

Paralegal Licensing Process Webinar

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Ken Osborne: Good afternoon, and welcome to today's webcast on the paralegal licensing examination. My name is Ken Osborne and I am the Team Manager - Entry Level Competence here at the Law Society of Upper Canada. Our goal today is to provide you with guidance on the paralegal licensing process. Specifically, we will address the general administration that is required to register for the licensing examination, the examination process itself, what to expect on the day of the exam, and tips for success in order to support your efforts to prepare for the examination.

I have several people to assist with today's presentation. They are, Gina Haros, Team Manager Licensing Process. Cettina Cornish, Counsel, Licensing and Accreditation. And Will Morrison, Counsel, Articling Program.

Before commencing I would like to take care of a few administrative points for the session and talk a little bit about the process before we actually get into the substance of today's session. First of all, the outline of today's session can be found on the agenda tab. The agenda outline contains relevant links to each of the topics that we will be discussing today.

The formal portion of our presentation is expected to be about 45 minutes in length, and we will leave the remainder of the session for questions. If you wish to submit a question, you may do so via the Q&A tab located on your screen and you should feel free to submit your questions at any time during the session. We will attempt to address as many questions as possible during the scheduled question and answer segment at the end of our presentation. If we don't get to all of the questions submitted, and you still need more information, we invite you to reach out to us via email or phone and we will be providing you with all our pertinent contact details at the end of the presentation.

A larger window on the right-hand side of your screen will display the presentation slides to which we will be speaking. And also note that an archive version of this webcast will be available within ten business days following today's presentation on the Law Society's website. And the archived version of the webcast will be located at the For Paralegals, Become a Paralegal tab – on the paralegal licensing process webpage.

By way of introduction I would like to address the role of the Law Society and the regulation of paralegals, and the requirements that have been established under our bylaws for the admittance of new licensees

as paralegals to the Law Society. As many of you are aware the Law Society has been regulating paralegals in Ontario since 2007. The mandate of the Law Society is to regulate lawyers and paralegals in the public interest, and to ensure that the public has access to competent legal professionals. We are empowered to regulate both lawyers and paralegals by virtue of the Law Society Act and its subordinate regulations, and there are currently approximately 6,700 licensed paralegals in the province of Ontario.

Since 2010, paralegal licensure in Ontario has been comprised of two fundamental components. Firstly, applicants must graduate from an accredited paralegal program. And secondly, the applicant must successfully complete the Law Society licensing examination. These components serve to ensure a fair and defensible licensing process at the paralegals point of entry into the profession. While much of today's session will be focused on the second component of the licensing process - the licensing examination - it's important to stress that as a feature of a paralegal's licensure the Law Society's Board of Directors called Benchers approved the accreditation of paralegal education as one of two foundational elements for entry into the paralegal profession in Ontario. Graduation from an accredited paralegal education program, and the licensing examination process, are two distinct milestones in paralegal licensing that are related, supportive, and developmental in nature.

As you move towards challenging the licensing examination, do not lose sight of the fact that graduation from an accredited paralegal program served to expose you to a very specific set of substantive law courses that fall within the paralegal scope of practice. Your paralegal education also exposed you to the experiential paralegal competencies established by the Law Society which constitute the professional performance standards upon which licensed paralegals are expected to uphold and apply. Additionally, the paralegal licensing examination is the means with which the Law Society assesses point of entry level competence of a paralegal's knowledge of substantive and procedural law, and their ethical and professional responsibilities that have the most direct impact on the protection of the public, and that influenced the provision of effective and ethical legal services in Ontario.

While accredited paralegal education provides a foundation for the development or enablement of paralegal competence for prospective licensees, it is the licensing examination that is used to gauge whether the minimum level of competence has been attained for the Law Society to grant licensure as a paralegal in Ontario. The approach that has been taken by the Law Society in implementing a robust, pre-licensing system of training, coupled with a fair and defensible system for licensing examination at the point of entry to the profession, is born of the paralegal profession's desire to ensure that it maintains its strong and very positive regulated reputation in the legal market.

So to begin our discussion I am going to hand things over to [Gina Haros] who is going to tell us more

Gina Haros: Thank you, Ken. For the purposes of this webcast I thought I'd briefly take participants through some of the high-level information about the application process, and things to keep in mind. As always, if information you are looking for cannot be found online, or if you have a particular question specific to your situation, please contact the licensing and accreditation department for assistance. The Law Society's licensing process application begins online at www.lsuc.on.ca, by clicking – as Ken mentioned earlier – For Paralegals, and then Become a Paralegal. At the bottom of that page you will see the “apply now” button, once you click there all documents and information referenced today can be accessed from this page. A key document to access while applying online is called, “Completing the Paralegal Licensing Process Application”, which outlines some of the things to be aware of, or items to have accessible when you apply. This document will also take you through all the details of admissions, and the application process. Candidates in the process have three attempts at the examination, and up to three licensing years to successfully complete the licensing examination and all filing requirements.

