



Why Canadian Professional Responsibility is a Mandatory Subject

In recent years, the Canadian Legal Profession has developed the view that competency to enter the legal profession is comprised of these three dimensions: knowledge, skills and professionalism. While professionalism is often incorporated implicitly in law school curricula wherever law is taught, the leadership of the Canadian legal profession has recognized that there are very specific and often intellectually complicated aspects to the lawyer's duty of professionalism, and that every lawyer should be familiar with these duties. IN many cases these duties have a very specific, Canadian context. Accordingly, anyone wishing to enter the legal profession in common law jurisdictions in Canada should be competent in Canadian Professional Responsibility.

Every lawyer who practices law in Canada is expected to be knowledgeable about their ethical responsibilities and to conduct in an ethical and professional manner. More specifically, the Canadian legal profession requires that the aspiring lawyer be competent in the following areas of knowledge and legal application:

- a. the duty to communicate with civility;
- b. the ability to identify and address ethical dilemmas in a legal context;
- c. familiarity with the general principles of ethics and professionalism applying to the practice of law in Canada, including those related to,
 - i. circumstances that give rise to ethical problems;
 - ii. the fiduciary nature of the lawyer's relationship with the client;
 - iii. conflicts of interest;
 - iv. duties to the administration of justice;
 - v. duties relating to confidentiality and disclosure;
 - vi. an awareness of the importance of professionalism in dealing with clients, other counsel, judges, court staff and members of the public; and
 - vii. the importance and value of serving and promoting the public interest in the administration of justice.

In Canadian Professional Responsibility, students will be exposed to each of these areas, in the Canadian legal and professional context. Course materials provide students with the opportunity to learn the substantive legal and ethical requirements in these areas and to apply their knowledge to real-life situations encountered by lawyers.