



Ontario Land Surveyor (OLS) Candidate Information Package

**for
Internationally Educated Professionals (IEP)**

January 2024

Ontario Land Surveyor (OLS) Candidate Information Package Internationally Trained Professional (IEP)

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Forward

Thank you for your interest in becoming an Ontario Land Surveyor. The AOLS is pleased to provide you with this Candidate Information Package. It's designed to provide you with valuable information regarding what's required to become an OLS. We hope you find this package of information helpful, and we look forward to assisting you.

About the AOLS & Benefits of Membership

About the AOLS

The Association of Ontario Land Surveyors (AOLS) was established in 1892. It is a self-governing association, responsible for the licensing and governance of professional land surveyors, in accordance with the *Surveyors Act*. As with all self-governing professions, the AOLS has a responsibility to ensure that the public interest is paramount. Section 2(2) of the *Surveyors Act* states:

The principal object of the Association is to regulate the practice of professional land surveying and to govern its members and holders of certificates of authorization in accordance with this Act, the regulations, and the by-laws in order that the public interest may be served and protected.

Refer to the About AOLS section of our website (www.aols.org/about) for additional information.

The AOLS is governed by a Council, comprised of nine Ontario Land Surveyors elected by the membership, the Surveyor General of Ontario, and up to five appointees, or lay members, who are appointed by the Ontario government and are not surveyors. Council does not include members of the AOLS staff. The lay members are representatives of the public, appointed by the government to help ensure that the public interest is protected. Council holds regular meetings in February, April, July, September, and November, with other meetings scheduled as required to deal with urgent matters.

The day-to-day operations of the Association are handled by a permanent staff, including an Executive Director, Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Survey Review Department Manager, and support staff.

The regulations under the *Surveyors Act* include the Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice, which must be adhered to by all members of the AOLS. In addition, there are Standards for Surveys and Guidelines for Surveys, which the AOLS has established to ensure that the public receives consistently reliable surveys.

To become a member of the AOLS, a surveyor must acquire the academic and practical training required by the *Surveyors Act* and subsequently be registered as an Ontario Land Surveyor (OLS)/Ontario Land Information Professional (OLIP).

Benefits of Membership

Current Benefits

- ✓ Recognition as an “Ontario Land Surveyor” and/or “Ontario Land Information Professional” confirms credibility as a professional with employers and the public.
- ✓ Belonging to a respected professional organization where members abide by a Code of Ethics and maintain a Standard of Practice.
- ✓ Meeting and working with like-minded geomatics professionals to influence change within the profession and to provide leadership.
- ✓ Opportunities to effect change at all levels of government through advocacy and public awareness activities of the AOLS.
- ✓ Access to Continuing Education and Professional Development through seminars and meetings.
- ✓ Access to events designed to share industry and technical knowledge and enhance business opportunities.
- ✓ Opportunities to liaise with professionals from other provinces in all levels of government and to share similar experiences and/or innovation.
- ✓ Opportunities to liaise with other industry-related professionals by attending meetings and conferences for professionals.
- ✓ Access to professional liability insurance at group rates.
- ✓ Opportunities to network with members for business and personal support.
- ✓ Mobility of professional credentials between provinces under the terms of a Mutual Recognition Agreement.
- ✓ Members and Associate Members (geomatics technician or technologist or articling student) have access to continuing education courses, special meetings, networking opportunities, website restricted-access pages, the annual general meeting program, and library and archived publications.

Future Benefits

- ✓ The proposed licensing of non-cadastral members, who have been issued Certificates of Registration, is expected to raise the Standards of Practice in all of the survey disciplines, promote international recognition, and lead to more networking, continuing education, and professional development. This benefit will be of particular value to geographic information managers, geodesists, hydrographers, and photogrammetrists.

Professional Membership Requirements

To work as a licensed professional land surveyor in Ontario, you must first become a member of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors (AOLS). To become a member of the AOLS, you must acquire the academic and practical training required by the Association and subsequently be registered as an Ontario Land Surveyor (OLS) or an Ontario Land Information Professional (OLIP).

Membership in the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors requires a baccalaureate level degree in geomatics from an accredited university program, for example, York University in Toronto, the University of New Brunswick, or the University of Calgary, or a course equal in content and level of difficulty. This is followed by a minimum 18-month term of articles and a set of professional examinations.

The first step for all candidates is to apply to the Association for a detailed evaluation of their post-secondary education.

If your degree/diploma was earned in another country, we require that you first apply to the Comparative Education Service (CES) of the University of Toronto or World Education Services (WES) and submit a document-by-document accreditation of your degree or qualifications from one of these services with your application to the AOLS.