The application for the 2017/18 licensing year was launched in October – just couple of weeks ago – for applicants hoping to select the August or October 2017 examination, or the February 2018 examination. Also, for those who graduated in time, and those whose school can provide a final transcript in time, there is an earlier February 2017 option on the application as well. The application is a two part process, and part one consists of the online entry of your information and the payment of the application fee. Part two consists of the actual paper copy submission of your application which must be commissioned or notarized before it is submitted to the Law Society.

When you apply online you will be required to provide information such as when you intend to write your examination, when you expect to graduate, what your full legal name is, whether you would like to request accommodation and things of that nature. You will also be required to answer a section regarding what the Law Society calls good character, and provide any necessary supporting documents. The application itself tends to take about 20 to 90 minutes to enter online.

Once you finish part one of the application online and pay the application fee you will be assigned a Law Society web account. This account is what you will log into to print the PDF application file that you had just created, in order to submit it to the Law Society. This web account is also where grade results for the examination and the invoices for fee payment will be sent to you as you move through the licensing process. It is recommended that you check your account weekly, and even more regularly when preparing for the exams, and up to the time that you are licensed.

Once you have accessed the PDF file of your application you are moving into part two of the process. Begin collecting all the supporting documentation which has to be commissioned and notarized in order to be submitted. The deadline to submit the application for the 2017/18 licensing year is December 2nd, 2016. We continue to accept applications after this date, but there is an added late fee. Please note that delaying the submission of your application may result in not being processed in time to receive materials and be registered for your examination. Once an application is received it reviewed and processed, and the applicant is then invoiced for their examination and study material fees. If anything is missing from your application licensing and accreditation staff will advise you via your web account. Applicants are required to follow-up directly with their school to ensure a final transcript is sent by the school to the Law Society, and also to ensure that they themselves submit the Statement of Field Placement Form once they complete their work placement.

If you intend on writing the examination in August or October of next year, and you apply by the deadline, it's expected you will be invoiced in January 2017 and provided with a spring payment deadline to submit the exam and study material fees. For those who pay their exam and material fees by the spring fee payment deadline, the licensing examination study materials are made available for distribution in late May of next year in a number of ways. Between May 29th and June 2nd study materials will be distributed on site at the Law Society for those candidates who wish to pick up the hard copy of the materials in person. Also, starting May 29th the study materials are released online and accessed through each candidate's online account under my study materials. After the distribution period candidates can still obtain a paper copy of the materials, but only by placing an online shipping request for an added fee. Of course, you may continue to download and print the materials on your own, as required.

In addition to the study materials, candidates will also be provided with a Law Society candidate identification card once they pay their fees. The identification card will be what you will bring to the examination site in order to check in, and what you will show when you enter legal libraries or facilities. It identifies you as a candidate in the process and includes your confidential candidate ID number which is unique to you, so please keep it in a private and secure place.

And now I will hand it over to Will, who will provide further information on the examination.

Will:

Thank you, Gina. I am now going to speak about the format and content of the paralegal licensing examination. I first want to emphasize that we have extensive materials on the Law Society website setting out this information; you should review all of these materials closely when you begin studying for the examination. You are required to successfully complete the paralegal licensing examination in order to be eligible to become licensed to provide legal services in Ontario. The licensing

examination is designed to assess whether a given candidate for licensure demonstrates the minimum level of competence required of an entry-level paralegal. The licensing examination tests competencies required for entry-level practice, it focuses on those competencies that have the most direct impact on the protection of the public and on effective and ethical practice. The Law Society engages experts across the legal profession to establish the entry-level competencies that are assessed in the examination. A competency is defined as a knowledge, skill, ability, attitude or judgement required for entry-level practice. There are 179 entry-level paralegal competencies, which are divided into the following categories: Ethical and professional responsibilities, Canadian law, Civil litigation, Criminal and quasi-criminal law and procedure, Administrative law, Problem and issue identification, Analysis and assessment, Alternative dispute resolution, Litigation process, and practice management issues.

The entry-level paralegal competencies have undergone a rigorous development and validation process. They are all listed on the Law Society website, and I would encourage you to review them as part of your preparation. Once established, these entry-level competencies form the basis for the test specifications for the licensing examination. These test specifications are a primary component of the blueprint document which is developed for the examination. A blueprint document is used to ensure that the items being assessed on the examination are both content valid and representative of paralegal practice. It also ensures that the same categories of competence are being assessed to the same standard of competence even though items being assessed change from one sitting of the licensing examination to another. This provides consistency between each sitting of the licensing examination and enhances their reliability, validity, fairness and defensibility.

