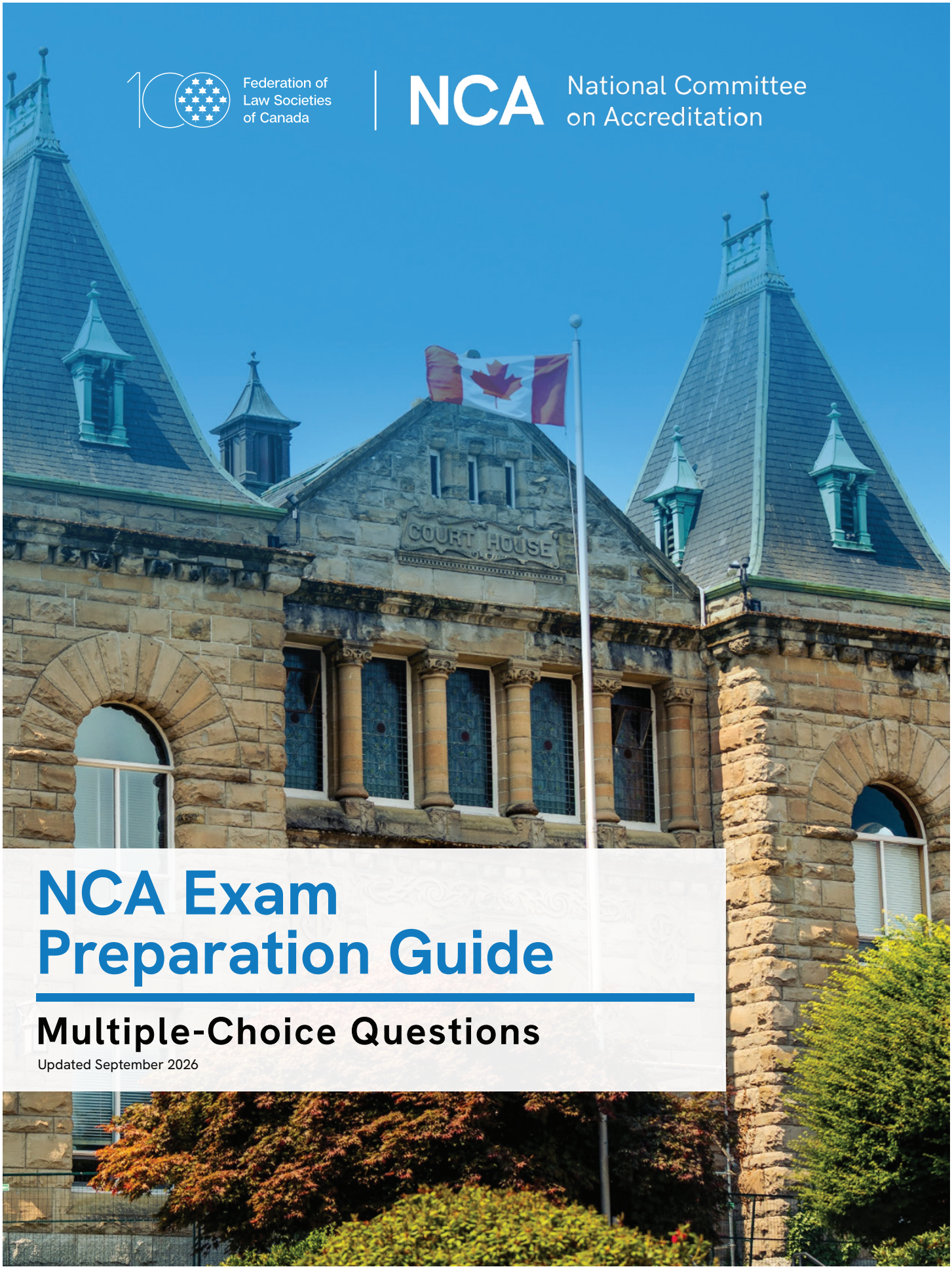
Federation of Law Societies of Canada

NCA National Committee on Accreditation



NCA Exam Preparation Guide

Multiple-Choice Questions

Updated September 2026

EXAM OVERVIEW

The National Committee on Accreditation (NCA) has prepared several exams to assess knowledge equivalency across the core subjects of Canadian legal education. The NCA assesses each candidate individually to determine which exams they will need to complete along with any other requirements before equivalency can be confirmed.

