduled interview.
- Candidates are encouraged to download all relevant software in advance of their interview date and conduct a test run to ensure they are able to connect, and their sound and video/webcam are functioning properly.
- If you require accommodation, such as a quiet space, internet or a computer to conduct your interview(s), contact the career services office at your law school.
- To the best of your ability, select a neutral background and location with minimal distractions (no pets/kids, etc.).
- If the interview platform allows for a virtual background, use the background(s) provided by your law school. Note a virtual background works best if you are positioned in front of a plain background.

2. During the call:

- It is the interviewer’s responsibility to keep track of the time but try to keep yourself on schedule.
- Ensure your video function and speaker/audio are turned on, and that you are facing the camera. If your internet connection is unreliable you can call in by telephone and still connect by video using your computer- just be sure to turn off your computer microphone/speakers.
- Recording or transcribing interviews, including through the use of AI-powered notetaking or transcription tools, is prohibited unless approved in advance as part of an authorized accessibility or accommodation process.

3. Technical Emergencies:

- If you experience a technical emergency, contact your interviewer by telephone (or other key contact you were given at the firm).
- If technical glitches occur, the employer will determine on an individualized basis, taking into account the reason for the glitch and the impact of the glitch on the technical quality and timing of the interview, whether to reschedule the interview.