The competencies and the blueprint parameters are reviewed on a regular basis in accordance with established best practices for professional licensing examinations. Practitioners representing all relevant practice areas develop licensing examination questions, which we refer to as items, under the guidance of psychometricians with expertise in professional licensing, test developments and validation. These items are derived from information in the study materials prepared by the Law Society for that licensing year, and are reflective of the established competencies for the examination. All licensing examination items undergo a rigorous review and validation process. A paralegal advisory group comprised of exemplary practitioners from a cross-section of practice areas and firm sizes in Ontario set the examination according to the blueprint parameters. Setting a licensing examination involves approving the items that will be assessed.

The licensing examination is seven hours in total length, and is comprised of a total of approximately 240 multiple-choice items. Each examination sitting is comprised of two parts, each of which is three and a half hours in length. Part one takes place during the morning, and part two takes place during the afternoon, with a break between the two

parts. The licensing examination is self-study, you are provided with the study materials which support all competencies on the examination. The licensing examination is also in open book format, you are permitted to bring into the testing area any print materials prepared for the purpose of assisting you in the writing of the licensing examination, including any study materials, notes and text books. You must mark your answers on an answer sheet provide by the Law Society. Only those answers marked on the answer sheet will be scored. The answer sheet is numbered from one to 200. However, there are only approximately 120 items on each part of the licensing examination. You should periodically check to ensure that the answer bubbles you are filling in on your answer sheet correspond correctly to the respective items you are answering.

All items on the licensing examination are in a multiple choice format. You must choose the best answer from four possible options provided. Each item has only one best answer, and you will receive credit only when you have selected the best answer. For any item for which you indicate more than one answer on your answer sheet, the answer will be marked as incorrect. The items on the licensing examination assess three different levels of cognitive ability. First, knowledge and comprehension. Second, application. And third, critical thinking. The licensing examination will include items in both independent multiple-choice and case-based multiple choice format. Independent multiple-choice items are independent of each other. Case-based multiple-choice items are preceded by a case scenario which will also apply to other items; however each item within that series of items preceded by case scenario is derived directly from that case scenario and is independent of all the others. In other words, determining the correct answer to item number three in a series of case-based items is not dependent on answering either of items number one or number two correctly.

There are no “all of the above” or “none of the above” multiple-choice options in examination items. For each sitting of the licensing examination, multiple different versions of the examination are developed and set. Each candidate who has registered for that sitting is randomly assigned a version of that licensing examination. Each version of the licensing examination complies with the blueprint parameters. The examination is marked on a pass/fail basis. Scores equal to, or higher than, the established passing mark receive a pass result. Scores lower than the passing mark receive a fail result. A candidate’s score is based on the number of correct answers chosen. There are no penalties for failure to choose an answer, or for choosing an incorrect answer.

At the same time that it sets a licensing examination, the advisory group also formally sets and approves the passing mark for that examination. The passing mark is the same for each different version of the same licensing examination. The passing mark represents a single overall score for the examination; candidates are not required to individually pass separate sections or areas of law on the examination. The passing mark represents the expected performance of a minimally competent

entry-level paralegal. To ensure consistency between each sitting of the licensing examination, the advisory groups apply this same standard to the particular set of items on each examination. The setting of a passing mark is based on the judgement of these informed subject matter experts, and is determined through rigorous consultation and dialogue. This approach to setting the passing mark helps to ensure that the same performance standard is applied consistently for each licensing examination, so that only those candidates who meet or exceed this standard will pass the examination. Only an individual candidate's performance, compared to this standard, determines whether that candidate passes the licensing examination. The candidate's performance is not assessed in comparison to the performance of other candidates, by using a curve or otherwise. There is also no predetermined rate for the proportion of candidates who will pass the licensing examination.

There are several important pages on our website, in the paralegal licensing section, that you need to review to prepare for the examination. These provide detailed information on what to expect and prepare for, and will ensure smooth sailing on the morning of the exam; they include information about the security and screening procedures at the exam venue. You should note that these are more formal and structured examinations than you may be accustomed to from college or from other exams. These pages also include information about the check-in process at the venue, and what items to bring with you. We have lists of permitted items that you can bring into the testing area, as well as prohibited items; you should review these lists in detail. Our website also offers a short orientation video to the licensing examination which I would encourage you to watch. Finally, you should also review the website to understand the conduct that is expected of candidates at the examination venues. We appreciate it is a high stakes day for candidates, and we need to ensure that the process runs smoothly and that a respectful and stable environment is maintained for the benefit of everyone.