The purpose of this guide is to help you better understand and prepare to respond to NCA exams, specifically those that include multiple-choice questions (MCQs). Within an NCA exam, each MCQ will ask you to demonstrate your legal knowledge in one core subject of legal competency, which may involve your ability to do any combination of the following:

- Recognize and interpret rules and doctrines of law in context.
- Apply laws, rules, and reasoning to legal challenges.
- Determine appropriate responses to complex legal issues or debates.
- Analyze a set of facts to determine a correct approach or appropriate consequence.
- Evaluate the theoretical and policy bases of a law or argument.

Though this document includes strategies to help you get ready for your exams, the best approach will require a balance of legal knowledge and preparation.

© 2026 Federation of Law Societies of Canada. All rights reserved.

QUESTION STRUCTURE

Every exam question is built from the same three components. Though you will not need to remember them for the exam, learning to recognize them will help you read quickly and accurately.

1. **Stem:** A brief description or scenario that sets up the question and includes the lead-in.
2. **Lead-in:** The actual question being asked, usually found at the end of the **stem**.
3. **Options:** The three (3) answer choices you choose from. The correct option is called the **key.** Incorrect options are called **distractors**.

Tip: Power of Elimination

If you are having trouble finding the correct answer, read each option carefully, then work through each of the options to eliminate the least correct choices. This strategy can be useful when no choice seems completely correct.

Question Types

Each MCQ will be presented as one of two distinct question types:

1. **Independent questions** provide all required information in the individual question itself.
2. **Case-based questions** present a detailed case (a.k.a. a scenario or fact pattern) that provides context for multiple related questions in sequence.

This table summarizes and compares the two main question types.

Question Component	Independent Questions	Case-Based Questions
Case	No detailed fact pattern presented	1 detailed fact pattern shared by several questions
Stem	1 short description	Up to 8 short descriptions per case (1 per question)
Lead-In	1 lead-in	Up to 8 lead-ins (1 per question)
Options	3 options per question	3 options per question

© 2026 Federation of Law Societies of Canada. All rights reserved.

Independent Questions

Each independent question stands alone. It may start with a short statement, then it provides a lead-in question, followed by 3 answer choices. Two examples of independent questions are shown below.

Independent Example 1

Lead-In	Which statute sets out the ways that the Canadian Constitution can be changed?
Options	A. *The Constitution Act, 1867* B. *The Constitution Act, 1982* C. *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

Independent Example 2

Stem	While renovating her home, Maria discovers a burst pipe that's causing extensive flooding. She calls Arjun, a plumber, and urgently asks him to come immediately, adding that she will pay him fairly. That evening, Arjun repairs the pipe. Before leaving, he tells Maria that his usual charge for an emergency call of this kind is $1,000. The following day, Maria emails Arjun, thanking him for his work and agreeing to pay him $1,000. Despite this, Maria later refuses to pay.
Lead-In	How enforceable is Maria's promise of payment?
Options	A. Maria's promise is enforceable because Arjun performed the work at her request, and both parties understood that he would be paid for it. B. Maria's promise is not enforceable because Arjun completed the work before Maria promised to pay $1,000. As result, this was not a bargained-for exchange. C. Maria's promise is not enforceable because an agreement to determine a fair price after the work is completed is too uncertain to create a contractual obligation.

Tip: Avoiding Common MCQ Pitfalls

If you have experience with MCQ assessments, you may be familiar with common strategies to answer questions when you're unsure of the best answer. To ensure fairness, the NCA has developed its tests that avoid those strategies and encourages you to base your answers on the information presented.

