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INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED LAWYERS, THE NCA PATHWAY, AND ONTARIO'S LICENSING REFORM: SHOULD THE BAR EXAMINATIONS BE ABOLISHED?

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Abstract

The licensing of lawyers in Canada rests on a foundation of provincial self governance, in which each law society is charged by statute with regulating entry into the profession in a manner that protects the public interest. For internationally trained lawyers, entry into this system is mediated by an additional layer of assessment administered by the National Committee on Accreditation, a body created by the Federation of Law Societies of Canada to evaluate foreign legal education and, where necessary, require further academic study before a Certificate of Qualification is issued. Only after this certificate is obtained may an internationally trained lawyer proceed into the licensing process of a Canadian province, which in Ontario includes an experiential training requirement and two centrally administered licensing examinations, the Barrister Examination and the Solicitor Examination, prior to call to the bar. It traces the architecture of lawyer licensing in Canada, the operation of the National Committee on Accreditation pathway, and the structure of Ontario's licensing process, before setting out the case for retaining and the case for abolishing the bar examinations. Drawing on comparative experience from other Canadian provinces, England and Wales, and the United States, the article concludes with recommendations directed at the Law Society of Ontario and other Canadian legal regulators for reducing unnecessary duplication in the credentialing journey while preserving the core public protection function of professional licensing.

Keywords: National Committee on Accreditation; Ontario bar; internationally trained lawyers; Law Society of Ontario licensing reform.

1.0 Introduction

The pathway to legal practice in Canada has become increasingly international. Lawyers educated and trained outside Canada now form an important part of the profession, bringing comparative legal knowledge, multilingual abilities, and professional experience acquired across diverse legal systems. Yet entry into Canadian legal practice remains governed by a layered process of academic recognition, competency assessment, and provincial licensing. For internationally trained lawyers seeking admission in Ontario, this journey commonly begins with the National Committee on Accreditation (NCA), which assesses foreign legal education and determines the additional requirements that candidates must satisfy before receiving a Certificate of Qualification. That certificate, however, marks only one stage of the licensing process.

In Ontario, candidates must subsequently satisfy the licensing requirements established by the Law Society of Ontario, including experiential training and, under the existing framework, the barrister and solicitor licensing examinations. These examinations have traditionally been justified as safeguards of minimum professional competence and, ultimately, protection of the public. Their continued necessity, however, has become increasingly contested as the Law Society considers significant reforms to the licensing process.

2.0 The Architecture of Lawyer Licensing in Canada: Regulation, Competence, and Provincial Authority

2.1 The Regulation of the Legal Profession in Canada

Unlike many jurisdictions in which admission to legal practice is governed at the national level, the regulation of lawyers in Canada is a matter of provincial and territorial jurisdiction. Each province and territory has its own law society, established by its own statute, with authority over the education, licensing, and discipline of lawyers practising within its borders.¹ This provincial fragmentation is offset in practice by the coordinating role of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada, an umbrella body through which the fourteen provincial and territorial law societies cooperate on matters of national concern, including the mutual recognition of credentials, the National Requirement for common law degree programs, and the accreditation of internationally trained candidates.²

¹See, for example, Law Society Act, RSO 1990, c L.8; Legal Profession Act, RSBC 1998, c 9; and the corresponding statutes of the other Canadian provinces and territories, each of which establishes a self governing law society with authority over admission and discipline.

²Federation of Law Societies of Canada, About the Federation, online: <flsc.ca>. The Federation coordinates

The result is a system that is simultaneously decentralized and coordinated. Provincial law societies retain full authority to set their own licensing requirements, and meaningful differences persist among them, yet a common baseline of legal education and competence is pursued through federation level instruments such as the National Requirement and the National Committee on Accreditation process, both of which apply, with local variation in implementation, across the country.

2.2 Provincial Authority over Lawyer Licensing

In Ontario, the Law Society Act confers upon the Law Society of Ontario the authority to govern the legal profession, including the power to establish requirements for admission as a lawyer or licensee.³ That authority is exercised principally through By Law 4, which sets out the licensing process in detail, including the requirement of a legal education, an experiential training component, and successful completion of the licensing examinations.⁴ The Law Society's authority is not merely administrative. As the governing body of a self regulating profession, it is understood in Canadian jurisprudence and in the Law Society Act itself to be exercising a public interest mandate rather than a purely internal or guild function, a point that becomes significant when the licensing examinations are later scrutinized for their fit with that mandate.