Now, a note on receiving your exam result. Inevitably, as soon as each exam ends candidates begin wondering about how they have performed. Please note that results will not be released until about six to eight weeks after the examination date. We will send your result to your confidential online licensing account, and you will get an email notifying you that it's there. So there is no need to call into our office and check whether the results are out yet. The results cannot be released before that time for several reasons. In order to ensure the integrity of the marking process a full six to eight weeks is required to receive and grade and verify exam results, and to provide them to candidates. Examinations are written in both official languages and it takes some time to ensure that all those licensing examinations are received and marked appropriately.

If you are unsuccessful on a licensing examination, don't panic, you can re-register for one of the subsequent scheduled sittings. Candidates are

permitted a maximum of three attempts at each licensing examination within their three year licensing term. All information regarding rewriting an exam will be sent confidentially in a message to the candidate through your online licensing account. You won't be the first or the last to be in that situation, I assure you, so please feel free to contact the licensing and accreditation department if you have further questions on the next steps for rewriting.

Finally a note on the process for deferrals. If, closer to the day of the exam, you find you are unable to write an exam that you have registered for, you must defer your examination by sending a deferral form to our office at least five business days prior to the examination date.

Ken Osborne: Thank you, Will, for that information about licensing examination guidelines. Now we are going to talk more about the examination itself, and discuss some tips and general guidance around preparing for the examination, and to do that I would ask Cettina Cornish, Counsel, Licensing and Accreditation, to take that on.

Cettina: Thank you, Ken. Before we get into examination preparation, let me begin by saying just a few words about exam prep courses. You may be aware of paralegal exam prep courses offered by other providers, not the Law Society. Although it is certainly up to you whether you wish to take these, you need to understand two things. First, these courses are not endorsed by the Law Society. And second, everything you need to prepare for your examination is contained in the paralegal study materials. Shortly you will be writing an open book licensing examination. There is a common misconception that you don't have to study as much for open book exams since you can bring your materials in the exam. Open book examinations require you to analyze information and apply it to new situations, you need to fully understand the contents and be very familiar with the materials. You don't want to waste your valuable time searching through your documents and not devote the time required to think about and adequately answer the questions during the exam.

So, what will help you to succeed? Having a solid understanding of what is in the paralegal study materials is absolutely essential, as well as maintaining a positive attitude. It takes time to adequately prepare for the examination. There are no shortcuts. Let me repeat that. There are no shortcuts. While study tips and examination writing tips can help you prepare, there is no replacement for taking the time to build that solid base of knowledge. Well, then how should you prepare? What most find useful is implementing a study strategy, and doing that early, as soon as you receive your study material. As well, successful candidates often use techniques to help them maintain a calm and focused attitude. So consider making these the key goals of your overall preparation strategy, learning the materials and staying positive.

Let's look at study strategies first. Although each of us learn and study differently, there are some techniques that research tells us work better than others. Consider taking a systematic approach that includes number one: A study schedule, to organize your study time. Number two: Effective reading, and note-taking. Third: Organization of your materials for an open book exam. And last: reviewing practiced questions. Let's take a look at each of these elements in a bit more detail. What are some of the ways to organize your study time? First, it's always a good idea to begin studying early. Research suggests that studying in short, manageable increments spaced over time is more beneficial than cramming all the material in a long study session just before the exam. Second, consider setting up and maintaining a regular study schedule. You may want to set aside a specific time of day for study, ideally try to schedule study time when you are wide awake and alert. In most, but not all cases, this means not scheduling study time at night, you are less likely to retain material when you are mentally or physically tired. So schedule study times when you are most likely to be ready to learn.

Next, to help focus your study sessions consider setting specific goals for each study session. So for example, you might decide to study one chapter or review the rules during a designated block of time. Taking breaks during study sessions is also a good idea; studying requires mental effort so take breaks as part of your study sessions. Here is an example of what we mean. After studying for, let's say 45 minutes, you would take a five minute break. After three consecutive study cycles you would take a longer break, 15 or 20 minutes, and then start the study cycles again. If the material you are dealing with is difficult, shorten your study times and take more frequent breaks. So for more challenging material you may want to study for 20 minutes, followed by a five minute break, and take a longer break after only two study cycles.

Next, it's also a good idea to start each new study session by reviewing the materials you previously learned. Reviewing materials you have learned, without a long delay, will help you keep knowledge fresh in your mind. If you wait too long to review the material you may waste time trying to relearn what you knew but forgot. Finally, try to use the weeks just before the examination to review, integrate, and reinforce your understanding of the content.