Keep the following in mind when answering MCQs:

- The longest, most detailed answers are not always correct.
- Even if multiple options seem plausible, the evidence will support only one as most correct.
- Negative wording ("not"), absolute language ("only," "all"), and "of the above" options are rare or absent.
- The questions are not designed to trick you or obscure the correct answer.
- One question's stem or options will likely not provide any clues to answering another question on the same exam.

All questions are answerable with sufficient legal reasoning and knowledge of the preparatory materials and the readings and resources referenced within them.

© 2026 Federation of Law Societies of Canada. All rights reserved.

Case-Based Questions

In case-based MCQs, all questions in a set refer to the same scenario, where each question has its own lead-in and corresponding options. Though each case-based MCQ question in a set will refer to the same scenario, each question can be answered independently from the other questions in its set (success on one question will not affect success on any other question). Each case-based question may also introduce small amounts of information to the case before presenting the lead-in to answer. An example of a case-based question is shown below.

Case	Priya Singh is a senior lawyer at a litigation firm. She is representing Daniel, a small-business owner being sued for breach of contract. Priya assigns the initial legal research to Alex, an articling student. While researching the claim, Alex discovers a potentially applicable limitation period that could significantly affect Daniel's case. Alex tells Priya that he is uncertain whether the limitation period applies. He asks her to review the issue before finalizing the firm's position. The following morning, Priya is preparing for a hearing and tells Alex to "use your best judgment" and draft the pleading without further discussion. Alex includes a limitation-period defence based on his preliminary research. The opposing lawyer later points out that the defence may have been based on a rule that does not apply to Daniel's circumstances. Priya realizes that she should have reviewed Alex's work before she filed the pleading.

Case-Based Example 1

Stem (Lead-In)	Given Alex's limited experience and his expressed uncertainty about the limitation issue, which professional obligation was most directly engaged when Priya decided not to review his work before she filed the pleading?
Options	A. Priya’s duty to ensure delegated work is performed competently and appropriately supervised. B. Priya’s duty to allow junior lawyers and students to exercise independent professional judgment. C. Priya’s duty to accept the student's legal analysis because the student performed the assigned research.

Case-Based Example 2

Stem	After the pleading is filed, the opposing lawyer identifies the apparent error in the limitation-period defence. Priya confirms that the defence may not be legally available and that the error resulted from Alex's preliminary research.
Lead-in	Which analysis best reflects Priya's professional responsibilities at this stage?
Options	A. Priya may leave the pleading unchanged because the opposing lawyer has already identified the potential error. B. Priya should take appropriate steps to address the material error while continuing to protect Daniel's legitimate interests. C. Priya should consider withdrawing because an error in delegated work prevents her from continuing to represent Daniel.

© 2026 Federation of Law Societies of Canada. All rights reserved.

DIGITAL EXAM FORMAT

While you will not be allowed to bring any resources into the exam, you will have access to the following resources and tools through the digital assessment platform:

- **Preparatory Materials:** Refer to the clean copy of the preparatory materials for that exam's core subjects provided in the digital exam platform. You cannot bring your own preparatory materials or any notes into the exam.
- **Strikethrough:** Draw a line through an option you have ruled out so you do not consider later.
- **Highlight:** Mark important words or phrases (e.g., parties, claims, regulations, jurisdictions) in cases, stems, and options to make them easier for you to find.
- **Mark for Review:** Flag questions to return to later while keeping the answer you already chose.
- **Notes:** Make private question-specific comments to help you determine a final answer.

Tip: Marking Questions for Review

From reading to responding, you will have a limited amount of time to complete each question. If you are re-reading the same question several times and unable to choose an answer, consider the following approach:

- Choose the best answer for now, even if you are not fully confident.
- Click **Mark for Review** to flag the question.
- Move on. Do not spend too much time on one question.
- Return to any flagged question(s) if you have any time after you have answered all the exam questions.

Scoring

Ensure you understand the basic rules of how the exam works and how to succeed in the digital exam.

