**Webcast for Current Lawyer Licensing Candidates Q&A– Air date: June 26, 2024**

Naomi: Thanks for joining us for this lawyer licensing candidate webcast and Q&A session. I’m Naomi Horrox, the Director of Licensing and Accreditation of the Law Society. In this role I provide leadership to the teams responsible for lawyer and paralegal licensing. Before we get started answering your questions, I’m going to turn it over to my colleagues to introduce themselves starting with Gina.

Gina: Good morning, everyone. My name is Gina Haros. I’m the Manager of Licensing Process and Experiential Training Programs here at the Law Society of Ontario and happy to be here today to answer your questions.

Jessica: Hi, good morning. My name is Jessica Weiss. I am Senior Counsel and Manager of Entry-Level Competence in the Licensing and Accreditation Department of the Law Society. And also very happy to be here this morning, look forward to answering your questions. Jason.

Jason: Hi, good morning, everyone. My name is Jason Pichelli. I’m a member of the Law Society’s policy team.

Naomi: OK. Thanks, everyone. So we’re going to begin answering questions once we start receiving them. As a reminder, today’s focus is on LSO Connects and the changes to the licensing process. So if you’re looking for answers to more general questions about the current licensing process, there’s a lot of information available to you on lso.ca. in the Becoming Licensed - Lawyer Licensing Process section.

 And if you have a question about a specific personal situation, we won’t be addressing those today. We do recommend though that you reach out to us, to the Licensing Department via your candidate account. So we’re just waiting to see if there are any questions. I’m not seeing any in my chat.

Jessica: Naomi, I’m seeing a number of questions here.

Naomi: Why don’t you go ahead then. Yes.

Jessica: Yes. So we’re getting a lot of questions about when exactly the transition to LSO Connects is going to take place and what date we’re launching. Jason, do you want to answer that?

Jason: Too many windows open. Yes, so we’re targeting to roll out LSO Connects to all lawyers and licensing candidates this coming summer and we’re going to keep providing information to the public, to people in the coming weeks. So as you can imagine with a large project of this nature, timelines continue to be revised and adjusted. So as a result, at this time we’re not able to provide an exact launch date.

 I understand that that could be frustrating. I would encourage everyone to check the Law Society’s website at regular intervals. We’ve created a dedicated page where we will include updates related to LSO Connects, and that’s lso.ca/comingsoon. And again, you were shown an email address earlier, licencesupport@lso.ca. If you have any questions about the change, the transition, how it might impact you, we encourage you to reach out to that address. Thank you.

Naomi: So that’s great. So questions about candidates who are wishing to article in the fall. So will these changes impact them in the articling process? Gina, maybe you want to take a crack at that.

Gina: Sure. Thanks, Naomi. So depending on whether you’ve actually filed any documentation currently, the answer may be slightly different. So if someone say has already filed their start of placement information on the current system such as their Articles of Clerkship documentation, they won’t be required to resubmit that information once LSO Connects is live.

 However, when they’re finishing up their articling placement and LSO Connects has gone live, their end of placement information will be entered in the new system. And so depending on when the start date is for each individual, they may begin the process within the current system. And then once we notify you to go and create your LSO Connects account because the system is live, you’ll be filing subsequent to that the information on the new system.

Naomi: Great. Thanks, Gina. So a question about the LPP program and the deadline that’s coming up for July 15. How should candidates handle the fact that that deadline is coming up?

Gina: So candidates who have already made the selection to join the LPP program this summer have likely been invoiced already. And I encourage you to make the payment to secure your registration in the current system. If you have difficulty with payment or there’s a specific situation you’d like to make Licensing and Accreditation aware of, please do reach out to us. And we’ll provide further guidance on that so that you can save your place and ensure that you’re registered and ready to go for the start of the Law Practice Program.

Naomi: OK. We have a question about the LSO ID cards and whether it can still be used for the fall 2024 exam or if government issued ID needs to be used?

Gina: I’ll take that one, Naomi, if you’re OK.

Naomi: Great.

Gina: So the candidate cards, I think it was briefly mentioned in the presentation piece. The candidate cards will no longer be issued for examination purposes. And so in the fall, for the fall sittings, you’ll be required to provide government-issued photo ID that’s valid at the time of the exam.

 We’ll be pushing out more messaging and providing more details of what that actually means, what type of an ID is acceptable. So stay tuned for that, it will likely be coming through once your LSO Connects account is set up so that you can prepare and ensure you have the correct documentation.

Naomi: OK. We have a question about I guess the migration of documents. So will archived messages and documents that were I guess in our current candidate accounts transition over to the LSO Connects account?

Gina: I can take that one.

Naomi: You want to take that, Gina, yes.

Gina: Yes. So depending on the situation and the status that the candidate’s account is in, most of the information that is current will be transitioned over to LSO Connects. Obviously for some students there’s quite a bit of information that goes back several years, we’ll let you know what is not being transitioned over.

 And I do want to make a special point to mention that candidates who have partially completed the current application – so they’ve applied online but have not submitted Part II of their application, the actual paper copy – those candidates should likely submit Part II asap so that it can be processed before the transition to LSO Connects.