The academic evaluation will specify what additional university-level courses, competencies, or equivalents you will need to satisfy our academic requirements. The majority of these courses are available either at York University or Ryerson University. Courses relating to the GIM branch may be available at several universities and colleges. Before taking any courses other than those specified by the AOLS, it is your responsibility to request the approval of the AOLS. The determination of course equivalency will be made by the Registrar and an assessor.

For the evaluation to be undertaken, we require:

- Payment of the current fee (see [Schedule of Fees](#)) We accept cheques, Visa, or MasterCard.
- A cover letter (download a [cover letter sample](#)).
- Your detailed résumé.
- An official transcript forwarded **directly** from the educational institution. (If this is not possible you may bring your **original** documents to the AOLS office to be copied.)
- Detailed course descriptions.
- Any other supporting information – academic or experience-related – that may support your evaluation (see the list on page 11 under the Portfolio heading).

List of Cadastral Academic Requirements

A comparison of AOLS Requirements to the York University Geomatics Course Equivalents and others, with descriptors, can be found on the AOLS website here:

- [Academic Requirements Table](#)

Experience

In preparation for admission to membership in the Association, you must obtain a minimum of 18 months of training and experience in professional land surveying to the satisfaction of the Academic and Experience Requirements Committee. This is done under Articles of Agreement with an Ontario Land Surveyor/Ontario Land Information Professional.

Articles of Agreement

The articling agreement governs the approved training to be provided to you by the articling surveyor or supervisor for the purpose of equipping you with the technical knowledge, work experience, professional skills, and attitudes necessary for AOLS membership.

The articling surveyor/supervisor agrees to:

- provide you with professional training throughout the duration of the articling term, while you are under their supervision
- instruct you in the practice of professional land surveying to the best of their ability and to monitor your progress in your efforts to complete the requirements as set out in the Learning Plan
- provide articling experience that conforms to the requirements of the Academic and Experience Requirements Committee (AERC)
- supply you with a Certificate of Completion confirming the period of time served upon completion of your contract, and update the status of your progress using the online Learning Management System (LMS)
- provide an update to the AERC monitor every 6 months, or as otherwise required by the AERC

You agree to:

- successfully complete the Statutes examination
- successfully complete all Essential Areas of Knowledge (EAKs), either through training and experience as established by the articling surveyor/supervisor, or through assignments provided by the AERC as directed by the articling surveyor/supervisor
- successfully complete the Oral Professional examination
- fulfil all experience requirements as prescribed by the AERC and successfully complete the written professional examination

Term of Articles

The standard term of articles for a student who has completed the academic requirements is 18 months. However, where you have received work experience in professional land surveying prior to your term of articles that is comparable to the stipulated requirements, the AERC may reduce the articling time. Under certain circumstances you may be permitted to have your articles transferred to another surveyor.

To Whom May I Article?

The Regulations state that a term of articles shall be under the direction of:

- a member of the Association, who became a licensed member at least three years before the beginning of the term of articles (this provision pertains to a student who is articling in order to apply for a licence as a cadastral surveyor), or
- a member who has held a Certificate of Registration for at least three years before the beginning of the term of articles or a person who, in the opinion of the AERC, is competent to provide and direct the approved professional experience (this provision pertains to a student who is articling in order to apply for a Certificate of Registration)

The Professional Examination

Upon successful completion of the term of articles, you are required as a final step to pass a professional entrance examination consisting of both a written and oral test. Examinations are normally held twice a year, in May and November. The application by an articling student to take the professional examination must be submitted in writing to the Registrar at least one month before the examination. On successful completion of the professional examination, you are eligible to apply for membership in the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors.

Associate Memberships

The Associate Membership Application Form can be found on the [AOLS website](#). All articling students are required to maintain Associate Membership.

Members of Other Surveying Associations

The AOLS is a signatory to a Mutual Recognition Agreement that was signed by all Canadian Provincial Surveyors Associations and the Association of Canada Lands Surveyors. Under this agreement, a licensed surveyor from any Canadian jurisdiction may achieve membership in another jurisdiction by demonstrating, through an examination and/or completion of an assignment, knowledge of local jurisprudence and systems. No academic evaluation or period of articles is required.