- **Choose the most correct answer.** Your overall score will be based only on the number of questions answered correctly with no partial credit given for incorrect responses.
- **Leave no question blank**. Selecting the wrong answer or leaving a question blank are both considered incorrect. Incorrect answers will not award any points and will not subtract from your overall score.
- **Each question is scored independently**. Even for case-based question sets, getting one question incorrect will not impact other questions or scores in that same set.

Tip: Leveraging the Preparatory Materials

While it may be tempting to refer to the preparatory materials to validate your answers, you will not have time to cross-reference with the preparatory materials for every question. Ensure that you only refer to the preparatory materials when needed.

© 2026 Federation of Law Societies of Canada. All rights reserved.

RESPONSE METHODS

There is more than one way to read and respond to a typical Independent MCQ. Try each approach with practice questions to find out what works best for you.

Method A: Top to Bottom	1. Read the stem and lead-in from top to bottom, highlighting key facts. 2. Read the options. 3. Choose the most correct answer.
Method B: Question First	1. Read the lead-in. 2. Read the complete stem, highlighting key facts relevant to the question. 3. Read the options. 4. Choose the most correct answer.
Method C: Option Preview	1. Read the lead-in. 2. Read the options. 3. Read the full stem carefully. 4. Choose the most correct answer.

Case-Based Question Methods

Case-based MCQs require a slightly different approach than independent MCQs. Each method above should be adapted or replaced to account for the different format. No matter which method you use, do not choose an answer while you are still reading. Finish reading the question and options first.

Method A: Top to Bottom	1. Read the case from top to bottom, highlighting key facts. 2. Read the first stem and its lead-in, referring to the case as needed. 3. Read the options for the first question. 4. Choose the most correct first answer.
Method B: Questions First	1. Read the stems and lead-ins for all questions. 2. Read the case, highlighting key facts relevant to each specific question. 3. Read the options for the first question. 4. Choose the most correct answer for each question.
Method C: Change States	1. Scan each stem for evidence of when the case changes (e.g., statements with “later”, “then”), creating a block for each time the case changes. 2. Read the case, highlighting key facts relevant to each block. 3. Read the first stem and its lead-in, referring to the case as needed. 4. Read the options for the first question. 5. Choose the most correct first answer.

Tip: Cover Up Method

If you have more experience with short answer or essay exams than with MCQs, you may choose to cover up the options while reading the stem and lead-in, then pause to mentally identify a correct answer. Once an answer comes to mind, reveal the options and select the best match to the answer that you identified.

© 2026 Federation of Law Societies of Canada. All rights reserved.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

This section offers sample independent MCQs from each subject to help you practice. Consider the strategies outlined in this document to guide your answering approach. For each question, the correct answer and its supporting rationale are available at the end of the document.

Canadian Public Law 1

Foundations of Canadian Law

A driver causes an accident while intoxicated and injures a stranger. The state initiates a criminal prosecution. At the same time, the injured victim launches a civil lawsuit to recover damages.

Which standard accurately distinguishes the required burden of proof for these two actions?

- The state must prove the criminal charges beyond a reasonable doubt, but the victim must prove the civil claim on a balance of probabilities.
- The state must prove the criminal charges on a balance of probabilities, but the victim must meet the higher standard of absolute certainty.
- Both the state and the injured individual must prove their respective cases beyond a reasonable doubt.

Constitutional Law

Which interpretive doctrine applies when both the federal and provincial governments adopt valid laws governing the same subject that do not conflict?

A. Ancillary powers
B. Double aspect
C. Federal paramountcy

Canadian Public Law 2

Criminal Law

A provincial statute creates an offence prohibiting a business from releasing a specified substance into a protected waterway. The offence is classified as a strict liability regulatory offence. The Crown proves beyond a reasonable doubt that the business released the substance. The business argues that it should not be convicted because it took every reasonable precaution to prevent the release.

Which statement is most accurate?