2.3 Competence, Professional Standards, and the Public Interest

The stated justification for lawyer licensing across Canada, and indeed across most common law jurisdictions, is the protection of the public through the maintenance of minimum standards of competence and ethical conduct. The Law Society of Ontario's governing legislation directs it to act so as to protect the public interest, and licensing requirements, including the experiential training requirement and the licensing examinations, are framed as mechanisms for verifying that a candidate possesses the knowledge, skill, and professional judgment needed to practise safely.

The central analytical question addressed later in this article follows directly from this framing. If the purpose of licensing is to verify competence, the relevant inquiry is whether each stage of the licensing journey, including the examinations, in fact measures competence in a manner that is reliable, proportionate, and free of unnecessary duplication, or whether some stages

national policy among Canada's law societies without displacing their individual statutory authority.

³Law Society Act, RSO 1990, c L.8, s 27 and related provisions governing licensing.

⁴Law Society of Ontario, By Law 4, Licensing.

instead impose cost and delay without a commensurate gain in public protection.

3.0 Internationally Trained Lawyers and the National Committee on Accreditation Pathway

3.1 The National Committee on Accreditation: Mandate and Institutional Role

The National Committee on Accreditation, commonly referred to as the NCA, is a standing committee of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada mandated to assess the legal education and professional experience of individuals trained outside Canada, or trained in Canada in the civil law tradition who seek entry into a common law jurisdiction, against the requirements applicable to graduates of Canadian common law degree programs.⁵ Its core function is comparative and evaluative rather than educational in the first instance. It examines an applicant's academic record and, where relevant, professional experience, and determines what further Canadian legal education, if any, must be completed before the applicant may be treated as the functional equivalent of a Canadian common law graduate.

3.2 The NCA Assessment and Accreditation Process

An applicant to the NCA process typically begins by submitting academic transcripts, certificates of good standing, and other supporting documentation for individualized assessment. On the basis of that assessment, the NCA issues a Certificate of Qualification requirement letter identifying a set of subject areas, historically drawn from core common law subjects such as Canadian constitutional law, Canadian administrative law, foundations of Canadian law, and Canadian professional responsibility, in which the applicant must demonstrate competence, whether through prior study, further coursework, or written examination.

The assessment is individualized, meaning that two applicants from the same foreign jurisdiction may receive different lists of required subjects depending on the content and duration of their prior legal education, their professional experience, and the currency of their credentials. This individualization is intended to tailor the accreditation process to the applicant's actual gap in Canadian specific legal knowledge, though it has also been a persistent source of complaint regarding unpredictability and inconsistency in outcomes among similarly situated applicants.

⁵Federation of Law Societies of Canada, National Committee on Accreditation, Policies, online: <flsc.ca/national-committee-on-accreditation>.

3.3 From Foreign Legal Education to the Certificate of Qualification

Once an applicant has satisfied every subject requirement identified by the NCA, whether by challenge examination, coursework at an approved Canadian law school, or an accepted combination of the two, the NCA issues a Certificate of Qualification. This certificate is the formal instrument by which the Federation of Law Societies of Canada attests that the holder has met the National Requirement and may be treated, for licensing purposes, as equivalent to a graduate of a Canadian common law degree program.

The Certificate of Qualification does not itself confer a license to practise law. It is a threshold credential that opens the door to the next stage of the journey, namely admission into the licensing process of a specific Canadian province or territory. In this sense the NCA functions as a gatekeeper to the gate, situated ahead of, and analytically distinct from, the provincial licensing process that follows.

3.4 The Position of Internationally Trained Lawyers within Canada's Licensing Framework

Internationally trained lawyers therefore occupy a structurally different position from domestically trained candidates from the very outset of their journey toward Canadian licensure. A Canadian common law graduate proceeds directly from law school into a provincial licensing process. An internationally trained lawyer, by contrast, must first satisfy an independent federation level body that their foreign education and experience meet a Canadian equivalent standard, a process that can take a considerable period of time and impose significant cost, before they are even eligible to enter the provincial process that domestically trained candidates enter immediately upon graduation.

This structural asymmetry is the analytical foundation for the argument developed later in this article, namely that internationally trained lawyers experience the Ontario licensing examinations not as a single discrete hurdle but as one further layer added onto a credentialing journey that has already required them to prove their competence once, through the NCA process, before they ever sit for the Law Society of Ontario's examinations.

