

CIAJ ICAJ

Canadian Institute
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of Justice

Listening. Learning. Leading.

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Écouter. Apprendre. Inspirer.



Council of Canadian Administrative Tribunals
Conseil des tribunaux administratifs canadiens

DECISION WRITING SEMINAR

ONLINE PROGRAM | JUNE 9–10, 2022

[REGISTRATION FORM](#)

This two-day online seminar on decision writing is offered jointly by the [Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice \(CIAJ\)](#) and the [Council of Canadian Administrative Tribunals \(CCAT\)](#). The program 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 Hon. Justice
Simon Ruel

Court of Appeal of Quebec

This program is
offered by an
accredited provider of
professional content

AGENDA | JUNE 9

START TIME ACCORDING TO DIFFERENT TIME ZONES IN CANADA

PT: 8:00 am MT: 9:00 am CT: 10:00 am ET: 11:00 am AT: 12:00 pm NT: 12:30 pm

NOTE: The time zone used in the program is Eastern Time

10:45 – 11:00 am LOG IN — STAND BY

11:00 – 11:10 am WELCOME REMARKS

11:10 am – 12:10 pm LECTURE: GOOD REASONS [VIRTUAL PLENARY ROOM]

Presenter: **Justice Simon Ruel**, Court of Appeal of Quebec

12:10 – 12:25 pm BREAK

12:25 – 1:25 pm LECTURE: WHAT IS ISSUE-BASED STRUCTURE? [VIRTUAL PLENARY ROOM]

Presenter: **Professor 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

1:25 – 1:55 pm LUNCH

1:55 – 2:30 pm GROUP WORKSHOPS: ISSUE STRUCTURE [VIRTUAL BREAKOUT ROOMS]

- Identify the deep issue

2:30 – 3:10 pm LECTURE: OVERVIEWS & POINT-FIRST WRITING [VIRTUAL PLENARY ROOM]

Presenter: **Professor Virginia McRae**, Faculty of Law – Common Law Section, University of Ottawa

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

3:10 – 4:30 pm GROUP WORKSHOPS [VIRTUAL BREAKOUT ROOMS]

- Write the overview

AGENDA | JUNE 10

10:45 – 11:00 am **LOG IN — STAND BY**

11:00 am – Noon **LECTURE: MANAGING THE FACTS** [VIRTUAL PLENARY ROOM]

Presenter: **Professor Katherine Vitale Lopez**, Faculty of Law, University of Toronto

Noon – 1:00 pm **GROUP WORKSHOPS** [VIRTUAL BREAKOUT ROOMS]

- Select the facts, evidence and law appropriate for each issue

1:00 – 1:45 am **LUNCH**

1:45 – 2:45 pm **LECTURE: CLEAR WRITING** [VIRTUAL PLENARY ROOM]

Presenter: **Professor Katherine Vitale Lopez**, Faculty of Law, University of Toronto

- Sentences and words
- Paragraphs and sentence revision

2:45 – 4:30 pm **GROUP WORKSHOPS: WORKSHOPS ON CLEAR WRITING & REVISIONS** [VIRTUAL BREAKOUT ROOMS]

(Break during the workshop)

4:30 – 4:45 pm **Q&A AND TAKEAWAYS** [VIRTUAL PLENARY ROOM]

Presenters: **Professor Virginia McRae**, Faculty of Law – Common Law Section, University of Ottawa
Ms. Christine Moisan, Communications Consultant, Christine Moisan Communications
Christine O’Doherty, Executive Director, Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice (CIAJ)
Professor Katherine Vitale Lopez, Faculty of Law, University of Toronto

Workshop Facilitators:

Professor Virginia McRae • Ms. Christine Moisan • Ms. Christine O’Doherty • Professor Katherine Vitale Lopez

BIOGRAPHIES

The Honourable Justice Simon Ruel, Court of Appeal of Quebec

The Honourable Simon Ruel has been appointed to the Court of Appeal on June 21, 2017. He was a judge of the Superior Court of Quebec from 2014 to 2017. He has experience hearing matters in all areas of law, including criminal law, family law, constitutional law, Aboriginal law and administrative law, civil law and commercial law. As a lawyer, Justice Ruel practiced mainly in public and administrative law and government affairs. He was a member of the Quebec Bar (1995) and of the Law Society of Upper Canada (2007). After beginning his career with the firm Grey Casgrain, he subsequently became a litigator and counsel to the federal Department of Justice, the Privy Council Office, and the Department of Finance. Before his appointment to the Superior Court, he was a partner with the firm BCF Business Law in Quebec City and, prior to that, with Heenan Blaikie. Justice Ruel participated as counsel in numerous federal and provincial public inquiries and investigations. Beyond his practice, Justice Ruel taught public and administrative law at the Quebec Bar School and was a lecturer at the University of Ottawa in Civil and Commercial Evidence. He has authored or co-authored numerous legal publications, articles, and commentaries in public and administrative law. He has participated as a speaker, organizer, or moderator in legal conferences on topics ranging from legal ethics to public law and inquiries. Justice Ruel currently serves on the executive of the Canadian Bar Association Judges' Forum.

Professor Virginia McRae, Faculty of Law – Common Law Section, University of Ottawa

Virginia McRae has been teaching legal writing since 1979. She was in private practice in Ottawa before joining the Department of Justice where for 28 years she practiced administrative law, human rights law and the Charter, family law and policy. She was appointed Assistant Deputy Minister in 2007. She was also on faculty in the Bar Admission Course for 11 years teaching Public Law, Legal Research, and Legal Writing. She joined the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law in 2011 as Director of Programs for the Legal Writing Academy and teaches senior level legal writing, Legal Writing and Social Justice, and the Writing Leadership course. She designs and runs customized legal writing programs for law firms, government legal departments, tribunals, justices of the peace, and judges.

Ms. Christine Moisan, Communication Consultant

Christine Moisan, M.A. Lettres françaises, is a professional writer and trainer in French writing. Her areas of specialization are clear and concise writing and strategic writing. Her clients include the Senate of Canada, the Parole Board of Canada and the Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Ottawa. She also writes speeches for ministers and elected municipal officials, and numerous communications tools for a variety of clients.

Ms. Christine O'Doherty, Executive Director, Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice Bilingual lawyer experienced in professional, labour and commercial law. She has contributed to developing and implementing effective government relations and public affairs strategies for the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec, major pharmaceutical companies such as Merck Frosst and Eli Lilly as well as NATIONAL, Canada's most prominent public relations firm. She was also responsible for carrying out compliance cases and developing audit programs. Ms. O'Doherty is a member of the Faculté de pharmacie de l'Université de Montréal, where she is responsible for the implementation of the soft skills curriculum for graduate and undergraduate students.

Professor Katherine Vitale Lopez, Faculty of Law, University of Toronto

Prof. Katherine Vitale Lopez is currently an Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law and the coordinator of the first-year Legal Research & Writing program. While in law school she served as Executive Editor of the Notre Dame Law Review. Prior to joining the Faculty of Law, she taught courses in oral presentation skills and editing at the University of Toronto School of Graduate Studies' the Graduate Centre for Academic Communication (GCAC), formerly the Office of English Language and Writing Support. Professor Lopez also worked as a litigation associate in Washington, D.C. She is admitted to the bar in New Jersey, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.