A. The business cannot be convicted if it establishes due diligence on a balance of probabilities because this is a defence to strict liability offences.
B. The business cannot be convicted unless the Crown also proves that the business intended to release the substance, thus satisfying the *mens rea* element.
C. The business is automatically liable once the Crown proves the prohibited act because strict liability offences do not permit a due diligence defence.

© 2026 Federation of Law Societies of Canada. All rights reserved.

Administrative Law

The *Environmental Permitting Act* provides that a director from the Environmental Protections Authority must process every completed permit application within 30 days of receiving it. The *Act* gives a director discretion to approve or refuse a permit after the application has been processed. Jordan submits a complete application, but the Director of Permits refuses to process it, stating that the department is currently too busy with an overflow of applications. Jordan applies to the court for a public law remedy.

Which of the following remedies should Jordan seek, and why?

A. *Certiorari*, because Jordan wants the court to compel the director to perform their duty and exercise discretion in Jordan's favour.
B. *Quo warranto*, because the director's refusal demonstrates that the director cannot perform their duties to hold public office.
C. *Mandamus*, because the director has failed to perform a clear, specific, non-discretionary statutory duty to process the application.

Canadian Private Law

Contract Law

Pioneer Construction contracts to renovate a warehouse owned by Summit Ltd. for $800,000 by September 1. The contract provides that Summit may deduct $5,000 from the contract price for each day of delay.

In August, Summit tells Pioneer: "Don't worry about the September 1 deadline. We won't enforce it." Relying on that assurance, Pioneer diverts its workers to another project and finishes the warehouse two weeks late.

After the work is completed, Summit deducts $70,000 from the contract price for late completion, which Pioneer then sues Summit to recover.

Is Pioneer entitled to recover, and why?

A. Yes, because Summit's promise constituted a binding variation of the completion date supported by fresh consideration.
B. Yes, because Summit's promise was binding despite the fact that Pioneer provided no fresh consideration.
C. No, because Pioneer gave no fresh consideration for Summit's promise not to enforce the completion date.

© 2026 Federation of Law Societies of Canada. All rights reserved.

Property Law

Before a condominium corporation was created, the developer registered an agreement that required the future corporation to pay the owner of an adjacent parking facility a monthly fee for parking access. After its creation, the corporation used the parking facility and paid the specified fees for eight years. It then stopped paying, arguing that the positive payment obligation could not run with the land.

Assuming no statute alters the common law, how would liability be best described in this case?

A. The corporation is not liable because a positive covenant cannot run with the land, making its subsequent use of the parking facility legally irrelevant.
B. The corporation is liable because registration of the agreement transformed the positive payment obligation into a proprietary interest, which binds the corporation as a successor.
C. The corporation is liable under a new contract if the parties' conduct manifested mutual assent, although the payment obligation did not run with the land.

Tort Law

A plaintiff commences a civil action, alleging that the defendant committed a tort against them. Which of the following correctly describes the applicable burden and standard of proof?

A. The defendant bears the burden of proof and must disprove the elements of the tort beyond a reasonable doubt.
B. The plaintiff bears the burden of proof and must establish the elements of the tort beyond a reasonable doubt.
C. The plaintiff bears the burden of proof and must establish the elements of the tort on a balance of probabilities.

Ethics and Professional Responsibility in Canadian Legal Practice

Why can a lawyer–client relationship develop even when no retainer agreement has been signed and no fee has been discussed?

A. Because conversations between lawyers and non-lawyers carry professional obligations.
B. Because the surrounding circumstances may reasonably indicate that legal advice was sought and provided.
C. Because the relationship depends on the client's intention with the lawyer not on a retainer agreement.

© 2026 Federation of Law Societies of Canada. All rights reserved.

Dispute Resolution and Oral Advocacy in Canadian Legal Practice

A combination of question types may be included in this exam. The following samples are only MCQs.