4.0 From NCA Accreditation to the Ontario Licensing Process

4.1 Entry into the Law Society of Ontario Licensing Process

Once a Certificate of Qualification has been obtained, or once a Canadian common law degree has been completed, the pathway into practice in Ontario converges into a single licensing

process administered by the Law Society of Ontario under By Law 4.⁶ At this stage internationally trained lawyers and domestically trained lawyers are formally subject to the same requirements, namely completion of an experiential training component and successful completion of the licensing examinations, followed by the call to the bar and admission as a lawyer of Ontario.

4.2 The Experiential Training Requirement

4.2.1 Articling

Articling remains the traditional experiential training route in Ontario, requiring a candidate to complete a period of supervised practical experience under the guidance of a licensed lawyer, historically set at ten months, during which the candidate is exposed to legal practice under supervision before being permitted to practise independently. Articling positions are secured through a competitive labour market process that operates largely outside the Law Society's direct control, a feature that has attracted sustained criticism because it means access to licensure ultimately depends on a candidate's success in an employment market rather than on the Law Society's own assessment of competence.

4.2.2 Alternative Experiential Training Pathways

In response to a persistent shortage of articling positions relative to the number of licensing candidates, the Law Society of Ontario introduced the Law Practice Program as an alternative route to satisfying the experiential training requirement, combining a period of instruction with a four month work placement. The existence of parallel experiential training pathways reflects an acknowledgment by the Law Society itself that a single mandatory model of practical training could not accommodate the full population of candidates seeking entry into the profession, and the relative merits, costs, and perceived prestige of the two routes have themselves been a recurring subject of internal Law Society review.

4.3 Licensing Examinations and the Call to the Bar

Independent of the experiential training route chosen, every candidate for licensing in Ontario must successfully complete two centrally administered, multiple choice licensing examinations, the Barrister Examination and the Solicitor Examination, each testing knowledge of substantive law, procedure, and professional responsibility across the areas of practice a newly licensed lawyer is expected to encounter. Only after a candidate has completed

⁶Law Society of Ontario, By Law 4, Licensing, Part III.

the experiential training requirement and passed both examinations may they be called to the bar and admitted to practise law in Ontario. It is this examination stage, applied uniformly at the end of a journey that is anything but uniform in its starting point, that forms the central subject of the reform debate examined in the remainder of this article.

5.0 Ontario's Licensing Reform: Why the Existing Model Is Being Reconsidered

5.1 The Changing Landscape of Legal Education and Professional Entry

The number of common law graduates and internationally trained candidates seeking entry into the Ontario legal profession has grown substantially over the past two decades, driven by an increase in Canadian law school enrolment, the growth of internationally trained applicants pursuing accreditation through the NCA, and the emergence of common law programs delivered outside the traditional university setting. This growth has placed sustained pressure on every stage of the licensing pipeline, from the availability of articling positions to the administrative capacity required to deliver licensing examinations to an expanding candidate population, and has prompted the Law Society of Ontario to revisit assumptions about licensing that had remained largely unchanged for decades.

5.2 Accessibility, Cost, and Administrative Burden

Licensing candidates in Ontario bear substantial direct costs, including licensing fees, examination fees, preparatory course materials, and, for many, the cost of unpaid or underpaid articling positions or lost income during a lengthy credentialing period. For internationally trained lawyers these costs are compounded by the fees and time associated with the NCA assessment process itself, so that the cumulative financial burden of becoming licensed in Ontario is, for this population, considerably higher than the cost borne by a Canadian common law graduate. Concerns about accessibility have accordingly featured prominently in recent Law Society discussions of licensing reform, alongside broader concerns about the administrative burden the current multi stage model places on the regulator itself.

5.3 The Growing Debate over Examination Based Licensing

Against this backdrop, a debate has developed within Ontario's legal profession, and within Canadian legal regulation more broadly, over whether centrally administered, multiple choice licensing examinations remain the most appropriate instrument for verifying entry level

competence. Critics point to the financial and psychological toll of high stakes testing, the questionable validity of multiple choice formats for assessing practical judgment, and the duplication inherent in testing candidates who have already been assessed through law school, and, for internationally trained lawyers, through the NCA process. Defenders of the examinations respond that a common, objectively marked assessment is precisely what allows the Law Society to guarantee a uniform minimum standard across a candidate population whose prior training is, by design, highly variable. It is this debate that the remainder of this article addresses in detail.

