

MLP Unit 4 Course Outline (Municipal Land-related Law)

Last Updated
July 29, 2026

Course Description

MLP Unit 4 focuses on municipal land-related law, starting with core concepts such as landholding, land ownership, liens, and other interests in land. It then examines the statutory and policy framework for land use planning in Ontario, which includes the *Planning Act*, provincial plans, provincial policy statements, and official plans. You will learn about the mechanisms that municipalities use to control land use within this framework, such as zoning, land division, and various by-laws. In addition, the unit introduces municipalities' complex responsibilities related to appeals, tax sales, and other land dealings such as expropriations.

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

- Outline the legislative and policy framework for land use planning in Ontario and the power that it confers on municipalities
- Identify various types of interests in land that municipal staff should investigate when dealing with land use applications, sales, transfers, and acquisitions
- Differentiate the purposes of zoning, land division, site plan control, and other land use controls that municipalities can employ under the *Planning Act*
- Use the *Planning Act* and related legislation and policies to identify rules and processes that municipal staff must follow when dealing with land use matters and appeals
- Use the *Building Code Act, 1992*, and the Building Code to identify rules and processes that municipal staff must follow when dealing with the construction, demolition, and inspection of buildings

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
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Assignment 1	17.5%
Assignment 2	17.5%
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 4 Topic Outline

Chapter 1: Landholding and Landowners

- The history of property law
- The meaning of key concepts, such as "land tenure," "freehold estate," and "leasehold estate"
- How real property is different than personal property
- The various interests in land that exist
- The types of owners and ownership structures that can hold interests in land

Chapter 2: Describing and Registering Land

- The basic principles of surveys and how to read a parcel register

- The difference between reference plans, plans of subdivisions, and condominium plans
- How land is registered in Ontario, both in the past and today

Chapter 3: Statutes That Create a Lien on Land

- What construction liens are and how they are used to protect the suppliers of goods and services
- What municipal liens are and how statutes give priority lien status to municipalities
- Other kinds of statutory liens relevant to municipalities

Chapter 4: Land Use Planning, Part 1—Provincial Policy and Official Plans

- How the land use planning hierarchy works in Ontario
- The role of provincial policy statements
- How provincial plans are made and amended
- How official plans are approved
- What official plans must contain
- The effects of official plans on public development

Chapter 5: Land Use Planning, Part 2—Zoning, Land Division, and Other Land Use Control Mechanisms

- Why land use control is an important part of the planning process
- The various forms of land use control governed by the *Planning Act* and how they are used by municipalities
- How Minister's Zoning Orders (MZOs) are used to override the planning hierarchy
- The key statutory provisions, regulations, and processes pertaining to the division of land
- How the Community Planning Permit (CPP) system is used by municipalities

Chapter 6: Land Use Planning, Part 3—*Planning Act* Appeals and Municipal Fees/Charges

- The various types of appeals available under the *Planning Act* and how these appeal processes work
- The various types of fees associated with land use planning applications

Chapter 7: Municipal Tax Collection

- The key components of municipal tax sales
- How tax arrears certificates are registered
- How public tenders and public auctions are conducted in the context of a tax sale
- How surplus proceeds from a tax sale are dealt with
- Alternatives to municipal tax sales, such as the “wait-and-see” approach

Chapter 8: Municipal Land Dealings

- How land is acquired and disposed of by municipalities
- The limitations on a municipality’s powers to deal in land
- The key provisions in agreements of purchase and sale
- How and why land is expropriated

Chapter 9: The *Building Code Act, 1992*

- How the *Building Code Act, 1992* and the Building Code work together to regulate the construction, demolition, and inspection of buildings
- The different types of building permits and when they may be issued or revoked
- How the building inspection process works
- What municipalities can do with a property standards by-law
- Dispute-resolution mechanisms and appeal rights under the *Building Code Act, 1992*

The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario

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