



Municipal Law Program (MLP) Unit 1: Introduction to Municipal Law Course Outline

Updated November 2024

Course Description

MLP Unit 1 provides a general context of the law and the legal framework governing municipalities. It also introduces municipal organization and operation, the *Municipal Act, 2001*, issues of statutory interpretation, municipal by-laws, and how to define, draft, enforce, and defend them.

MLP Unit 1 is a standalone certificate course that can be taken on its own. However, those who are pursuing AMCTO's Diploma in Municipal Administration (DMA) must complete all four units of the program. The subsequent units are:

- Unit 2: Municipal Torts
- Unit 3: Municipal Contracts
- Unit 4: Municipal Land-related Law

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. Your work is graded by the instructor. 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%
Assignment 3	17.5%
Participation	17.5%
Final Assignment	30%

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 hypothetical cases, laws, or problems related to the course topics to demonstrate your understanding of the legal provisions, concepts, and principles discussed in the textbook.

Please note that MLP is an academic program that requires time commitment for reading, research, and writing. Assignments are graded based on criteria such as depth of analysis, clarity, organization, effective use of sources and examples, and grammar and mechanics.

If you use a source (such as a website, article, report, video, legal source, or any other source) in your work, it must be properly cited.

Further guidelines and expectations will be provided with the course syllabus and assignment instructions.

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). This policy defines and outlines the penalties for academic misconduct, which includes plagiarism and other forms of misrepresentation such as fabricating information or representing artificial intelligence (AI)-generated content as one's own work.

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