

**CIAJ ICAJ**

Canadian Institute  
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of Justice

Listening. Learning. Leading.

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d'administration  
de la justice

Écouter. Apprendre. Inspirer.



Council of Canadian Administrative Tribunals  
Conseil des tribunaux administratifs canadiens

## DECISION WRITING SEMINAR

**June 6-7, 2018**

Canadian Human Rights Tribunal  
160 Elgin Street, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor, Ottawa, ON K1A 1J4

This two-day seminar on decision writing offered jointly by the [Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice \(CIAJ\)](#) and the [Council of Canadian Administrative Tribunals \(CCAT\)](#), is designed for members of administrative agencies, boards, tribunals, etc.

The seminar provides essential tools for decision writers, new or experienced, to improve their decision writing skills. It includes lectures, discussions, and workshops that stress the nature of good prose, gender neutral language and the special requirements and challenges of decision writing.

Since the art of writing is a skill that can be improved through practice, much of the instruction will centre on practical written exercises. Each attendee will be assigned an instructor who will read a sample of the attendee's writing prior to the seminar and coach the attendees during the seminar workshops.



### **Keynote Speaker**

The Honourable  
James O'Reilly

Federal Court

This program is  
offered by an  
accredited provider of  
professional content.

# AGENDA | JUNE 6

**8:00 – 8:45 am**      **Registration and Continental Breakfast** (*The Hearing Room, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor*)

**8:45 – 9:00 am**      **Welcome Remarks and Seminar Overview** (*The Hearing Room*)

**9:00 – 10:00 am**      **Good Reasons** (*The Hearing Room*)

*Presenter* • **The Honourable Justice James O'Reilly**, Federal Court, Ottawa

**10:00 – 11:00 am**      **What is the Issue-Based Structure?**

*Presenter* • **Prof. Virginia McRae**, Faculty of Law – Common Law Section, University of Ottawa

- Key principles of issue-based structure
- Identify the deep issue
- Identify the issues
- How to write your issues

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**11:00 – 11:15 am**      **Break**

**11:15 am – Noon**      **Workshops: Issue Structure** (*Breakout Rooms: 11A-58 / 11A-59 / 11A-60*)

- Identify the deep issue

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**Noon – 1:00 pm**      **Lunch** (*The Hearing Room*)

**1:00 – 1:30 pm**      **The Processes of Decision Writing** (*The Hearing Room*)

*Presenter* • **Prof. Shelley Appleby-Ostroff**, Faculty of Law – Common Law Section, University of Ottawa

- Work with a plan
- Prepare the questions
- How to revise
- Note-taking template (when applicable)

**1:30 – 2:15 pm**      **Overviews and Point-First Writing** (*The Hearing Room*)

*Presenter* • **Prof. Virginia McRae, Faculty of Law** – Common Law Section, University of Ottawa

- Overview
- Context
- Point-first writing
- Context before details
- Headings

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**2:15 – 2:30 pm**      **Break**

**2:30 – 4:30 pm**      **Workshops** (*Breakout Rooms: 11A-58 / 11A-59 / 11A-60*)

- Write the overview

# AGENDA | JUNE 7

<b>8:00 – 9:00 am</b>	<b>Continental Breakfast</b> ( <i>The Hearing Room, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor</i> )
<b>9:00 – 10:00 am</b>	<b>Workshops</b> ( <i>Breakout Rooms: 11A-58 / 11A-59 / 11A-60</i> ) - Presentation of overviews in small groups
<b>10:00 – 10:45 am</b>	<b>Managing the Facts</b> <i>Presenter • Ms. Stéphanie Roy, En Clair Service-Conseil, Montreal</i>  - Manage all the information: ~Break your decision by issue and select the useful information ~How to select and write facts ~How to select and write evidence ~What to do with elements that are not used - How to deal with credibility findings
<b>10:45 – 11:00 am</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>11:00 – Noon</b>	<b>Workshops</b> ( <i>Breakout Rooms: 11A-58 / 11A-59 / 11A-60</i> ) - Select the facts, evidence and law appropriate for each issue
<b>Noon – 1:00 pm</b>	<b>Lunch</b> ( <i>The Hearing Room</i> )
<b>1:00 am – 4:00 pm</b>	<b>Workshops on Clear Writing</b> ( <i>Breakout Rooms: 11A-58 / 11A-59 / 11A-60</i> ) - Sentences and words - Paragraphs and sentence revision  (Break during the session)
<b>4:00 – 4:30 pm</b>	<b>Q&amp;A</b> ( <i>The Hearing Room</i> ) <b>Takeaways</b>