 So I encourage everyone or anyone who’s in that situation to reach out to Licensing and Accreditation to get more details, but also submit Part II. Or else what would likely happen is once LSO Connects goes live, that application will not carry over and you’ll be required to start the process all over again. So in order to save you the work of applying twice, please, please I encourage you all to submit Part II of your application if you haven’t done so already.

Naomi: OK. We have a question about getting into LSO Connects. Do we have to register in LSO Connects, will we be put in automatically? If it’s automatic, how do we log in, what will our username and password be? I don’t know, Jason, if you want to take that or Gina. Gina.

Gina: I’m fine to take it, Jason, if you’re OK.

Jason: Yes, go ahead.

Gina: So the goal is to invite all of our candidates into the new system. And when I say invite, it is going to be a message or an email that will come to the personal email account we have on file for you already. So all candidates, it’s strongly suggested that you take a quick once over of your current online account, if you’ve applied online, and ensure that you have an email reference there as part of your contact information that you have ready access to.

 So I would recommend that if you currently have an email that’s associated with your law school, you may want to change that to a personal email because of course access to those emails sometimes is deleted after a certain point. So make sure you update your personal email address within your online account at this time so that you can be invited in to set up your account for LSO Connects.

 So the expectation isn’t that you go and do anything right now. We will definitely reach out to you to let you know in a staged kind of timing and process for you to set up your account so that you can have access to your application and all of the things that were transitioned over from the previous system.

Naomi: Thanks, Gina. A question about part-time articling. Are there any changes specifically to part-time articling? Jessica, do you want to take that?

Jessica: Sure, I’d be happy to. So if someone has started part-time articling already then, the regular process changes would apply to you in the same way that they would to all articling candidates. In future state, applying for part-time articling, you’ll be doing it through LSO Connects in the same.

 Instead of kind of filling out the PDF forms and submitting your request through the current candidate portal, you would just be doing it through LSO Connects. In terms of kind of the rules and policies around part-time articles, there are no additional changes specific to part-time articles.

Naomi: Thanks. Some questions about timelines. Do these changes impact or shorten the application process timelines? For example, how do they impact the process of an exemption for an articling application?

Gina: I’ll take that one if that’s OK. So in terms of the application piece, the first step of applying to the Lawyer Licensing Process, the intention is to transition it over to an entirely online submission.

 So there are definite benefits to that, which is why we’ve chosen that direction. And so it does shorten the amount of time that the student has to take with all of the steps to going to print off everything and submit it. So the goal is that the application will be entirely submitted online by the applicant, which is great news I think on all sides.

 In terms of the exemption process or the abridgement process that was mentioned, that too will also be submitted online. So instead of, as Jessica mentioned previously, downloading the form or the application for the exemption and abridgement process, it will be through a service request entirely online and you will enter the details, the relevant information, provide the supporting the documentation.

 And so we anticipate that definitely that change in how you submit the information will cut down the timelines of assessing these requests and providing information back to the student through LSO Connects.

Naomi: And so just to clarify, we had a couple questions on this, Gina. Is there a specific timeline or deadline for an articling exemption application?

Gina: In terms of a deadline, there isn’t a specific deadline because everyone’s situation is different and when they can provide the relevant supporting documents may differ from another candidate. So I would say to provide the LSO with all of the information that’s required in that service request so that we can make a more wholesale decision and have all of the information because delays usually happen when the information is not submitted correctly or entirely, frankly.

Jessica: And, Gina, the only thing I would add to that is that you’ll want to make sure to do that as early as possible in your licensing term. Because in the event that we require additional information or perhaps ultimately you’re not eligible for an exemption and so you do still need to complete experiential training, you’re going to want to give yourself the time to be able to do that within your licensing process term. Which is three years from when you apply or, yes, get registered into the licensing process.

Gina: Excellent point, Jessica. That is definitely something you should be doing sooner rather than later, to Jessica’s point.

Naomi: There’s a few questions about Supervision Agreements. The first more specific one is, is it necessary for the supervisor to be your articling principal? And also a couple of requests just for us to say a little bit more about Supervision Agreements. Jessica, is that something you could do?

Jessica: Yes, for sure. So Supervision Agreements, now maybe I’ll just kind of reiterate the requirements. Anyone can feel free to jump in at any time. So right now the way a Supervision Agreement would work if you were to apply today is you have to submit a PDF form to the Law Society right away.

 So the change is that for the initial six-month period where a candidate wants to work under the supervision of a licensee, they would fill out a PDF form from the Law Society’s website, but the Law Society does not need to approve that Supervision Agreement.

 The supervising lawyer I believe does not necessarily have to be the individual who the candidate was working under as a principal. There are some requirements. The supervising lawyer should be a lawyer in good standing and needs to be licensed by the Law Society. But for those initial six months, it does not need to be an approved principal and it does not need to have been your principal.

 If you need an extended Supervision Agreement beyond that six-month period, that is when you require Law Society approval. And that is when you will need to log into LSO Connects, fill in the Supervision Agreement request service request. And at that point in time, the supervising lawyer does need to be an approved principal by the Law Society.