6.0 The Case for Retaining the Bar Examinations

6.1 Minimum Competence and Uniform Professional Standards

The strongest argument for retaining the licensing examinations rests on their function as a uniform floor of competence applied to a candidate population whose educational backgrounds vary enormously. Canadian common law graduates come from more than twenty different law schools, each with its own curriculum, grading practices, and areas of emphasis, and internationally trained lawyers arrive with legal educations obtained in dozens of different jurisdictions and legal traditions, even after their NCA required coursework. A common, centrally set examination is, on this view, the only mechanism by which the Law Society can be confident that every licensed lawyer, regardless of educational pathway, has demonstrated a shared baseline of substantive legal knowledge at a single point in time, immediately before entry into practice.

6.2 Public Protection and Confidence in the Legal Profession

Proponents of retention also emphasize the examinations' role in sustaining public and professional confidence in the value of a Canadian law license. Because the legal profession is self regulating, its claim to that privilege depends in significant part on its ability to demonstrate, credibly and visibly, that it maintains rigorous standards of entry. A licensing examination, precisely because it is standardized, externally set, and independently marked, provides a form of assurance to clients, courts, and the public that is more difficult to replicate through workplace based assessment alone, which can vary considerably in rigour depending on the quality of supervision a particular candidate happens to receive.

6.3 Regulatory Consistency across Diverse Educational Pathways

A related argument concerns consistency across the several routes by which a candidate may

arrive at the licensing stage, including Canadian common law degrees, NCA accreditation, and, increasingly, non university credentialing programs. Where the substantive content and rigour of these upstream pathways cannot themselves be fully standardized or independently verified by the Law Society, a common examination administered at the point of entry into the profession offers a check that operates independently of whatever variation exists among the pathways that preceded it, thereby preserving a measure of regulatory consistency that might otherwise be lost.

7.0 The Case for Abolishing the Bar Examinations

7.1 Duplication of Academic and Professional Assessment

Critics of the current model argue that the licensing examinations largely duplicate assessment already performed elsewhere in the credentialing journey. Canadian common law graduates have already been examined, repeatedly and over three years, on the substantive subjects the licensing examinations test. Internationally trained lawyers have, in addition, already been assessed by the NCA on precisely the Canadian specific subjects, such as constitutional law, administrative law, and professional responsibility, that reappear on the Barrister and Solicitor Examinations. On this view, the examinations do not test something new so much as they retest, in a different format, competence that has already been certified by a law school or by the NCA itself, raising a legitimate question as to what additional public protection the repetition actually secures.

7.2 Whether High Stakes Examinations Reliably Measure Legal Competence

A further line of criticism questions whether a timed, multiple choice examination is a valid measure of the professional judgment, client communication skill, and practical problem solving ability that competent legal practice actually requires. The skills most directly implicated in preventing harm to clients, such as sound judgment under uncertainty, ethical sensitivity in ambiguous situations, and effective communication, are argued to be poorly captured by an examination format that rewards recall of doctrine and rapid identification of a single correct answer among several plausible distractors. If the examinations measure something other than the competencies they are meant to protect the public against, their retention is difficult to justify solely on public protection grounds.

7.3 Financial, Psychological, and Professional Costs of the Licensing Process

The financial cost of examination fees, preparatory courses, and study time, together with the

well documented psychological toll of high stakes testing, including significant reported anxiety among candidates, is advanced as a further reason to reconsider the examinations. For candidates who must also fund an NCA assessment, additional coursework, and, in many cases, relocation to Canada, the cumulative financial and psychological burden of the full credentialing journey can be substantial, and critics argue that a system imposing this level of cost ought to be able to point to a correspondingly clear and demonstrated public protection benefit, which the available evidence, on this view, does not clearly establish.

7.4 Barriers to Entry and the Accessibility of the Legal Profession

Finally, critics contend that the examinations function, whether intentionally or not, as a barrier to entry that disproportionately affects candidates without the financial resources to afford lengthy preparatory study, candidates supporting dependants while studying, and candidates for whom English or French is an additional language. Because these characteristics are not evenly distributed across the candidate population, an examination format that is more burdensome for some groups than others raises equity concerns that intersect directly with the profession's stated commitment to diversifying its membership, a commitment that critics argue is undermined rather than advanced by the current examination model.

