

Information on  
Becoming a  
BC Notary Public

# Becoming a Notary



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
THINKING OF THE WORLD

**BC Notaries**  
A TRUSTED TRADITION



# Overview of the Process of Becoming a BC Notary

Thank you for your inquiry about The Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia.

This brochure provides information to assist you to determine whether you are eligible for membership under the Notaries Act , R.S.B.C. 1996 (as amended) and the Bylaws and Rules of The Society.



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## Your eligibility is dependent upon

1. your personal, professional, and education qualifications;
2. your eligibility for acceptance into the Master of Arts in Applied Legal Studies Program at Simon Fraser University;
3. your successful completion of the program; and

After our preliminary review of your application, The Society's Membership and Credentials Committee will assess your complete file and, if approved, forward your application to Simon Fraser University (SFU) for enrollment in the Master of Arts in Applied Legal Studies (MAALS) .

The decision of the Committee and/or the Secretary/Executive Director of The Society and/or SFU is final. Reasons for non-acceptance will not be provided.

A re-application will be considered after 2 years.

Please study the enclosed information carefully. Consider that the path ahead is long and arduous.

## Timeline and Expenses

- The Initial screening process may take 6 months to 1 year, depending on the time of year you apply.
- The education program is approximately 2 years in duration.
- Intense studies and a considerable financial outlay are necessary. Plan on approximately \$15,000 for SFU and Practical Training tuition fees, books, reference materials, and so on.
- Applicants from out of town should be prepared to travel and secure accommodation in the Lower Mainland for the face-to-face education and training sessions in the Lower Mainland.

If you meet the requirements and wish to proceed, please send us your fully completed Preliminary Application Questionnaire, together with all requested documentation and your evaluation fee of \$425 + GST.

**NOTE: This fee is a non-refundable processing charge.**

GST registration #128686219

*Time does not permit us to answer telephone calls about applications and education.*

*You may write to us by Canada Post or email. ([apps@notaries.bc.ca](mailto:apps@notaries.bc.ca))*

*When you reach the interview stage, we will be glad to respond to your questions personally.*



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# A BC Notary Public

## Character

Members of The Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia are professionals and thoroughly trained in their field. All have passed a series of stringent statutory examinations and declared qualified and trustworthy for their avocation by the Supreme Court of British Columbia.

Before candidates may train for a career as a BC Notary Public, they must undergo a comprehensive screening of their professional, financial, and educational backgrounds. The screening also reviews candidates' law-related training and, most importantly, their character and reputation.

## Community Service

Candidates must have proficiency and integrity. They are usually leaders with a commitment to community service.

Commissioned to provide certain legal services within their Notarial District, BC Notaries are very well trained and must maintain the highest professional and ethical standards.

## Competence

Every notarial candidate must establish competence to work in this field. Business acumen and good judgment come only with experience. Therefore, notarial candidates must be mature adults.

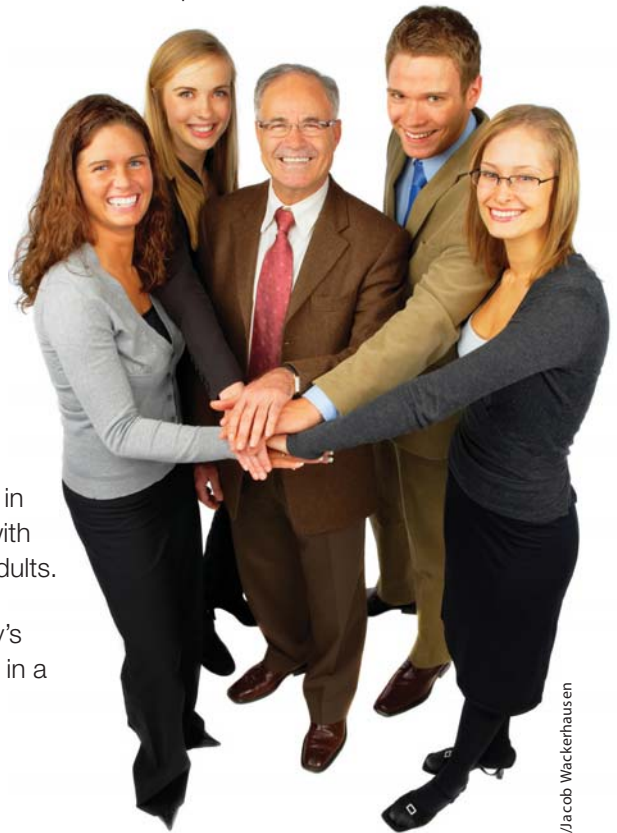
In addition to a university degree and Simon Fraser University's MAALS degree, candidates must possess sound experience in a field related to the work of a Notary Public.