Let me recap. When considering organizing your study time, try to include these: Start early, maintain a regular study schedule, have specific goals for each of your study sessions, take frequent breaks, review previously learned material at each new study session, and use the last weeks before the exams not to learn new information but to strengthen what you already know. Those are suggestions for organizing your time. So, what about reading and note-taking for open book exams? Reading for pleasure, as you know, is very different from reading to learn or study for an exam. Consider how best to read and review the paralegal study materials so that you understand and retain what you have read. This usually involves careful, active and systematic reading.

It's not uncommon to have to read material more than once to really understand the content; that is really one of the reasons why you want to start studying early, that's why it's so important.

Considering factoring into your preparation study time for repeated reading of the material. To build a solid base of knowledge you may need to read the material once to get a general understanding and overview of the content, and then a second time to draw out important concepts. It's a good idea to begin highlighting or taking notes, or making notes, only once you have a general understanding of what you're learning; if you start too early you may end up highlighting or writing down too much information. Then consider reading the material one more time for review purposes, perhaps at your next study session. research suggests that reviewing materials on a regular basis will help retain information in long-term memory.

So, what are some of the things you can do to prepare your materials for use during the exam? The goal here is to organize your materials so you can quickly access relevant information to answer questions. Prior to the examination take some time to make your study materials as user-friendly as possible. We have three suggestions for organizing your material. One: Using tabs or a colour-coding system to delineate certain subject areas and key topics. Two: You could prepare short, manageable summaries on selected topics. Or finally, you could create an index, or a table of contents, listing key topics and corresponding pages in your materials and notes. The point of all this is to help you quickly find information in your materials in the exams, so choose a way to organize the materials that works best for you.

Finally, take some time to review the sample questions on the Law Society's licensing process page. The questions will give you an idea of the types of questions that will be asked, the thinking required - whether it's knowledge, application, critical thinking - and the degree of difference between incorrect and correct answers. Implementing these pre-study exam strategies will help you feel more confident about writing the exam. What else beyond studying the material can you do to prepare for the exam? Taking steps to help you maintain a positive attitude about the exam should be part of your overall preparation strategy. Don't skimp on the basics of a healthy lifestyle, try to get enough sleep, eat and drink for good nutrition; these two are essential to maintain concentration. Take personal downtime, connect with friends and family. Maintain social interaction. Exercise, as I am sure you know, will help you keep anxiety at bay, clear your mind, and assist you in maintaining that positive attitude. Avoid too many stimulants, such as caffeine, sugar, cigarettes, drugs and alcohol, all of which can significantly increase stress levels.

Once you build that solid base of knowledge you will be in a better position to think positively. Remember, success is usually a result of focused and adequate preparation. Examination anxiety is not uncommon. Part of controlling anxiety involves, well, being prepared

for what lies ahead. Your goal is to be emotionally, physically, and intellectually prepared the day you write your exam. What can help you achieve this? No surprises here. The most important thing you can do is to know your material thoroughly and to organize your materials to eliminate unnecessary flipping and page-turning during the exam. It's okay to feel some anxiety during the exam, but if you start to feel overwhelmed consider taking these steps: Take slow, deep breaths to relax. Calming yourself physically will help calm you emotionally. The calmer you are during the examination the better you will be able to concentrate. Two: Don't focus on the anxiety, focus on your next task. Don't psyche yourself out by thinking about the implication of the examination, focus on the task at hand and remember you are doing your best.

Ken Osborne: Thank you very much, Cettina. Now we are going to talk a little bit about what can be expected on the examination day, and I would like to turn things back over to Gina Haros who will address the exam day, support services. In addition, she'll also talk about dates to remember and fees.

Gina Haros: Thank you, Ken. As we mentioned earlier, the licensing examination is seven hours in length, with a break after the first three and a half hours. It is held at a fairly large venue with a very formal setup in terms of dedicated check-in stations, coat checks and screening areas. Arriving at the site may seem overwhelming for some when they realise they may be writing with over 500 or 600 candidates who are also checking in and being screened at that time. Arrive early, or at the very least on time. Bring lots of snacks. Leave your cell phones in the car, and try and carve out a rare moment of calm before you begin writing. Once you check-in and pass through the security screening area you will be expected to sit in your assigned seat for the duration of the examination period, except of course when you break for lunch. And before you know it, you'll be writing your examination.

I did want to take a moment and mention that as part of the Licensing and Accreditation Department the examination administration staff here at the Law Society provide various forms of assistance and accommodation to candidates in the process. The aim is to improve the testing environment for these students who are otherwise unable to comply with some of the conditions or requirements of the licensing process. Services can include examinations in alternative forms, such as audiotape, brail, text-to-speech, and special equipment for persons with visual or auditory impairments. If you are a person with a disability or a condition that requires some accommodation during the process, please feel free to contact the examination administration team directly once you submit your application. There is a 45 business day deadline prior to an examination sitting to explore these options that may be available to support you during the licensing process.