8.0 Internationally Trained Lawyers and the Problem of Multiple Gatekeeping

8.1 Credential Recognition and the NCA Process

The first gate faced by an internationally trained lawyer is credential recognition itself, through the NCA's individualized assessment of foreign legal education. This process can take many months to complete, requires the applicant to obtain and often have translated academic records from a foreign institution, and frequently results in a requirement to complete additional coursework or examinations even where the applicant has practised law competently for years in their home jurisdiction. This first gate is, on its own, a significant undertaking, and it is one that domestically trained candidates never have to pass through at all.

8.2 Repeated Assessment across the Licensing Journey

Having cleared the NCA gate, the internationally trained lawyer then proceeds into the same experiential training and examination requirements as every other candidate, including the Barrister and Solicitor Examinations, which, as noted above, retest many of the same Canadian

specific subject areas the NCA has already required them to master. The internationally trained candidate is therefore assessed on Canadian constitutional law, administrative law, and professional responsibility not once but twice, first by the NCA and again by the Law Society, a form of repeated assessment that a domestically trained graduate, tested on these subjects only through law school and the licensing examinations, does not experience in the same cumulative form.

8.3 Articling and Labour Market Barriers

Internationally trained lawyers also report facing particular difficulty securing articling positions, a phenomenon widely discussed in the Canadian legal profession and attributed to factors including employer unfamiliarity with foreign credentials, the absence of a Canadian professional network, and, in some documented instances, outright discrimination. Because articling remains, for many candidates, a necessary step toward licensure, difficulty securing a position can add substantial additional delay to a credentialing journey that has already been lengthened by the NCA process, compounding the cumulative burden already described.

8.4 Whether Internationally Trained Lawyers Bear a Disproportionate Regulatory Burden

Taken together, the NCA assessment, the repeated testing of Canadian specific subject matter, and documented difficulty in the articling labour market suggest that internationally trained lawyers bear a regulatory burden that is not merely equal to, but meaningfully greater than, the burden borne by domestically trained candidates, notwithstanding that both groups face formally identical requirements once they reach the Law Society of Ontario's licensing process. This article argues that any reconsideration of the bar examinations in Ontario must account for this disproportionate cumulative burden, rather than evaluating the examinations solely from the vantage point of a domestically trained candidate for whom they represent the sole and final assessment hurdle.

9.0 Comparative Perspectives on Lawyer Licensing Reform

9.1 Lawyer Licensing in Other Canadian Jurisdictions

Licensing models vary among Canadian provinces notwithstanding the coordinating influence of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada and the National Requirement. Quebec, operating within the civil law tradition through the Barreau du Québec and the Chambre des notaires, employs a licensing model distinct from the common law provinces, reflecting its different

substantive legal tradition. Among the common law provinces, requirements for experiential training and examination format and structure differ in detail even where the underlying National Requirement subject matter is shared, illustrating that a single national standard of substantive competence can coexist with considerable variation in how that competence is actually assessed at the licensing stage.

9.2 England and Wales and the Solicitors Qualifying Examination

England and Wales offer a particularly relevant comparator because that jurisdiction recently replaced a fragmented system of provider set qualifying assessments with a single, centrally set Solicitors Qualifying Examination administered by the Solicitors Regulation Authority, introduced in stages beginning in 2021.⁷ The stated purpose of the reform was to introduce a single, consistent, centrally assessed standard applicable to all candidates regardless of their educational route, including candidates qualifying through equivalent means, which is, notably, a rationale that moves in the opposite direction from the deregulatory case for abolishing examinations, since it replaces a more devolved assessment model with a more centralized one in pursuit of the same underlying goal of consistency that Ontario's examination defenders also invoke.

9.3 The United States and the Changing Bar Examination Landscape

In the United States, the National Conference of Bar Examiners has developed a redesigned bar examination, generally referred to as the NextGen Bar Exam, intended to place greater emphasis on lawyering skills and the practical application of legal knowledge, with jurisdictions transitioning to the new format over the mid 2020s.⁸ Separately, a number of American states, including Oregon and Washington, have introduced or piloted alternatives to the traditional bar examination, such as supervised practice pathways, allowing candidates to qualify through a structured period of supervised practice assessed against defined competencies rather than through a single written examination.⁹ These American developments demonstrate that competency based, workplace embedded assessment is being treated by at

⁷Solicitors Regulation Authority, Solicitors Qualifying Examination, online: <sra.org.uk>. The SQE replaced the Legal Practice Course and Qualifying Law Degree route as the standard assessment route to qualification as a solicitor in England and Wales.

