

B3: Better Billing Bulletin

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1. Billing requirements for articling students

- While the Law Society of Ontario (LSO) has recently updated certain rules regarding articling students, Legal Aid Ontario's (LAO's) billing rules remain unchanged. LAO's definition of student is found in section 57 of [LAO's Rules](#).
- You must have a written supervision agreement in place to bill for services rendered by an articling student, including services provided during the period between completing their articling and their call to the Bar. LAO may request a copy of the agreement.
- Please review the LSO's [Supervision Agreements](#) regarding who may identify as an articling student, and the restrictions on supervision agreements for candidates who are subject to good character hearings or law society proceedings.
- In accordance with LAO billing rules, if you bill for services provided by an ineligible articling student, or cannot provide a verified supervision agreement to LAO, LAO will recover any funds paid for services and may levy an administrative fee.

2. Notifying LAO of a change in financial circumstances

- As set out in sections 10(3) and 10(6) of the [Legal Aid Services Act 2020](#), you must notify LAO of any change in your client's circumstances that may impact their financial eligibility for continued legal aid coverage. Failure to disclose may result in non-payment or recovery of accounts paid.

3. Certificate effective date

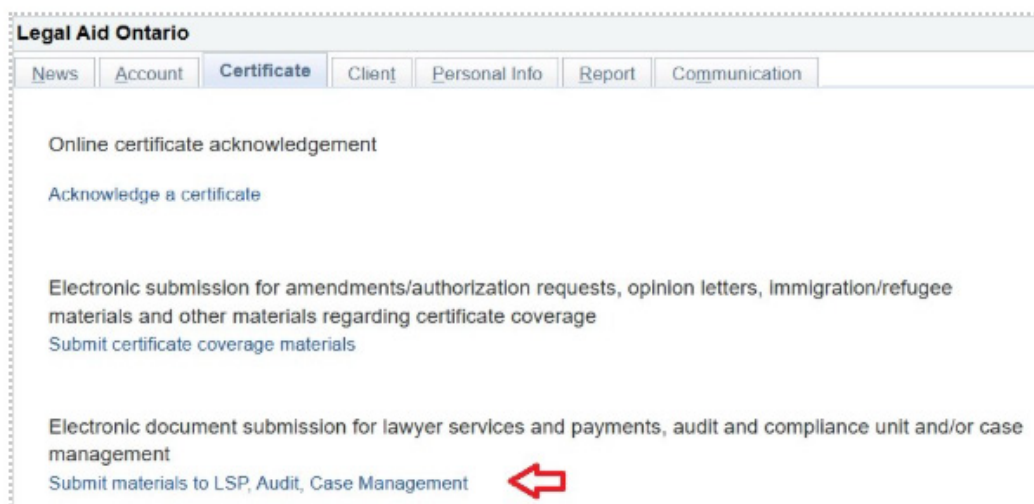
- As set out in chapter 1.8.2 of the [Tariff and Billing Handbook](#), each certificate has an effective date, which is important for billing purposes.
- Services billed for payment under a certificate must be rendered after the effective date.
- Services provided up to 30 days prior to the effective date are payable provided that the acknowledging lawyer was not retained privately before the client received the certificate.
- If services have been provided to a client more than 30 days prior to the effective date of their certificate, backdating may be requested from Centralized Services. Backdated payment will not be granted if a private retainer has been provided.
- Refer to s. 50 of [LAO's Rules](#) regarding backdating of certificates.

4. Dockets: Dates and times of day

- You are expected to keep accurate records of the services that you provide to legally aided clients.
- To ensure timely payment, dockets attached to accounts must contain all necessary information, including specific dates and times of day for services of one-half-hour (0.5 hours) or more.
- Refer to chapter 2.5.1 of the [Tariff and Billing Handbook](#), which sets out detailed requirements for dockets submitted on accounts for all types of certificates.

5. Communicating with Lawyer Services and Payments (LSP)

- Requests for disbursements, reviews of account settlement, retroactive discretion and any other certificate-related matters should be sent to LSP by way of [electronic document submission](#) via Legal Aid Online.
- Please avoid requests by email due to the possibility of error or non-receipt. Correspondence received through Legal Aid Online is certificate specific, which helps ensure it is correctly routed and processed efficiently. Items are recorded in LSP's system and forwarded directly to the appropriate staff member for processing and response.



The screenshot shows the 'Legal Aid Ontario' website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with tabs: 'News', 'Account', 'Certificate' (which is highlighted), 'Client', 'Personal Info', 'Report', and 'Communication'. Below the navigation bar, the main content area is titled 'Online certificate acknowledgement'. Under this title, there are three distinct sections, each with a blue link: 1. 'Acknowledge a certificate' 2. 'Electronic submission for amendments/authorization requests, opinion letters, Immigration/refugee materials and other materials regarding certificate coverage' followed by the link 'Submit certificate coverage materials' 3. 'Electronic document submission for lawyer services and payments, audit and compliance unit and/or case management' followed by the link 'Submit materials to LSP, Audit, Case Management'. A red arrow points to the 'Submit materials to LSP, Audit, Case Management' link.

- Please ensure that all documents and information submitted relate to only one certificate. Correspondence that refers to multiple certificates must be manually reviewed by staff and can result in administrative delay.

6. Certificates and accounts subject to audit or investigation

- Roster members have the ability to self-generate payments using LAO's online billing system. Your account will be paid automatically if it is within the authorized tariff authorization for fees and disbursements.
- LAO's Audit and Compliance Department Unit (ACU) and Investigations Department regularly conduct audits and investigations to ensure accounts are accurate and billed appropriately.
- ACU and Investigations will not accept revised dockets for an account that is being audited or investigated.
- Certificates and accounts under audit or investigation cannot be considered for:
 - Discretionary increase;
 - Late-billing approval;
 - Retroactive backdating; or
 - Additional certificate authorization.
- Please refer to Section 1.11.2 of the [Tariff and Billing Handbook](#) for additional information regarding compliance with LAO's billing rules and policies.

Questions? Comments?
Contact the Lawyer Service Centre
at pl-lsc@lao.on.ca