## Standard of Practice

Notaries in British Columbia have the authority to practise in some areas of law that in most other provinces are limited to lawyers. Members of The Society carry an obligation to provide services that are at least equal in quality to those provided by lawyers. Notaries are held by the Courts as having the legal obligation to provide the same "duty of care" to clients as is expected of lawyers.

Members of The Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia are commissioned for life after the Supreme Court of BC has determined their fitness and they have passed a rigorous set of statutory examinations, conducted by a Board of Examiners named by BC's Attorney General.

**The examinations are integrated into the two phases of our education program.**



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# What Can A BC Notary Do?

The Tradition of Trust enjoyed by Notaries Public began in the early days of recorded history when Notaries were the principal agents for almost all commercial and judicial records.

Modern-day Notaries do not get involved in litigation or argue cases before a judge. Their activities are restricted to non-contentious matters—those where the parties involved are in agreement.

Notaries are trustees who have earned the public's confidence through their performance in various specified areas of law. As a Notary student, you will be trained to provide the following services.

- Affidavits for documents required for public registry within BC
- Residential and commercial real estate transfers
- Contracts and agreements
- Mortgage refinancing
- Business purchases and sales
- Manufactured home transfers
- Personal property security agreements
- Purchaser's side of foreclosures
- Commercial leases and assignments of leases
- Wills preparation
- Easements and rights of way
- Estate planning
- Subdivisions and statutory building schemes
- Powers of attorney
- Restrictive covenants and builder's liens
- Representation agreements
- Zoning applications
- Health care declarations
- Letters of invitation for foreign travel
- Wills searches
- Authorizations of minor child travel
- Statutory declarations
- Proof of identity for travel purposes
- Insurance loss declarations
- Passport application documentation
- Certifications of true copies of documents
- Marine bills of sales and mortgages
- Notarizations and attestations of signatures
- Marine protestations
- Execution and authentications of international documents

## **Some BC Notaries provide these services.**

- Mediation
- Subdivision registration
- Marriage licences
- Strata plan registration
- Real estate disclosure statements

# Screening Requirements for Applicants

- Applicants must have a university degree that is acceptable to The Society and Simon Fraser University.
- Prior to being “Approved-in-Principle,” applicants are thoroughly screened and tested. This includes scrutiny of their education background and a full financial character report from an investigation agency.
- The Society corresponds with individuals who are prepared to act as character witnesses for the applicants.
- Each applicant is required to submit proof of a Criminal Records Check.

Applicants are personally interviewed and given the opportunity to offer further information and explanations for items discovered during the screening process.

Each application is then reviewed by The Society’s Membership and Credentials Committee, which meets prior to the start of the education program each year. Only files complete at the time of that meeting are considered.

It is not possible to guarantee when any specific file will be reviewed. The most common delay occurs in the receipt of letters of reference from character witnesses. We suggest you stress to your character witnesses the importance of a prompt reply to the letter from The Society.

The initial screening process could take up to a year. We highly recommend you contact The Society regularly by mail or email to determine the status of your file.

If your application meets the requirements, a background investigation will follow. In due course, you will be contacted for a personal interview.

If your application is approved, your name and a few details about your background (to assist in identifying you) will be circulated to all members of The Society for their comments. Unless well-founded objections are received, you will be notified you have been “Approved-in-Principle.” You then are required to commence the education program at Simon Fraser University.



# The Education Program

The Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia is committed to ensuring the educational requirements for membership in The Society are of the highest standard.

After applicants satisfy the initial screening process and are “Approved-in-Principle,” they are required to undertake the Master of Arts in Applied Legal Studies (MAALS)\* degree at SFU.

## Phase 1

### A. NOTARY PREPARATION PROGRAM (NPP) SFU Master of Arts in Applied Legal Studies (MAALS)\*

Phase 1 of the Notary Preparation Program is scheduled to begin each September. This 18-month phase of the program is delivered by a combination of distance education, online, and in-class learning, with weekly assignments requiring approximately 15 to 20 hours of work each week.

Courses will cover the following topics.

- Canadian Law and the Canadian Legal System
- Legal Research and Writing
- Legal Philosophy
- Contracts
- Real Property
- Personal Planning
- Notarial Legal Planning
- Other Selected Topics

The form and content of the courses are subject to change by SFU.

The courses are administered and delivered by SFU as follows.

#### Fall Term

September to mid-December: a 2-week face-to-face introductory intercession, delivered at an SFU Lower Mainland campus, with the balance of the term by distance education and online learning.