In terms of additional candidate supports that are available, candidates who receive an unsuccessful result may contact Licensing and

Accreditation for tutoring services. Candidates who request tutoring will be connected with an appropriate tutor for up to five hours of tutoring, provided a request is submitted by the deadline. Further details on tutoring are available online under the section of “candidate supports”. And finally, under “candidate supports” you will also find information on the monthly payment plan, which allows you to pay your examination and material fees in four equal installments. Feel free to review the deadlines and other information in this section, if this is something you wish to explore in early 2017 when the revised payment plan documents will be posted. I also urge you to visit and bookmark the “dates to remember” page, of which we have a link on our agenda. For many of the relevant due dates for the paralegal licensing process, please be mindful that deadlines are usually in business days unless otherwise indicated. Please ensure all fees are paid on time, and all documents are filed by the deadlines, in order to not only avoid any late fees but to receive information on the study materials and to confirm examination registration for your selected sitting.

A final reminder that, in addition to payment, candidates must ensure that they file two crucial documents once they complete their program, including their placement. So the first one would be to request from their school the final official transcript, and secondly, to submit the Statement of Field Placement Form which can also be found in the “fees and forms” section of the website. In terms of examination sittings, the examinations as we mentioned are held in August, October and February of each year. You can review the precise exam dates online in the “licensing examination” section of the website. At this time I will turn it over to Ken, to wrap up and provide some final thoughts.

Ken Osborne: Thank you very much, Gina. And thank you Will and Cettina as well, for providing such a useful overview of the examination process and candidate preparations. We’re now going to open up the discussion to questions, and we have received a few already, so we’ll try to get to as many as we can. We now have our contact information up for a few reasons. One, if we don’t get to your specific question today you can reach out to us. And secondly, if some of you have specific questions that pertain to your personal- or your individual circumstances then we would ask that you reach out to us using these contact details. Our intent today, really, is to address questions that have a general application to those that are listening, and while we do see that some of you have questions that relate to your personal circumstances it’s perhaps best that we address those through the contact information directly with you at a later time.

So we do have one question here that I’d like to address. The question is, how much study notes or books can I bring to the exam writing location? I think I’d like to use that question to address both rules and protocols generally, and I’ll also specifically address and answer that question. I want to draw your attention to the fact that the Law Society has posted licensing examination rules and protocols on its website. And in that documentation, which is very thorough, it contains a

number of permitted and not permitted items that can and cannot be brought into the testing location. Take a good look at that information, go through it in some detail. In terms of some of the permitted items that are allowed in the testing facility, you will note that in some cases they have to be brought in in a particular way.

In terms of specifically addressing the question, and whether printed materials can be brought in, the answer to that is yes. Printed materials prepared for the purpose of assisting the candidate in writing the licensing examination may be brought in, including the examination study materials, notes, or textbooks. But I want to draw your attention to the fact that you should take care in that all printed materials that are brought into the testing site must be left in the testing area and will not be returned to the candidate. So do take care that the materials that you bring in are materials that are disposable and can be left behind.

Gina Haros: Great. We have a couple of questions relating to the fees associated with the process, as well as to the specific examination dates. Ken, if you don't mind, I'll address those, sort of in a group as well. Some of the questions relate to the application fee, which is the more imminent fee, and that fee is \$160, plus HST, and that's invoiced to you in your Law Society web account. There's a full fee schedule available on our website, it's also accessible through the agenda that we have provided. And once again, I urge you to make that part of your bookmarks, or print out the sheets so that you are familiar with what the fees are associated with this process in its entirety, and that will include the examination and any incidental fees.

We also had some questions about the examination dates. And once again, I would urge you to follow up with the website directly, which will have the most up-to-date information on any of the sittings that you may be interested in. We have posted the 2017/18 examination dates, as well as the deadlines for our candidates. And we have another question in terms of the fee associated to rewrite an examination if you are unsuccessful the first time. I did want to clarify that the fee schedule does specify the fee amount for one examination and one set of materials; so if in the event you are unsuccessful and must rewrite, you will be required to pay the fee to rewrite the examination.

Ken Osborne: Okay, so we do have one question that relates to the pass grade for the exam, and I'd like to have Will take the opportunity at answering that, please.

Will: Sure. The Law Society doesn't publish the passing grade for a licensing examination. I did provide some information about how the passing score is developed, and that information is also found on our website in the guide to the paralegal licensing examination, so you're welcome to review that and get some information about how the exam is developed. But the passing score itself if not released, it's not published.