Key People, Processes, and Tools

Case Manager

The Case Manager (CM) manages the relationship between you and the AOLS, and will likely be your first point of contact. The CM will provide you with important information about the AOLS certification process and answer any questions you may have. The CM will make an initial determination whether your English-language skills require updating and maybe the person who will act as an adviser to you to guide you through the phases of certification such as:

- Help you to prepare for your assessment. Assessment can take many forms (e.g., competency-based) and the CM can assist you in preparing for whatever form of assessment your path may require.
- Assist you with identifying what type of documentation is acceptable for assessment purposes.
- Help you with organizing the documentation collected into a package of information (e.g., Master Portfolio) for the purposes of assessment.
- Provide you with information on external resources or information centres that might be helpful.
- Language requirement information.
- Advice and recommendations based on the CM's experience helping other IEP candidates.
- Act as a liaison between you, the assessor, an educational institution, or other organization as required in the certification process.

Assessor

The AOLS assigns an assessor(s) to review your documentation to decide what course and/or competencies are necessary for you to meet the OLS certification requirements. A critical component of your process is a preassessment meeting with the assessor. The assessor does a preliminary review of what you know and can do by reviewing the documentation you've gathered and having a conversation with you about your experience, etc. As a result of this meeting, the assessor might identify that more documentation, explanation, or clarification is needed to support the assessment process. Both you and the Case Manager are notified of this before the assessor sends an assessment review report to the Academic and Experience Review Committee (AERC) for their final review.

Academic and Experience Requirements Committee (AERC)

The AERC is a statutory committee of the Association. It is composed of at least five volunteer members appointed by AOLS Council, as well as one elected councillor and one government-appointed councillor.

The functions and responsibilities of the Committee include the following:

- a) to evaluate prospective candidates for admission to the profession
- b) to set standards for, and monitor, the articling and training process
- c) to examine candidates in the prescribed subjects, and
- d) to recommend the licensing or registration of successful candidates to the Registrar

Academic Learning Plan

You will receive a letter and other documentation from the AERC that outlines what academic courses or competency-based skill development is required to achieve certification. This information will be the basis of the Academic Learning Plan. The learning plan is a personalized action plan designed to help you set and meet the learning requirements necessary to becoming a certified OLS.

The Learning Plan is a document that you prepare in partnership with the Case Manager after receiving your AERC Assessment. It identifies:

- what do you plan to learn and by when
- the way you will undertake the learning (e.g., classroom, e-learning, self-study, etc.)
- resources you may require to bring the plan into action
- the form of evidence that will be used to demonstrate that the learning has taken place
- the type of validation to be provided that proves that the learning has been recognized and/or accomplished

An Academic Learning Plan will be developed once your documentation has been assessed and reviewed by the Academic and Experience Requirements Committee.

Academic Learning Agreement

A learning agreement is a jointly written agreement between you and an instructor, learning facilitator or assessor that identifies what's to be learned, how it will be learned, and how that learning will be evaluated.

There are many ways to design a learning agreement, incorporating as many or as few elements as you wish. Despite this flexibility, there is a general format that most learning agreements follow:

1. Identify what content will be learned
2. Specify the methods and strategies that will be used to learn the content
3. Specify resources to be used to learn the content
4. Specify the type of evidence that will be used to demonstrate learning
5. Specify how the evidence will be validated, and by whom

The extent to which an instructor, learning facilitator or assessor is involved in this process is largely where variations arise in the format. Some like to provide lists of objectives, activities, and assignments that students are to choose from, taking a more active hand in the direction a student is heading. Others prefer to take a more hands-off approach, allowing students to define almost the entire agreement from some thematic focus the instructor has provided. This is another area where the Case Manager can provide you with assistance upon request.

A learning agreement will be developed as required.

Competency-Based Portfolio

A competency-based portfolio is a package of documentation and relevant information that helps you to demonstrate that you have acquired knowledge and/or developed a skill through life experiences. This information is assessed against an academic course or other requirement to determine if you meet the course or competency-based requirements as established by the AERC. A sample competency-based portfolio is available for your review. Please contact the AOLS for more details.

Portfolio (also known as a Master Portfolio)

A portfolio, in this circumstance, is a package of information kept in a binder, a file, a folder, or electronically, of your prior learning achievements – what you know and can do. Some portfolios are extremely comprehensive and wide-ranging. Some are more narrowly and specifically focused depending on the objectives, purpose, and goals of the individual. While portfolios often contain many elements and components, there is not a single “right” way to organize and present a portfolio. In fact, people present a great deal of creativity in this regard. For the purposes of the AOLS certification process, a master portfolio format is recommended and may include the following sections/documentation (not a complete list):

- Cover page

- Table of contents
- Resume
- Reference letters
- Employment letters
- Letters of recommendation and/or verification
- Performance evaluations/assessments
- Job descriptions
- Work samples (i.e., reports, presentations, project lists, drawings, worksheets, etc.)
- Photos of workplace projects
- Publications, media clips, research topics
- Work-related volunteer recognition
- Assessments
- Professional license, professional membership

There are many reasons why you would want to prepare a portfolio since it can provide a solid foundation from which decisions can be made and next steps taken. Although it's not mandatory that you prepare a master portfolio, it is highly recommended. This is another example of where the Case Manager can provide you with assistance upon request. A portfolio guide and template is available to assist you as you prepare your own master portfolio. A sample master portfolio is available for you to review. Please contact the AOLS for more details.