⁸National Conference of Bar Examiners, NextGen Bar Exam, online: <ncbex.org>. Individual states have adopted varying timelines for transition to the redesigned examination.

⁹See, for example, the Oregon Supervised Practice Portfolio Examination and the Washington Bar Licensure Task Force reforms, each of which permits qualification through assessed supervised practice as an alternative to the traditional written bar examination.

least some common law regulators as a credible alternative to, rather than merely a supplement to, examination based licensing.

9.4 Lessons for Ontario from Comparative Licensing Models

The comparative picture is mixed rather than uniformly supportive of either position in the Ontario debate. England and Wales moved toward greater centralization and standardization of assessment, which supports arguments for retaining a common examination, while emerging American experiments with supervised practice pathways support arguments for reducing reliance on a single written test. The lesson most directly applicable to Ontario is not that either the bar examinations or an alternative model is self evidently correct, but that reform is more likely to succeed where it clearly identifies the specific competencies the profession wishes to verify and then selects the assessment instrument, whether examination, supervised practice, or a structured combination of the two, best suited to verifying those particular competencies.

10.0 Recommendations for the Law Society of Ontario and Canadian Legal Regulators

10.1 Reconsidering the Role of High Stakes Licensing Examinations

The Law Society of Ontario should undertake a structured, evidence based review of what the Barrister and Solicitor Examinations actually add to public protection once law school assessment, and, for internationally trained lawyers, NCA assessment, are taken into account. Where such a review demonstrates genuine incremental value, the examinations should be retained but refined in format to better test practical judgment rather than recall. Where it does not, the Law Society should be prepared to reduce the examinations' scope or to substitute a more targeted form of assessment for the subject areas already reliably tested upstream.

10.2 Reducing Unnecessary Duplication in the NCA to Licensing Journey

The Federation of Law Societies of Canada and the Law Society of Ontario should coordinate to ensure that subject areas already assessed through the NCA process, particularly Canadian constitutional law, administrative law, and professional responsibility, are not substantially retested in the same form at the licensing examination stage for candidates who hold a Certificate of Qualification. A recognized mechanism of credit or exemption for competencies already certified by the NCA would directly address the disproportionate cumulative burden identified in this article without weakening the overall standard applied to internationally

trained lawyers as a group.

10.3 Strengthening Experiential and Competency Based Assessment

Drawing on the American experience with supervised practice pathways, the Law Society of Ontario should consider expanding structured, competency based experiential assessment as a recognized complement to, or partial substitute for, written examination, particularly for competencies such as client communication, ethical judgment in practice settings, and file management that are difficult to assess through a written format. Any such expansion should include clear, standardized competency frameworks and independent verification of supervising lawyers, so that experiential assessment achieves a rigour comparable to that of the current examinations rather than becoming a lower standard route into practice.

10.4 Preserving Public Protection while Improving Fairness and Accessibility

Whatever reforms are ultimately adopted, the Law Society of Ontario should treat public protection and accessibility as complementary rather than competing objectives. Reducing unnecessary duplication, cost, and delay for internationally trained lawyers does not require lowering the substantive standard of competence expected of every licensed lawyer, and reform proposals should be assessed against both objectives simultaneously, with particular attention paid to the cumulative, rather than merely the formally equal, burden that different categories of candidates actually experience over the course of their credentialing journey.

11.0 Conclusion

Lawyer licensing in Canada rests on a provincially rooted but federally coordinated architecture designed to secure a uniform minimum standard of competence in a profession whose members enter practice through highly varied educational routes. For internationally trained lawyers, that architecture imposes an additional, prior layer of assessment through the National Committee on Accreditation, so that by the time such a candidate reaches Ontario's licensing examinations, they have already been tested once on much of the same Canadian specific subject matter the examinations cover. This article has argued that Ontario's ongoing reconsideration of its licensing model presents an opportunity to address that disproportionate cumulative burden directly, whether by refining the examinations themselves, recognizing NCA certified competencies at the licensing stage, or expanding rigorous, competency based experiential assessment as demonstrated in comparable jurisdictions. The examinations need not be abolished outright to achieve a fairer and more efficient system, but nor can their retention in

unmodified form be justified simply by reference to tradition. What the public interest actually requires is an assessment model, at every stage of the journey from foreign law degree to Canadian call to the bar, that is proportionate to the competence it purports to verify, and that treats internationally trained lawyers as valuable entrants to the profession whose credentials deserve efficient and fair recognition rather than repeated proof.

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