Gina Haros: Okay, we have some questions here regarding tutoring and I'm not sure exactly what information the question is asking about, but there is full information as well as the application for tutoring available online, and that is accessible right now to anyone that's interested. Again, tutoring is only available to candidates who are unsuccessful the first time around.

Ken Osborne: We have a question here that is related again to whether the exam is an open or closed book, and there might be some confusion out there. Again, I'd refer you to the information on the Law Society website related to the rules and protocols for the licensing examination, but I can say that the exam itself is an open book exam. In fact, as I indicated already to you, you can bring in materials that would be supportive of your licensing examination activity in the exam site itself, which would include the study guide materials for example, or any other tools that you might prepare to support your performance on that exam. So the exam itself is open book, and you should expect to have your materials there and available to you in order to address the exam.

Gina Haros: Okay, I have a question here from an applicant, or a potential applicant, who is asking whether they can write the February examination before they graduate from their college program and unfortunately, no. The requirement is that the final transcript from your college program will be on file with the Law Society in order for you to be permitted to proceed and write the examination. And that transcript and all the other filing requirements have to be on file with our office at least 30 business days prior to the examination deadline.

Ken Osborne: Okay, so we have another question that sort of relates to the one that I addressed a little earlier on, and the question is: Can I take an English/Chinese dictionary into the examination area? And the answer to that is yes, of course you can. It's material of course, but be mindful of the fact that you will be required to leave that material behind at the end of the examination, so as I indicated before, the exam is an open book examination. You can bring printed materials that will support your performance on that exam, but in the case of printed materials, be mindful that they should be disposable to you and they must be left behind at the end of the examination.

There's a question here which I think is a really good one because it relates to the currency of the printed materials that you'll be getting to study for the exam. And the question is: How are amendments to the materials made after the materials have been provided to the candidate?

So it's important to stress that in order to get the materials to the candidate, they have to be designed, they have to be edited, they have to be reviewed, they have to be printed, and they have to be disseminated to the candidates who are taking the exam. So all that requires, as you might imagine, a cut-off date for those materials. You should note that

when you receive your materials there will be a date stamp on the cover of that booklet, and it will indicate the date of currency for that printed material.

Now, the material that you receive will support the exam that you're writing, so any changes to the law that may occur, for example, beyond the applicable date printed on the study materials will not require the candidate to make updates. It's not incumbent on the individual candidate to start going through those materials to update the law; we don't expect that.

That said, students are, from time to time, notified of any changes to the materials themselves through the issue of an addendum to the material, and those are presented to the students and you should be expected to review those and ensure that you take note of them as they come through. But absent any notification or any addendum to the materials, you're not expected to update any changes to the law that may occur following the publication date of the materials themselves.

Gina Haros: Thanks, Ken. We have another question relating to the materials being brought to the examination site. Again, everything you bring into the examination site must be left at the site. Someone was asking about a hardcover legal dictionary and whether or not they can take it with them when they leave. That is definitely something that will have to stay behind at the examination.

We have another question referring to sittings and when applicants should select a specific sitting and whether or not it fills up pretty quickly. We haven't had difficulty before in terms of accommodating students at the site. We do request and encourage students to register as soon as they are able in order to pay their fees and access the materials, so it sort of depends on the students plan and when they want to write, and how long they'd like to review the materials for.

A question regarding the examination room and if they are finished before the three and a half hour point and whether or not they are permitted to leave the site. A moment here. [Pause]

Ken Osborne: So I'll take that question. Basically the candidate is expected to remain at the site. That said, within 15 minutes of the end of the examination for example, you will not be permitted to leave; you will have to wait until the examination is completed. In addition, in the first hour of that examination you will also be required to remain if you happen to finish it within that time, but after that point you may be permitted to leave early.

Gina Haros: I have a question here regarding when you will receive access to your Web account, and it is when you submit your information online.

Ken Osborne: So we have a question related to the examination coverage. Again, we need to be mindful that we will not be disclosing information related to the exam, but I think the question is worth discussing and I'd like to have Will take it on. And the question is: Could you provide a ratio of coverage for the 240 questions in terms of the testing areas – Ethics, Civil Litigation, Criminal Law, for example?

Will: Sure. So I would first encourage you again to review the page that's called Entry Level Paralegal Competencies on the website. It lists out each of those competencies that will be assessed on the exam and it can be a very useful roadmap for you to understand what are the types of issues and skills and items of knowledge that will be assessed.

In terms of an actual breakdown of how much any given area of competency will be assessed on any given exam, that's not something that is published by the Law Society. It is in accordance with the examination blueprint that I discussed during the presentation.