 It doesn’t necessarily mean that that person needed to be your principal, but it does mean that the supervising lawyer has to be an approved principal. And that extended Supervision Agreement can be from six months to 12 months. So the total amount of time that a candidate can operate, work under supervision is 12 months maximum. And the additional thing, though it’s not entirely new, is that candidates who are going through the good character process are not permitted to work under a supervision.

Naomi: Unless that matter is closed, just to clarify. So once that matter is resolved, there’s no issue with working under a Supervision Agreement. Quick question just about logistics. We recognize we’re providing a lot of information today. Questions about whether today’s session is going to be recorded. It is and we will be posting this on the Law Society website so that you can all access it. Questions about international articling placements. Will these changes impact international articling placements? Gina, would you like to take that?

Gina: Sure. As we mentioned earlier, the real change will be in how you’re submitting the information and how you’re able to begin a placement such as an international or national placement. And that will be done entirely within LSO Connects where the request will be made. Actually I don’t think it’s a request. I think it is simply entering the information of the start and end of placement. So I stand corrected.

Naomi: I’m just seeing some more questions about what will be moved to the new system. So specifically will exam results, exemptions, financial transactions that have been previously made, will they be moved to the new portal? The answer is yes, there is a process for migrating all of this information into the new system. We do ask that once you have your new LSO Connects account that you go in and you check it out and you make sure there’s no issues with the information that you’re seeing. But all of the information should be there, should be migrated over.

Jessica: Naomi, I’m seeing a lot of questions from folks who maybe started articling or are about to start articling. And so they’re kind of wondering – or maybe they wrote an exam and they’re waiting for exam results. So they’re kind of wondering how should things work. Should they submit all their forms now or if they’ve submitted their forms but end of placement details maybe once LSO Connects is launched?

 So I thought, and Gina, feel free to jump in, but just to kind of answer that. Yes, stay with current process until you are told otherwise. So as we mentioned, you will be receiving lots of correspondence from us once LSO is imminently launching and then once it has launched. So you don’t need to wait to submit forms right now. Please follow current process. Make sure you’re meeting deadlines and kind of proceed as in the normal current course until you hear that LSO Connects has launched.

 Once it has launched then it’s kind of new process. So if you started articles with an Articles of Clerkship form but then your articling is going to end once LSO Connects has launched, then you are going to complete your articling using the new articling – I’m blanking on the …

Gina: Placement information.

Jessica: Thank you. Articling placement information, you’ll put in your end of placement information in LSO Connects using the new process. You know, same as exams. I can’t say for certain whether the exam results will be released in the current portal or in LSO Connects, but either way you will know. And whichever system is operating at that time is where your results are going to be and that is where you’re going to be able to find that information.

 So just to reiterate. Please follow current process. Don’t feel that you have to wait to submit forms. Do so, if anything, as soon as possible. And then you will know once LSO Connects launches and that is when new processes will begin.

Gina: Yes. So if you have information about your placement start date that’s imminently starting this summer, submit the information as you would in the current system, definitely. I wouldn’t delay. That information will be transitioned over. So the record will still be there for you to be able to pick up the baton over in LSO Connects once it launches and enter your end of placement information.

Naomi: Great, thanks. So we have a couple of questions about the November exam. So how do these changes impact candidates registered to write the exams in November? And then will the new platform impact the substance of the November exams, or is the content of the November exams still the same as what’s currently posted?

Gina: Jess, do you want me to take that one, do you mind? So in terms of if somebody is registered, already registered and has paid for the examination or even just made the selection for the fall examination, that information as well will be transitioned over to the new system. And once the new system is live if someone has not made payment for that exam, they can make payment there or they can make payment in the current system.

 In terms of the content of the examination, it’s really unrelated. LSO Connects is a platform through which the LSO expects to communicate with you administrative requirements, financial requirements, letting you know about your examination results and call to the bar information, and it’s really not related to the content of the examination. There’s no changes anticipated to the current structure of the examinations.

Naomi: Will there be monthly administrative call dates going forward? Sorry, Gina, just when you took your water.

Gina: No problem. We actually anticipate licensing people more often in future state, so to speak. So those monthly administrative calls that we had set before will be transitioned to more frequent administrative calls so that we can license people expeditiously and so that they can go on and practice. So that’s the expectation. More information will follow post-LSO Connects just specifying the information and the frequency.

Naomi: OK, a question about the system. One huge advantage of the current system is the prompt responses to questions sent to LSO. Do we expect the same in LSO Connects?

Gina: I mean it’s my team that handles most of those responses, so happy to hear that, they’re responding promptly when they can. Of course the same rules apply, and the same expectations apply. There are certain periods of the year where it’s extremely busy for us. The time leading up to the June examinations, for example, and the calls to the bar all happening in the same month. So from April to June it’s pretty busy. The expectation is though that the staff will do their best to answer any enquiries.

 But the benefit of the system, the new system will be that a lot more information will be transparent and available to candidates so that you don’t necessarily need to message us or call in. The information will be more at your fingertips with this new system. And hopefully because a lot of the items that you’ll be able to do within your LSO Connects account are really self-directed, there will hopefully not be too much of a need for you to be reaching out. But obviously you’re always welcome to and we expect our staff to be available.