PART D: DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST

Attach the following documents with this Application Form.

- i) COVER LETTER
- ii) DETAILED RESUME
- iii) OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT (In English)
- iv) At least one of the following:
 - DEGREE CERTIFICATE
 - DIPLOMA

IMPORTANT: An official transcript **must be forwarded directly from the educational institution** (If this is not possible then you may submit your original documents to the AOLS office to be copied) **along with detailed course descriptions**. All documentation must be in English or translated to English.

PART E: EDUCATION INFORMATION**1. University Degree**

Degree:
Name of Institution:
Country:
Graduation Date (dd/mm/yy):

2. Technological Degree or Diploma in Engineering or Geomatics**2YR****3YR**

Degree or Diploma:
Name of Institution:
Country:
Date of Completion of Degree (dd/mm/yy):

3. Professional Survey Commission in another recognized jurisdiction

Commission:	
Name of Group:	
Country:	
Date of Commission (dd/mm/yy):	Commission Number:

PART E: PAYMENT INFORMATION**Evaluation Fee: \$500 +HST****Select Payment Method:**

Credit Card (Visa or MC only) – If you select to pay by credit card, a custom checkout link will be emailed to you.
A 3% Convenience fee will be charged for credit card payments

Online Banking – *(Details to follow by Email)*

E-Transfer

Cheque

Cheques made payable to:

Association of Ontario Land Surveyors
1043 McNicoll Ave.
Toronto, Ontario, CANADA
M1W 3W6

Ontario Land Surveyor (OLS) Academic Areas of Knowledge

- Advanced Surveying
- Business Practices and the Profession
- Coordinate Systems and Map Projections
- Geodetic Positioning
- Geographic Information Systems
- Hydrography
- Land Use Planning and Development
- Least Squares Estimation and Data Analysis
- Mathematics
- Remote Sensing and Photogrammetry
- Survey Law

Ontario Land Surveyor (OLS) Articling Essential Areas of Knowledge (EAKs)

- Ethics and Professionalism
- Business Practices
- Cadastral Surveying
 - Research
 - General Boundary Retracements
 - Descriptions
 - Easements
 - Roads
 - Natural Boundaries
 - Original Township Retracement
 - Adverse Possession
- Spatial Reference
- Mining Act
- Condominium Act
- Planning Act

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Being able to communicate and work in English, French, or both is essential for successfully completing the licensure process with the AOLS as well as to work as an Ontario Land Surveyor. As part of the licensure process, candidates will be required to complete an oral exam and, depending on their education and experience, will need to partake in further studies. As part of the day-to-day activities of being a land surveyor, a candidate will be required to communicate effectively with coworkers, customers in common, and in legalese English.

The Academic and Experience Requirements Committee has established Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) Level 8 as a minimum recommended level of English knowledge. A free self-evaluation test is available at the [CLB-OSA online self-assessment tool](#), and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses are available at many locations.

If your learning plan includes courses offered at a post-secondary institution, you will be required to meet the language requirements of the institution at which you are seeking enrollment. Candidates should contact the proposed learning institution to determine its language requirement and the proof required.

The AOLS is prepared to assist candidates in identifying the language requirements, referring them to appropriate language resources and service providers as well as providing other helpful information regarding language training and the workplace of an Ontario Land Surveyor.

Next Steps

Organize your documentation

Ensure that all of your relevant documentation is clearly labelled and organized. If you are having difficulty identifying relevant documentation, you can refer to the portfolio guide to assist you. Remember that the documents required will differ based on what you have available and your education and experience. The three basics of your application are your cover letter, resume, and application form. All other required documentation will vary based on your experience and education.

Submit Documentation to the AOLS

Documentation can be submitted to the AOLS by email (with the documentation as an attachment), mail, or in person.

Prepare for your pre-assessment interview

A member of the AOLS staff will contact you to schedule a pre-assessment interview with an AOLS assessor. This meeting will allow you to further discuss the requirements of the AOLS as well as your education and knowledge. The goal is to recognize what you already know and have experience with and to recognize any knowledge gaps that exist. Furthermore, the pre-assessment interview allows the assessor to identify any additional documentation that you can provide to ensure a thorough assessment of your application.