Gina Haros: Thanks Will. A number of questions we've received regarding the good character section that I mentioned earlier, so these aren't good character references that you're required to provide – this is a section on the application of, I believe, 13 questions that you'll be required to answer in order to provide the Law Society with information relating to your good character. So it's not as if the applicants need to submit character references or letters of that sort, it's a section on our application that you have to answer.

Ken Osborne: I just want to remind the candidates, we are getting a few questions that are related to individual circumstances of the candidate and their paralegal education programming and their placement within the programming. I would encourage you, perhaps, to reach out to us using the contact information and talk to us about your specific circumstances. Again, we're trying to address questions and issues of a general nature that would be applicable to all of the candidates who are online at the moment.

Gina Haros: Again, Ken, we're also receiving many questions in terms of the start time of the examination, the date, the venue, and I do encourage you all to please access the links that we provided on the agenda. And, failing that, you can visit our website under "for paralegals, become a paralegal". That section has all of the information.

Ken Osborne: So we have another question here about the break between each section of the exam. As was communicated to you, there are two parts to the examination, one that occurs in the morning and one that occurs in the afternoon. The break between those sessions is the lunch hour, essentially, so it is about an hour in length, so part one will cease and it will wrap up. You will break for lunch and then you will come back in to recommence part two of the examination in the afternoon and will continue on for that three and a half hour point.

Gina Haros: Okay. We have another question about a candidate who will be writing the October examination in 2018 – so quite a ways away – who was enquiring about receiving the study materials. So if you are applying now for this examination, you will be able to receive your materials, along with the regular cohort, in May 2017. So if your application is received by next December and you're invoiced accordingly, you will be able to access the materials. However, I would suggest that if you would like to write in October of 2018, that you contact us so that we can kind of figure out how to advise you specifically. I'm not sure what the circumstances are, but we can certainly discuss that if you call Licensing and Accreditation.

We also have a question on how many documents need to be commissioned, and I'm assuming this is relating to the application. So again, I urge you to access the document called "Completing the Paralegal Licensing Application Process", that kind of provides a lot of information and guidance on how to notarize your information or commission it, what you need to submit. And again, I urge you all to thoroughly read that document before you apply online.

Ken Osborne: Okay, so this question actually is an interesting one. It relates to the so-called third-party prep courses, and I'll have Cettina tackle this one. The question is: While the Law Society does not endorse the so-called third party prep courses for the licensing examination, does it follow that the Law Society discourages enrolment in such courses?

Cettina: Really, the decision whether you want to take these prep courses, it's really up to the candidate. What I'd like to stress once again is that everything you need to know for your exam is in the study material and so it really is up to you whether you want to take these prep courses. But, once again, what you need to know is in the study material, and that's really all you need to know to be successful on the exam.

Ken Osborne: Okay so, again, we have another question related to the components of the exam and its breakdown, and specifically the two parts: Part 1 and part 2 which occur with Part 1 in the morning and part 2 in the afternoon. The question deals with when part 1 of the section of the exam is over, do you still get to see those exam questions when you come back for part number 2 after lunch? And the answer to that is "No", once part 1 is completed it is completed. The examination booklets and materials are collected from the candidates. You are released from the examination hall to take your lunch. You then return and part 2 commences and you do not have the opportunity to look at part number 1 and go back and address questions that you may not have completed in that part.

And the same is true with part number 2. Once the examination time is done, it's done, and that session is over and you do not get an opportunity to go back and look at that part once time for the exam has

ended. All your activities related to the examination must be completed and done within the time allotted for part 1 or part 2 of the exam.

Gina Haros: I believe I have one final question now regarding the study materials and whether or not they're available in French. And indeed they are for our French students. You can also choose to not only receive the materials in French, but also write your examination in French as well.

Ken Osborne: Okay, we've now come to the end of our webcast. I want to thank the panellists for all the knowledge and information that they've imparted to the candidates today. I just want to remind you, as well, that an archived version of the presentation will be available in approximately two weeks' time on the Law Society's website, and it will be available on the "for paralegals, become a paralegal" portion of the website.

Further, I'd like to thank all of you – the candidates – for your very enthusiastic participation and your great questions. We're pleased to answer any more questions that you might have, and in particular those individual questions that were coming to us that, we'd encourage you to reach out to us through the contact information that's available to you right now.

And we're pleased to answer any more questions that you have through the contact means that have been provided to you on the slide. So feel free to reach out to us.

Finally, I'd like to wish you all the best of luck with your paralegal education studies, and the best of luck with your examination preparation. We look forward to welcoming you to the paralegal profession as a licensee with the Law Society of Upper Canada. Thank you.

[End of recorded material at 01:03:03]