Negotiation and Mediation

During settlement negotiations concerning a $50,000 civil dispute, the lawyer sends opposing counsel a written offer containing a proposed payment amount of $30,000 and several concessions. The negotiations ultimately fail, and the matter proceeds to litigation over the initial $50,000 claim. Opposing counsel now seeks to introduce the lawyer's offer as evidence that a lower $30,000 award is acceptable.

Which statement best describes the admissibility of the offer?

A. The offer is likely inadmissible as it is generally protected by settlement privilege and cannot be used against the party who made it in subsequent litigation.
B. The admissibility of settlement offers is determined on a case-by-case basis, where the judge will make an in-camera decision based on counsel's arguments.
C. The offer is likely admissible because settlement privilege ends when negotiations fail to produce an agreement, provided the negotiations were in good faith.

Litigation

Twelve months ago, Maya (38 years-old) underwent surgery to repair a torn ligament in her knee. Following the surgery, Maya continued to experience significant pain and limited mobility, but she dismissed the symptoms as part of the six-month healing process.

Six months ago, Maya started to suspect that the pain was due to complications from the surgery.

Last month, Maya obtained her medical records and learned that the surgeon had failed to follow a required procedure during the operation. After consulting another physician, Maya learned that this failure likely caused her ongoing and persistent knee pain. She now wishes to bring a civil claim against the surgeon.

When did Maya's basic limitation period generally begin?

A. Twelve months ago, on the date of the surgery, because that was when the surgical malpractice occurred.
B. Six months ago, when Maya started to suspect that her pain was not normal and may have been caused during the surgery.
C. Last month, when Maya's suspicions were substantiated by another physician as likely caused by potential surgical malpractice.

Oral Advocacy

Oral Advocacy questions will not be multiple-choice questions, but will instead ask candidates respond to a scenario to demonstrate oral advocacy skills.

© 2026 Federation of Law Societies of Canada. All rights reserved.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS: ANSWERS AND RATIONALES

Subject	Key	Rationale
Foundations of Canadian Law	A	Criminal prosecutions require the Crown to prove guilt "beyond a reasonable doubt," whereas civil actions (torts) require the plaintiff to prove liability on a "balance of probabilities."
Constitutional Law	B	Where two laws govern the same subject or activity and they do not conflict, we are to "live and let live" by the double-aspect doctrine.
Criminal Law	A	For a strict liability offence, the Crown must prove the prohibited act beyond a reasonable doubt. The accused may then avoid liability by establishing due diligence on a balance of probabilities to demonstrate that it exercised all reasonable care in the circumstances.
Administrative Law	C	*Mandamus* compels a public body to perform a clear, specific, and non-discretionary legal duty. *Mandamus* would therefore compel processing without dictating the substantive outcome.
Contract Law	B	Summit clearly represented that it would not enforce the September 1 completion date, and Pioneer changed its position, in reliance on that assurance, by diverting workers to another project. Promissory estoppel may therefore prevent Summit from insisting on its strict contractual right to deduct the delay amount.
Property Law	C	A positive obligation that does not run with the land may nevertheless become enforceable against a successor as a personal contractual obligation. The corporation's prolonged use of the parking facility and payment of the specified fees may objectively demonstrate offer and acceptance of a new contract. Recognizing that contract does not create a new form of proprietary interest.
Tort Law	C	In tort law, the burden of proof rests with the plaintiff, and the applicable standard is a balance of probabilities (i.e., that it was more reasonable than not that the defendant committed the elements of the tort).
Ethics and Professional Responsibility	B	The relationship depends upon the reasonable expectation that legal advice is being sought and provided.
Negotiation and Mediation	A	Communications exchanged during genuine settlement negotiations generally attract without prejudice/settlement privilege, which protects offers and concessions from being used against the negotiating party in subsequent litigation.
Litigation	B	The basic limitation period generally runs from the date the plaintiff knew or ought reasonably to have known that the injury or loss occurred, that it was caused or contributed to by an act or omission, that the act or omission was attributable to the defendant, and that a proceeding would be an appropriate means to remedy the injury.

© 2026 Federation of Law Societies of Canada. All rights reserved.