#### Spring Term

January to April: Distance education and online learning.

#### Summer Intercession

3 weeks in May: Delivered face-to-face at an SFU Lower Mainland campus

#### Fall Term

September to mid-December: Distance education and online learning, with a 1-week wrap-up, face-to-face session in December at an SFU Lower Mainland campus

**Detailed course outlines will be available on SFU’s website [www.sfu.ca](http://www.sfu.ca)**

## B. PRACTICAL TRAINING

### Through The Society of Notaries Public of BC

The Society delivers 6 weeks of practical Notary training following the student's successful completion of the MAALS degree. This training consists of lectures, in-office Notary mentoring, written and oral assignments, and research on the practical aspects of the following topics.

- Real estate conveyancing
- Trust accounting
- Wills drafting
- Notarization of documents

And more!

To move forward to Phase 2, the student must pass the examinations from both the SFU MAALS Program and the Practical Training program of Phase 1.

## Phase 2

### Mediation

As part of his or her education, the candidate is required to complete a 5-day intensive mediation workshop conducted during the initial Fall Term session of the MAALS Program. The Co-Director of the Program on Dispute Resolution/Clinical Instructor in Dispute Resolution at the University of British Columbia Faculty of Law conducts this program.

### Mentoring

To receive in-office experience throughout the education period, each student will be paired with an experienced Notary "mentor."

# Qualifications for Membership in The Society

Applications for membership in The Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia are regulated by the membership, admission, and credentials rules of The Society. To fully understand the process and avoid unnecessary delay, ALL APPLICANTS ARE ADVISED to obtain and thoroughly review a copy of the *Notaries Act*, R.S.B.C. 1996 (as amended).

View the Act on our Website: [www.notaries.bc.ca](http://www.notaries.bc.ca).

## The Quintessential BC Notary Applicant

1. Graduate of a recognized university.
2. Possesses a sound business or employment background of at least 5 years of practical experience in a related field. Preference is shown to applicants with a background in legal drafting, professional accounting, banking (loans or management), insurance (nominee level), real estate, or other areas of non-contentious jurisdiction.
  - International credentials *MUST* be compared to our provincial and national systems. International Credential Evaluation Services (ICES) handles credential evaluation. (A comprehensive report must be submitted to meet our requirements.)

Contact: BCIT  
3700 Willingdon Avenue, Burnaby, BC V5G 3H2  
Telephone: 604 432-8800

3. A demonstrated above-average ability to communicate, verbally and in writing, in accordance with accepted business norms. Applicants may be required to successfully pass an English language proficiency test through TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). For further information, you may go to [www.toeflgoanywhere.org](http://www.toeflgoanywhere.org).
4. The ability to meet the admission requirements of Simon Fraser University's Master of Arts in Applied Legal Studies Program.
5. Computer literate and equipped and capable of accessing the Internet
6. Willing and able to set up an independent notarial practice accessible to the public. Should not be involved in a business that might be considered a conflict of interest
7. No criminal or bankruptcy record, nor a conviction of moral turpitude
8. Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada
9. A history of community service



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# Quick Facts about Notaries Public in BC

- Notaries' Tradition of Trust goes back over 2000 years—to the dawn of recorded history. Notaries laid down the Codex Hammurabi, the oldest evidence of documented law. Notaries were also employed by the Catholic Church to be the guiding light of civilization through the Dark Ages. Throughout centuries of upheaval, the Notary's reputation for trustworthiness ensured that documents remained reliable.
- BC Notaries are governed by the *Notaries Act* of British Columbia and The Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia. The position of Notary, as a member of one of the branches of BC's legal profession, is sanctioned and safeguarded by law. This makes BC Notaries unique in North America in providing services for non-contentious legal issues to the public.
- The professional work of a BC Notary is covered by an insurance plan that protects the public.
- BC's Notaries reflect the many ethnic and linguistic backgrounds of the province's population.
- The average age of a BC Notary is 51 and 55 percent of the province's Notaries are women.
- Notaries in British Columbia put a high priority on service to their local communities. Most are involved in fundraising, social service, business associations, and service clubs such as Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, Kinsmen, and Lions. Over 30 percent of BC's Notaries are active in youth sports and recreation.
- The Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia receives over 1600 enquiries for membership from the public annually! On average, 25 applicants are selected each year.



## Privacy Policy

Information you provide to The Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia is used only for internal examination and selection. It is not given to any other organization without your consent. Information retained for applicants selected for the education program is subject to our Student Education Privacy Policy, which is provided to students upon enrollment.



**THE SOCIETY OF NOTARIES PUBLIC OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

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