Naomi: Great. Hopefully, a couple of questions we can answer really quickly. Will LSO Connects replace the portal accounts for all licensees and be used for all communications with the LSO such as CPD tracking? Yes, absolutely. So that’s one really exciting part about this new system, it’s one system for both candidates and licensees. So once you get into LSO Connects, this is the system that you’ll be using to deal with the Law Society once you’re licensed logging your CPD and complying with your other administrative requirements.

 I’m seeing a couple of questions just about the use of government-issued photo ID at the examinations and specifically about for international candidates what does that mean. So specifically, can they use their passports? Yes, so you can use your passport. It just needs to be valid, current, government-issued photo identification.

 So just some questions I’m seeing about the monthly payment plans. So maybe, Gina, if you could just provide some clarity about how the monthly payment plans work going forward. The difference between how they work now and how they’ll work in future.

Gina: So currently there are – because of the timing of the year and where we’re at there are no active payment plans that are available for students at the moment. But the expectation is that once LSO Connects goes live, that there will be the opportunity to add your examination fees and your experiential training fees to a payment plan.

 And so how it will be designed is that each of those items, so whether it’s an examination fee or the experiential training fee, you will be able to self-select and enrol to pay those fees partially in the form of a monthly payment plan. There is, as there is now, an administrative fee that is attached to that ability or that process and so students can basically start a payment plan any time they like.

 Again, the goal of LSO Connects is to provide more self-service where students don’t have to be bound by certain monthly payment plan deadlines to enrol and you’ll be able to enrol whenever you like.

Naomi: Thanks, Gina. I just see a question here about whether or not the duration or any of the requirements for articling are changing as a result of LSO Connects? So just to clarify. You know, except as we’ve outlined, which is mostly with respect to the processes for how you’re going to submit various pieces of information or documentation, there’s no changes to the articling duration or the requirements as a result of LSO Connects.

Jessica: And, Naomi, the same goes for exams. I think I’ve seen a couple of questions about is the exam schedule changing, is the type of exam changing? No, none of that is changing. That’s all staying the same. Naomi, if you don’t mind, I think there may have been some confusion when I answered the question about Supervision Agreements that I wanted to address.

Naomi: Sure, go for it.

Jessica: I apologize if I wasn’t clear. So Supervision Agreements, that’s different than articling. So articling is one way that you can fulfil the experiential training requirement. You could also do the LPP.

 Supervision Agreements only apply once a candidate has completed their experiential training, but they have not been called to the bar yet. Maybe they need to take the exam again. Maybe, they really want to do a call to the bar ceremony but there’s not going to be one for a few months in-between when they finish articling and so that is when a Supervision Agreement would come into play.

 Because you’ve completed experiential training, you’ve completed your term of articles, you’ve completed the LPP, but you are not yet called to the bar so you are not permitted to provide legal services. Unless you are under a Supervision Agreement either for those first six months that does not need to be approved by the Law Society, or between six and 12 months that does need to be approved by the Law Society. So Supervision Agreement is after articles or after LPP, it is not the same as articling.

Naomi: Thanks for clarifying, Jess. I’m seeing a couple of questions from candidates who are indicating they don’t have an online LSO account and what should they do. Gina, I’m wondering if you want to take those?

Gina: Sure. I’m going to assume that you haven’t applied yet. And so if that is the case, you can either apply now online or you can wait until LSO Connects launches and have this brand-new fantastic experience of an entirely digital submission of your application. It depends on what you’re intending to do, when you want to write, if you are intending to article. Obviously, you have to have a fully submitted completed application in order to undertake any of those activities. So you should not be articling unless you are already fully applied and a licensing process candidate.

Naomi: So some questions about the good character requirement and whether there are any changes coming in the new system. Jess, would you like to take that?

Jessica: Sure. So big picture the answer is no, there are no changes to the good character requirement. The process of how you fill out the good character questionnaire will be different because you will be doing it on LSO Connects. But otherwise, no, there are no changes to the good character process.

Naomi: Great. I just see a bunch of specific questions and just maybe I can try to address them in a bunch for all the things that you do not need to resubmit. So if you have previously been approved for accommodation, an exemption, an abridgement, anything along those lines, you do not need to reapply. We have that information on file for you and it will be migrated over to LSO Connects.

Jessica: And, Naomi, I’m seeing some questions about the end of article document. So the assessment documents that principals used to have to fill out for candidates, and partially there were some documents that candidates also had to fill out. So those are no longer mandatory. We are still strongly encouraging principals to make sure that they are – well they are required to still evaluate the candidate and provide feedback to candidates. But that’s no longer – the Law Society is no longer kind of a part of that. That is between the principal and candidates.

Naomi: I’m seeing some questions I guess just about timing. Will the new process still require candidates to provide a detailed schedule upfront when applying for part-time articles?

Gina: So from what I recall, the details will be submitted when you’re filing your articling information online in terms of the hours that you intend to complete. But, Jessica, if I’m not wrong, I think it’s been pared down a little bit in terms of the details. I think it’s just the timing, right, and how it will be split up?

Jessica: Sorry, I muted myself. Yes, I think that’s right, Gina. Thanks.

Naomi: We have a question. Can we participate in the administrative licensing process to expedite receiving our license and then attend the formal ceremony afterwards as a form of celebration?

