

MLP Unit 1 Course Outline (Introduction to Municipal Law)

Last Updated
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Course Description

MLP Unit 1 provides an overview of the legal framework governing municipalities in Ontario, how municipalities are organized, and how they exercise their powers. The unit begins by outlining the different types of law, the role of courts and quasi-judicial bodies, and the scope of powers that provincial statutes confer on municipalities. You will learn how municipalities make decisions, develop by-laws, and defend them within this framework. If you have no legal background, this unit also serves as an introduction on how to find and navigate laws to support your municipal work.

By the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Use legal resources such as e-Laws and CanLII to find statutes, regulations, and case law
- Explain how municipalities exercise their powers within statutory constraints
- Research the *Municipal Act, 2001* and other legislation to help assess issues related to municipal jurisdiction, powers, administration, and accountability
- Reference basic rules of interpretation when reading statutes, regulations, and municipal by-laws
- Draft a basic municipal by-law
- Identify methods of enforcing by-laws and ways in which by-laws can be challenged

The MLP certificate of completion will be issued upon completion of four units within three years:

- Unit 1: Introduction to Municipal Law
- Unit 2: Municipal Torts

- Unit 3: Municipal Contracts
- Unit 4: Municipal Land-related Law

MLP can be taken on its own or as part of AMCTO's [Diploma in Municipal Administration \(DMA\)](#).

Course Delivery Formats

AMCTO offers MLP in two formats: correspondence format and Zoom format.

- If you are taking the course in **correspondence format**, you will complete the assigned readings and submit assessments according to a given schedule. There are no classes to attend. Your work is graded by a marker.
- If you are taking the course in **Zoom format**, you will attend interactive online classes led by an instructor in addition to completing readings and assessments. Attendance and participation in discussions are important in the Zoom format.

All course materials and assessments are provided through AMCTO's online learning platform, AMCTO Connect.

A syllabus with assessment due dates is provided when the course opens each term.

Grading Scheme (Correspondence Format)

Assessment	Weight
Assignment 1	17.5%
Assignment 2	17.5%
Assignment 3	17.5%
Assignment 4	17.5%
Final Assignment	30%

Grading Scheme (Zoom Format)

Assessment	Weight
Assignment 1	17.5%
Assignment 2	17.5%

Assessment	Weight
Assignment 3	17.5%
Participation	17.5%
Final Assignment	30%

Course Grade Policy

To successfully complete the unit, students must earn a minimum grade of 51% on the final assignment and an overall average grade of 60% or higher for the entire unit.

Students who do not achieve 51% but score at least 35% on the final assignment will be given the opportunity for a re-write. This re-write must take place on the date(s) chosen by AMCTO.

Students who score less than 35% on the initial final assignment or under 51% on the re-write will be required to re-register to take the course in its entirety.

Assignment Expectations

All assignments are written assignments. They require you to analyze laws and hypothetical cases or problems related to the course topics to demonstrate your understanding of the legal provisions, concepts, and principles discussed in the textbook.

Time Commitment

The amount of time required to read the course materials and complete the assessments varies widely between individuals because they bring different levels of prior knowledge, reading/research/writing skills, and professional experience. This makes it difficult to provide a precise amount of time that will be required to complete the course work. However, we recommend preparing to spend a minimum of 35 to 40 hours over the course of the term for each MLP unit.

Due Dates

There will be a schedule of assessment deadlines in the course. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the deadlines and understand the penalties for late submissions under Section 3 of the Education Programs Policy. The policy will be provided in the course syllabus.

Academic Integrity

Students in AMCTO's education programs are expected to abide by the association's policy on academic integrity (section 4 of the Education Programs Policy). Academic misconduct discovered in an assessment submission will result in a zero on the entire assessment. Severe and/or repeated instances of misconduct will result in more significant penalties such as failure, suspension, and expulsion.

Sources used in assessments must be properly cited according to the instructions and policies in the course. Using artificial intelligence (AI)- or large language model (LLM)-based tools or other automated tools to rewrite, paraphrase, or generate content (including but not limited to text, images, audio, and video) and representing it as one's own work is not permitted.

It is the student's responsibility to be informed about the definitions and consequences of academic misconduct. The full policy will be provided in the course syllabus.

MLP Unit 1 Topic Outline

Chapter 1: The Law and the Legal Framework Governing Municipalities

- The different categories, types, and sources of law
- The basic framework of lawmaking in Canada
- How municipalities fit into that framework
- How to approach finding and researching the law
- The basics of the judicial and quasi-judicial systems

Chapter 2: Municipal Organization and Operation

- How municipalities are created and structured

- The powers of municipalities
- The roles of council, head of council, and municipal officers
- The rules regulating the qualification and election of council members
- How council meetings are conducted and how some council powers are exercised
- Conflict-of-interest rules for council members under the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*

Chapter 3: The *Municipal Act, 2001*

- The legislative history of the Municipal Act, 2001
- The structure of the act
- Topics covered by the act and where to find the relevant provisions

Chapter 4: Statutory Interpretation

- The common law rules and guides to the interpretation of statutes, regulations, and by-laws, including presumptions in interpretation
- The main rules covered by Ontario's *Legislation Act, 2006*'s interpretation provisions
- The rules and presumptions that may apply in particular situations

Chapter 5: Municipal By-laws, Part 1—Defining and Drafting

- The characteristics of a legally valid by-law
- The basic components of a by-law
- The difference between by-laws and resolutions
- How to effectively write a by-law
- The issues related to repealing and amending a by-law

Chapter 6: Municipal By-laws, Part 2—Enforcing and Defending

- How municipal by-laws are enforced
- The procedures followed in prosecuting a by-law offence under Parts I and III of the *Provincial Offences Act*
- The four main ways a municipal by-law may be challenged in court
- The main grounds for attacking a by-law



**The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers
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