

OJEN'S JUSTICE EDUCATION ACTIVITIES QUALIFY AS CPD

In January of 2011 the Law Society of Upper Canada instituted a new Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirement of all members licensed as practicing lawyers in Ontario. Every year, each lawyer must report on a minimum of twelve hours of CPD, three of which must be in approved professionalism sessions. The rules allow for up to six of the hours to be completed through educational activities including educational talks, legal writing and mentoring activities, *if* the activity facilitates the professional development of the lawyer. OJEN has consulted with the Law Society of Upper Canada about the eligibility of OJEN justice education activities towards this annual minimum for lawyers.

Substantive hours: Lawyers must undertake 12 hours of CPD through courses, attending conferences, etc. Up to six of these hours can be completed through educational activities, including three kinds of educational activities that relate to OJEN projects:

- **Educational sessions given to the public or colleagues** (not for the purpose of client development). A workshop or session that requires research of new developments in the law, consideration of their practice area for a new audience or explanation of a complex issue to the public, qualifies as it facilitates the professional development of the presenting lawyer.
- **Writing on a legal topic.** Writing articles or plain language explanations of the law is an acceptable CPD activity.
- **Mentoring.** Within this category, the Law Society recognizes the time spent coaching mock trial teams as an acceptable type of mentoring.

Self-Assessment: For each of these types of acceptable educational activities, the lawyer is expected to claim only the hours that involve professional development. For example, while coaching a high school mock trial team, a lawyer might spend a few hours in challenging conversations about the application of the law, or emerging issues, while time spent giving advocacy tips or watching rehearsals would not involve professional learning. Lawyers are to self-assess the amount of professional development involved.

Professionalism Hours: The three professionalism hours are to focus on ethics, civility and practice management. These hours must be pre-approved through a simple process with the LSUC. Limited OJEN activities would qualify, including scheduled workshops on civility in the trial process or community dialogues on how the justice system responds to allegations of racism. These types of OJEN projects engage lawyers in a dialogue about the perspectives and experiences of the community and can lead to a change in practice style. Contact the OJEN office to arrange, *in advance*, for this type of session to be approved.

Reporting: The lawyer is expected to self report and to be honest about the amount of hours spent in legitimate CPD. OJEN keeps records of individual lawyer activity and will verify participation in the event that a lawyer is audited. If you are involved in an OJEN project that may not have been recorded, or was arranged informally, email the date, location, and type of activity to regions@ojen.ca and it will be recorded.



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