Gina: I’ll take that one. It’s one or the other. Once you’ve been licensed you can’t be licensed again. We would love to invite everyone to the ceremony. However, we do have limitations obviously at the venues and so the priority is given to those individuals that actually selected a ceremonial call instead of an administrative call. So unfortunately can’t do both unless we get the SkyDome, whatever it’s called now, to do some of these ceremonies. Good question though.

Naomi: A question about payment. So for applications, exams, materials, can it be paid through LSO Connects with their employer’s credit card or does the credit card have to be in their name?

Gina: Well I think according to credit card agreements, only the person whose name is on the card can actually use it. The expectation for us is that the candidate makes the payment and then gets reimbursed by their firm if the firm is covering their fees.

Naomi: OK. Some more questions about payment. So if there are payments outstanding at the time that we move over to LSO Connects, do they become automatically due?

Gina: I wouldn’t say automatically due but likely the majority of the invoices that are coming over are either fall examination payments and/or experiential training. There will be a grace period provided for the experiential training fee for a short while and we’ll communicate that information to our candidates who are in that position. But for the examinations, for the fall examinations the regular registration dates apply for payment, as well as for accommodation.

 So I encourage everybody to keep abreast of the dates on the current website. And I think it was mentioned in the presentation, we’ll also be kind of refreshing our web content when LSO Connects goes live and you should also be reviewing those pages. We don’t anticipate any changes to any fall or winter examination deadlines or accommodation deadlines at this time. So keep looking, meet those deadlines for examinations. We want to make sure that you’re registered and ready to go to write those fall and winter exams.

Naomi: A quick question just about what’s eligible for a payment plan and is LPP eligible? The quick answer is yes, it is. So a separate question, new question. Can you please clarify updates for time off during articling?

Gina: Did you want me to take that one?

Naomi: Gina, yes, go ahead.

Gina: So the regular time off amount has not changed moving forward. But I recall that what we’re expecting is that time off requests that exceed that maximum amount will be handled between the principal and their articling student. So there’s no need to advise the LSO when you’re submitting your articling information exactly how many days you missed and the details of what those dates were.

 That’s what we were doing in the past and in the future that’ll be between yourself and your principal to manage. But if your principal or you have any questions on that, feel free to reach out to us in Licensing and we’ll provide a little bit of guidance if needed.

Naomi: A couple of questions just about the call ceremony and administrative licensure. So a candidate wants to know if they have to wait for a call ceremony or they could just get licensed through an administrative call? I’m wondering, Gina, if you can maybe just explain what the difference is between those two options.

Gina: So, as Naomi said, we have the two options. One being the ceremonial call which requires our candidates to attend in person. So they would either attend the ceremonies available in Toronto throughout the year or in the summertime there’s also the opportunity to have a London or Ottawa call in person.

 So that would require anyone attending to of course make that selection in the new system to advise us that, “Yes, I would like to walk across the stage and be licensed at a ceremony.” And it would require, as I said, your in-person attendance robed, fully gowned and ready to go for the ceremony.

 The other option for individuals that may be out of province, out of the area is to be administratively called. And what that would mean is that you would make the selection, advise the Law Society that you want to be administratively called. Documentation will be shared with you, and you will have to submit that information by the timeline specified so that you can be administratively called. And I mentioned earlier that we will be doing that a little bit more frequently. Not on a monthly basis but instead on a rolling call basis.

 And I did want to mention that there is a price difference as well. So for your licensing fee for the ceremony it is slightly higher than being administratively called.

Naomi: Thanks, Gina. And just as a point of clarification, we had a question about whether the candidates can choose their location of ceremonial call? And that’s right.

Gina: Yes, absolutely. The benefit of having LSO Connects to manage the calls to the bar is that you will be able to register for your call to the bar just like it’s an event. So you’ll select your location, you’ll be able to see the time, you’ll have all of the information at your fingertips. And if you need to change that around, there will be some flexibility that can be self-directed, so you’ll be able to initiate changes. If deadlines are still in play and you haven’t reached those deadlines, you can move things around.

 So, we have some candidates that think that they’re going to be licensed in Toronto, but it actually ends up being better for them to be licensed in Ottawa say because their family is there. There’s certainly flexibility to move that around. There are deadlines in place as always to make those types of changes but definitely it is more self-directed than current state.

Naomi: Relatedly, a question about the frequency. Will the number of ceremonial call to the bars be increased? If yes, how many in a licensing year? So to clarify, currently we have three call to the bar ceremonies per year. There’s no intention to increase the number of in-person call ceremonies at this time.

 What will be increasing though is the frequency of the administrative calls. And the reason that we’re doing this is in recognition of the fact that our licensing candidates want to become licensed as quickly as possible and start their careers. So that is an option that we are going to make more readily available, more accessible to them.

 A question I guess just about timing and NCA. So can an international student apply for articling before taking the NCA? Gina?

Gina: No. That’s the short answer. Definitely the NCA Certificate of Qualification is your entryway into the licensing process. So you’ve got to complete that and provide proof that that’s been successfully completed, or the NCA will provide us with proof before you can do anything in the licensing process. You’ve got to meet that admission requirement before you do anything else.