*Workshops Facilitators*

**Prof. Shelley Appleby-Ostroff • Prof. Virginia McRae • Ms. Stéphanie Roy**

# BIOGRAPHIES

[Professor Shelley Appleby-Ostroff](#), Faculty of Law – Common Law Section, University of Ottawa

Prof. Shelley Appleby-Ostroff is a legal writing specialist and founder of SAO Legal Writing, which specializes in reader-driven professional writing development for lawyers. She teaches legal writing at the University of Ottawa's law school, where she is one of the Legal Writing Academy's program co-directors. In addition to practicing law, she worked as a senior government executive, mediator, and executive coach. She received her law degree from the University of Western Ontario in 1986, her B.A. (Philosophy) from the University of Toronto in 1982, and her M.A. (Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies) from Carleton University in 2016.

[Professor Virginia McRae](#), Faculty of Law – Common Law Section, University of Ottawa

Prof. Virginia McRae has been teaching legal writing since 1979. She was in private practice in Ottawa before joining the Department of Justice, where she practiced administrative law, human rights law and the Charter, family law and policy before becoming Assistant Deputy Minister. Professor McRae was on faculty in the Bar Admission Course for 11 years and is now Co-Director of programs for the Legal Writing Academy at the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law where she teaches senior level legal writing, Legal Writing and Social Justice, and the Writing Leadership course. She consults with law firms, government departments, and tribunals on writing.

[The Honourable Justice James O'Reilly](#), Federal Court, Ottawa

Justice James O'Reilly graduated from the University of Western Ontario with a BA (Hons), and then obtained his LLB from Osgoode Hall Law School and an LLM from the University of Ottawa. He has had a varied legal career, serving as Consultant to the Law Reform Commission of Canada, Legal Advisor in the Department of Justice, sole practitioner specializing in legal policy and law reform, Executive Legal Officer at the Supreme Court of Canada, Associate Executive Director at the National Judicial Institute, and Counsel to the Collusion Investigation in London, England. He is the author of many reports and publications, and has taught law at Carleton University, the University of Ottawa, McGill University, Western University, and the Law Society of Upper Canada. Justice O'Reilly is also a Fellow of McLaughlin College, York University. He was appointed to the Federal Court in 2002 and to the Court Martial Appeal Court in 2003. He has served as co-chair of CIAJ's Judgment Writing Seminar since 2009 and is CIAJ's First Vice-President.

[Ms. Stéphanie Roy](#), Lawyer, En Clair Service-Conseil, Montreal

Co-founder of the communications firm En Clair Service-Conseil Inc., Stéphanie works with financial institutions, insurance companies and other private and public organizations, guiding them on how to simplify their contracts, policies and other complex documents. Her team also coaches and trains corporate leaders and in-house teams on legal design and clear and effective communication. Before making the leap as an entrepreneur, Stéphanie practiced banking law at a large Montreal law firm (now Dentons) and later worked as a plain language legal information specialist at Éducaloi. For several years now, she has had the great pleasure of being a trainer for CIAJ seminars. Her expertise in contract simplification and her commitment to clear legal communication earned her the Young Bar of Montreal's 2013 Leaders of Tomorrow award for Lawyer of the Year – Alternative Career. She has also published various articles on the topics of plain legal language and contract simplification.