



NOVA SCOTIA BARRISTERS' SOCIETY

Who We Are and What We Do

As the regulator of Nova Scotia's legal profession, the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society (NSBS) exists to uphold and protect the public interest in the practice of law.

We fulfill our public interest mandate by ensuring that lawyers deliver competent and ethical legal services in accordance with our standards for legal professionals.

Our responsibilities include:

- Accrediting articling clerks and lawyers through a rigorous admissions and licensing process;
- Establishing ethical standards through its *Code of Professional Conduct*;
- Ensuring the professional responsibility of lawyers, including by receiving and investigating complaints concerning lawyers' quality of service and allegations of professional misconduct;
- Setting practice standards and competency requirements for lawyers;
- Striving to improve the administration of justice in the province. This includes working with the Courts, government departments and participants in the justice system and facilitating dialogue and cooperation that will improve all aspects of the justice system for Nova Scotians.

The Society's membership is currently comprised of over 2000 lawyers.

Our Governance

Council is the Society's governing body and includes 21 voting members who are elected lawyers from across the province, as well as five appointed public representatives. Council is supported by numerous committees, hundreds of volunteers and a dedicated staff, led by the Society's Executive Director.

Council ensures that the Society fulfils its purpose by striving for excellence in regulation of the profession, promoting the highest standards of competence and ethical conduct of lawyers and striving for equity, diversity and inclusion within the profession.

Council establishes our strategic direction. Following a series of consultations with members, stakeholders and the public in 2019, Council created a set of Strategic Goals and Objectives to guide its work for the next four years (2019-2023).

Review our 2019-2023 Strategic Goals and Objectives at nsbs.org/strategicplan.

Our Foundational Activities



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Society staff and volunteers ensure that we operate in a responsible, effective and efficient manner. Our foundational activities include:

- leading national regulatory initiatives and adopting best practices in all areas of its work including credentialing and monitoring the competence and conduct of lawyers;
- maintaining an outcomes-focused and risk-based regulatory model;
- promoting and maintaining effective relationships through sincere, substantive and sustained engagement; and
- focusing on the future and making sound, informed financial decisions.

Our Values

We carry out our work in alignment with the following values:

- **Diversity and Inclusion:** We promote substantive equality and encourage the profession to embrace the value of diversity and inclusion. We are inclusive and supportive of people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, practice environments and life experiences.
- **Excellence:** We promote excellence in the profession and strive for excellence in all aspects of our work. We adopt appropriate and best policies, procedures and practices.
- **Fairness:** We operate fairly and impartially. We are proactive, principled and proportionate.
- **Respect:** We treat everyone with dignity and respect. We listen, consider and seek to understand other points of view.
- **Integrity:** We approach our work in an ethical, honest and principled fashion.
- **Accountability:** We are open, objective and fiscally responsible in our independent governance and regulation of the profession.
- **Transparency:** We are transparent in our decision-making and processes.
- **Visionary leadership:** We actively seek out and assess what is happening provincially, nationally and globally that affects the regulation of the legal profession. We anticipate and respond to a rapidly changing environment and have the courage to initiate change.

Our 'Triple P' Approach to Regulating and to Decision Making



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We regulate Nova Scotia lawyers in a manner that is risk focused, **proactive, principled and proportionate**. We embed this “**Triple P**” approach of being proactive, principled and proportionate in all of our activities.

Proactivity: We do not simply react, but we engage the legal profession and Nova Scotia’s communities to discuss challenges and opportunities.

Principled: We set a regulatory framework that is aspirational and focused on our public interest mandate rather than based solely on narrowly prescriptive rules.

Proportionate: We apply efficient and effective regulatory measures to achieve objectives using, among others, risk assessment and risk management tools. It calls for a balancing of interests and a ‘proportionate’ response, both in terms of how we regulate, and how we addresses issues of non-compliance.

Our Triple P regulation gives appropriate consideration to the risks to the public and the profession. It encourages innovative approaches to risk reduction, providing a regulatory system that serves the best interest of the public in having access to competent and ethical legal services.

Accountability for our Strategic Goals and Objectives

Council, assisted by the Executive Director, adopts an **Annual Activity Plan** establishing specific outcomes, initiatives and timelines to achieve the Society’s priorities and initiatives arising from the Strategic Goals and Objectives.

Council revisits the Activity Plan at each of its meetings and reviews the status of the Strategic Goals and Objectives annually.

Council’s executive members, namely the President, monitors Council’s activities respecting the Strategic Goals and Objectives and the Annual Activity Plan

The Executive Director supports Council in achieving the Strategic Goals and Objectives by providing regular status reports to Council.

An update on the Strategic Goals and Objectives is included in the Society’s Annual Report tabled at the Annual General Meeting.