Naomi: Just kind of another general question for you, Gina. Somebody who is looking to kind of understand licensing cycles. So, for example, they start in December of 2022, they wrote an exam in November 2023. When does their licensing term end?

Gina: Very good question.

Naomi: And you don’t have to use that specific example, but just maybe if you can explain it more generally.

Gina: Yes. So typically – or not typically, actually the licensing year for lawyer candidates begins on May 1 of each year and runs till the following April 30. And so that constitutes one licensing year. However, candidates have up to three licensing years in order to complete their requirements.

 And to the person that asked the question, I suppose that they’ve been off stream. So instead of applying in the fall, as we all used to do, and see the applications coming into us in the fall, they may have been in a different timeline. And so if, for example, the person did not apply in the fall and applied the following January, their clock has already begun and so they’re in the previous term.

 And it can be a little bit confusing. There is information on the website that sort of outlines it more broadly. However, if the individual wanted to reach out to our office we can explain when their licensing term actually ends, when it began so they can have a good sense of that.

 The positive thing in the new system is that you will actually self-select the term that you want to enter into. And it will be abundantly clear, we hope it will be abundantly clear what term you’ve committed to and how much time you have to complete your requirements so that you can schedule yourself accordingly. See when you want to start articling, see when you can start LPP and write your exam. So that’s the hope.

Naomi: OK, Gina, I think another question for you. Since we’re moving to payment first instead of being invoiced, will the exam registration and deferral form still be used for people who want to defer their exam sitting for a later date?

Gina: I’m going to say a big hooray that no, those forms will not be required in a future state. What will happen in LSO Connects, and again you’ll be able to see it once it launches and get a sense of the look and feel, but you’ll be able to defer an examination within your online account if the deferral deadline has not passed.

 So, a lot of things have changed with LSO Connects coming. However, there are still deadlines surrounding the examinations and either registering for them or pushing them to a future date. And so what you’ll be able to do is essentially cancel that registration.

 Let’s say you were intending to write this fall. You know, personal events or professional commitments kind of overtook the need to write the exam. You’ll be able to push that exam off by cancelling the registration and registering for the next available sitting that you would like to attend. And if you do that by the deadline, I did want to mention, sorry Naomi, that your fees that you’ve paid for that fall sitting that you are now deferring will be applied to the future sitting you select.

Naomi: I have a number of questions about call to the bar. I’m just wondering if you can speak generally to them, Gina. So candidates wondering, do they get an invitation to the call to the bar, can they bring guests to the ceremony, how many guests can they bring? I think that summarizes kind of the gist.

Gina: That’s the gist. OK. I do want to say we have this information on the website under the Becoming Licensed section of lso.ca. So there’s a fair bit of information just to get a sense of what is this call to the bar that we speak of. So there’s a stream on the website that talks a little bit about the ceremonial call and what’s expected during the ceremonial call. As well as the administrative call and kind of what you need to provide to do it that way. So there is a good chunk of information there.

 But essentially it’s not going to be an invitation in the new system, it will be an event that you register for. And what will happen is once you are eligible, you will be able to see licensure info and you’ll be able to go and first tell us your path, would you like to be administratively called or would you like a ceremonial call. And then after that you will register for the event once that becomes available.

 And then you will also be sent ticketing information if you have a ceremonial call that you’ve selected so that you can actually buy your tickets for your guests and share them with them. So there’ll be an opportunity to do that, it’s typically up to five tickets for each ceremonial call. And all of that information will be in your online account, you don’t have to reach out to us. We will definitely release that information when the time comes to ensure you have all you need to register. I think that covered the question.

Naomi: I think so. Yes, I think that was great, Gina. Thanks. A quick question. Are the bar exams still in person or can they be written online for those who are out of province? LSO Connects is not changing our process with respect to exams. To maintain the security and integrity of the exams we are going to continue to deliver them in person for the foreseeable future.

 I see a couple of questions about licensing term extensions, Gina. So if requirements can’t be completed within the three-year period, what can a candidate do?

Gina: Definitely the first step I would recommend is to reach out through your portal. I’m not sure if the person is considering this in the future with LSO Connects or current state. Regardless, your first step should be reaching out to Licensing and Accreditation to provide information on your particular circumstances so that we can assess the need and provide further information and steps that you might need to take.

Naomi: With regard to exam outcomes, will we continue to receive simple pass or fail results, or will more detailed information be available via LSO Connects? Jessica, did you want to take that?

Jessica: Sure. It will still be pass/fail. There are no changes to the way that results are being communicated other than once LSO Connects launches they will be communicated through the new LSO Connects system rather than on your current candidate portal.

Naomi: I see a question about whether or not it’s possible for a candidate to change their chosen experiential training path from LPP to an exemption?

Gina: Certainly, the request can be made. And I don’t know if it’s imminent that this request needs to be made or in the future when LSO Connects is live, but you’ll be able to make that request certainly through your online account whether it’s now or later.

Naomi: And just to confirm, so it looks like that person had a follow-up question, so that can happen at any time of year?

Gina: Well I would suppose that you would probably want the decision sooner rather than later and likely before the Law Practice Program commences. Because of course there is a fee for that program that you’ll be responsible for if you decide to proceed in that direction and you’d probably want to know that sooner rather than later.

Naomi: OK. So somewhat related to some of the questions you’ve been answering, Jessica. After completing all of the requirements like articling and LPP and passing the exam, can a candidate start offering legal services before getting called?

Jessica: People who are not licensees are not permitted to provide legal services. So the answer to that is no, unless you are working under a Supervision Agreement as we had talked about. And I also saw a question about Supervision Agreements. Asking if someone still, for whatever reason, isn’t able to become licensed after that 12-month maximum for Supervision Agreements, can they continue working under a Supervision Agreement? And the answer to that again is no, Supervision Agreements are possible up to a maximum of 12 months.

Naomi: OK. We have a question about the timing for sharing exam results and whether or not that will be accelerated with LSO Connects. I’m wondering, Jessica, if you just want to speak to the reason that it takes the time it does to process exam results.

Jessica: Sure. So exam results generally are released eight weeks after an examination and that is because the Law Society goes through a rigorous best practice process for scoring all licensing examinations. So they are scored first and then they are reviewed carefully by individuals, actually by two separate sets of individuals and validated. And we also need to ensure the security and integrity of the licensing examination.

 So, we have experts that we work with who look at a number of different kind of data and statistics for the licensing examinations to ensure that there aren’t any irregularities with each examination and that takes time. So to make sure that all of your licensing examination results are accurate and valid and meet best practices and are fair and secure, we have to take the time that it takes and results are released generally within six to eight weeks after the sitting of the exam.

Naomi: I have a similar question in the context of ceremonial calls to the bar, Gina. So a candidate asking if there’s an intention to shorten the amount of time in advance that a candidate needs to register for a ceremonial call as a result of LSO Connects?

Gina: Likely there will be different deadlines in place for making that selection. I’m not sure exactly in what context the person who posed the question is talking but there are definitely deadlines surrounding the call to the bar that are in place. We don’t anticipate that you need to declare a ceremonial call six months in advance. The deadlines will be reasonable, and they’ll be shared with all who might consider a ceremony.

Naomi: OK. So I’m just going to open it up to any of the panelists to – if you see any questions that you think we haven’t covered in our list thematically, feel free to pick them up. I’ll continue to toss out questions as I see them. But if there’s something that you’d like to answer, please don’t hesitate to jump in.

Gina: Naomi, I’ll jump in. I think there were a couple of questions about fees and the information surrounding experiential training fees in particular. And just to let everyone know that currently all of this information is posted on our Fees and Forms section of the website, so I encourage you to take a look there. The experiential training fee is listed, as well as the examinations and any other incidental fees that may be charged if you make requests for them.

Jessica: I see a question here. What if you have already accidentally created an account with your personal email on file? So I just wanted to kind of make sure that there was no miscommunication. A personal email is the exact right email that you want to have in your current online candidate account.

 Our concern is that if you are using a university or school email address, that you may lose access to that account once you have graduated. Same if you were using maybe a professional account but you may change jobs at some point during the licensing process.

 So it is extremely important that everyone ensures that they have a personal email address that they expect to have continuous access to over the next number of years in their candidate online accounts currently. So that when LSO Connects launches we can reach you promptly and that you will receive that email to your personal email account.

Naomi: Thanks, Jessica. I see a question about whether or not there’ll be any changes as a result of the transition to submit Certificates of Qualification? Gina, do you want to answer that?

Gina: I’m not sure in what context but I’m going to assume to support an exemption – sorry. Certificate of Qualification is what you said?

Naomi: Qualification, yes.

Gina: I’m sorry. So there is no intention to stop accepting those. They are a requirement for admission to the licensing process.

Naomi: And the process will be the same, we’re receiving them in the same way as we have been in the past.

Gina: Right. I did want to mention and kind of stipulate to our audience that you need to also ensure that you provide your transcript information by the deadlines and make those requests as soon as you’ve met your requirements. Whether you’re an NCA candidate or you’re a J.D./LL.B. candidate, you know, try and give your schools a little bit of a heads up so they can get the information over to us by the required deadline. Those are not documents that you’ll be submitting on your own now or in the future, so they need to come directly from your issuing institution.

Jessica: I’m seeing a lot of kind of very general questions about articling, exemptions, abridgements and I just want to reiterate that that information is available on the Law Society website. So if you go to lso.ca and under Becoming Licensed: the Lawyer Licensing Process, there is a lot of information about articling, about seeking exemptions, about the LPP. And so maybe I’ll try to share a link with a group to the Becoming Licensed page so that you’re able to get that information.

Naomi: Thanks, Jessica. I see a question we haven’t answered here about usernames and passwords and whether or not those will be the same? To my knowledge they will not be the same. As we discussed earlier, you will receive an invitation to set up your new LSO Connects account and so your username and password very likely will change.

Gina: Naomi, I have a question here from somebody who’s wondering whether or not they should wait to apply until the new platform is live in connection with starting an articling placement.

 So without knowing the particulars of when that placement is intended to begin, I would say if it’s going to be this summer you should likely apply now. If it’s going to be next week you definitely need to be a licensing process candidate to start any form of experiential training. But if it’s not until a little bit later in the summer, there is the opportunity of course to apply on the new system, you just can’t do anything until then.

Jessica: Jason, I’m seeing a French question here close to the top. I don’t know if you see it or if I can read it out for you?

Jason: I was typing an answer into the chat. But the question is are we considering bringing the exams online? So I’ll respond in English. I was going to finish typing my answer. We’re always looking for new and better ways to deliver licensing examinations. However, at this current time there is no plan to change our exam delivery, modality. That’s something that could change in the future. You know, we’re always examining this, but right now there are no plans to do that. So I’ll just finish typing out my response. Thanks.

Naomi: Thanks very much. Go ahead, Gina.

Gina: We had a couple of questions about the study materials. Access to them, when they need to be paid and things like that. So I just wanted to quickly touch on that. Again, there is a study material page with general information on our website. As Jessica mentioned, there is a ton of information there, but I did want to answer the question of the person that is asking.

 If they decide to defer their examination sitting to a new licensing year, do they have to pay for the reading materials, the study materials essentially again? And yes, the materials are updated on an annual basis, so every new licensing year has a new set of materials on which the examinations are based. So you do have to pay for the new study materials if you defer to a new licensing year.

 The other thing as well is some questions I saw about when the materials are typically available, and I wanted to address that. So the study materials at this time are usually released for lawyer candidates in and around April. So they’ve been released for the current licensing year. They’re available for anyone who has registered for an exam and paid for the study materials. And we typically tend to follow that same timeline. So for next summer’s exams the materials are anticipated to be released in April as well.

Jessica: I see a question here about whether articling principals are going to be informed of the changes to the articling process and about LSO Connects and kind of specifically how they will be impacted? And the answer to that is yes, principals are being informed about the changes. We are sending communications directly to principals and there is also information available for principals on the lso.ca/comingsoon website.

 There is also information specifically for candidates on that website. I believe that website was shared with all of you through the webcast and we would encourage you to go there. And if you have a principal, we have told them to go there but you could also remind them that that’s a great place to get information. That will be updated regularly as we’re able to share more information about LSO Connects as we get closer to launch.

Naomi: Thanks, Jessica. I see a question about the system itself. So when LSO Connects goes live, is it going to be an app on your phone, a webpage, how can you access it? So absolutely. It’s not an app per se but it is accessible online. That’s the way that you’re going to log into it like a portal with a username and password and it will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

 So you can go in at any time that you wish to check out your information. If you need to submit documents or information to us, that will be available. And as was mentioned earlier in this session, you’ll be able to see the status of your licensing application and your result. Everything will be available to you there at a glance.

Jessica: I’m just seeing some questions from folks who have had to join late and just wanted to remind everybody that a video recording of this session will be posted. So if you had to join late don’t worry, you can watch this session from the beginning once it gets posted to the Law Society’s website.

Gina: We have a question here about the deadline for the LPP, this summer’s offering for the LPP. And someone wanted to clarify whether the payment is due July 15, or the registration? It’s actually both. In order to complete registration you have to have the selection on file, as well as make payment.

 Another question related to the LPP. Someone is asking whether or not the second part of the LPP, so the work placement portion of the program, whether they will have similar documentation that needs to be filed similar to an articling placement? So no, the expectation is not that LPP candidates will be filing end of placement information. That information will be confirmed by the program head that will confirm your successful completion and share that with the LSO.

Naomi: Thanks, Gina. I see a question about the timing for posting the video. Do you have a sense of generally when this might be available?

Gina: Yes. So I think we had indicated in the invitation to register that it is expected about 10 business days or so. So a couple of weeks I would say is the general estimate on the timing of when this will be posted.

Naomi: I see a question about the requirement to file the experiential training plan and whether or not this is still required? Perhaps, Gina, if you just want to clarify.

Gina: It is not required to be filed with the LSO moving forward once LSO Connects launches, but the expectation is that that will be between you and your principal. A plan will be shared that you can refer to and obtain feedback on. So it just doesn’t need to be filed with the LSO.

Jessica: I just saw a couple of questions about the duration of the articling term. So just to remind everybody that the articling term is still currently a minimum of eight months and a maximum of 10 months. And I’m not aware currently of any plans to change that.

Naomi: OK. Well, we had a lot of great questions today. I see a number in the chat that we weren’t able to answer for you today, but I just wanted to remind you about how you might be able to get this information. So you can find information about LSO Connects and the changes to the licensing process on the Law Society’s website at lso.ca/comingsoon that we’ve talked about. We’ll be updating this content as more information becomes available and in response to questions that we receive.

 If your question is not answered by the coming soon page and it relates to these changes that we’ve been talking about today, please don’t hesitate to reach out to us at the licencesupport@lso.ca account, and that’s licence with a C.

 If you need general information about the licensing process because many of the questions that I think are remaining are really just about generally the licensing process, whether that’s exams or experiential training or the process, please do check out the Becoming Licensed section of the LSO webpage. If you can’t find your answer there, we are of course happy to help and to answer your questions. So please reach out to us through your candidate account.

 I wanted to thank you again for your participation in today’s webcast and your active engagement, and I hope you have a wonderful day.