

Dear Robson Hall Class of 2027,

Bienvenue à la Faculté de droit de l'Université du Manitoba! Law school starts in approximately six weeks, and we are very much looking forward to meeting you all. Vos professeurs se préparent à vous offrir une expérience d'apprentissage enrichissante dans un environnement à la fois sécuritaire et stimulant.

Nous souhaitons vous donner des mises à jour au sujet de notre programme bilingue novateur. The Faculty of Law offers students entering the first year of their JD program the opportunity to earn a Concentration in Access to Justice in French (A2JF), a course of study approved by the University of Manitoba Senate in 2022. Les étudiants qui compléteront au moins 26 des 92 crédits de leur programme JD dans des cours bilingues obtiendront la Concentration en accès à la justice en français en reconnaissance des efforts qu'ils auront déployés à acquérir les compétences nécessaires pour desservir leurs clients dans les deux langues officielles. A few of you have already indicated an interest in participating in the A2JF program starting in September, and it is not too late if you haven't yet let us know of your interest.

Many of you may not have used your French in an academic context for a few years, and so you may feel unsure about participating in the A2JF program. To support your participation, our partners at Université de Saint-Boniface have formulated a language assessment to provide you with a sense of your readiness for the program. The assessment also allows us to determine what supports you might need to be successful, including French tutors (at no cost), who are available year-round to help with assignments or to answer any French language questions that you may have. Information about the assessment can be found on the Robson Hall website. We encourage you to make use of this opportunity for feedback and support that will allow you to build strong skills for your future as a bilingual lawyer. The Government of Canada is funding bursaries for students whose first language is not French and who are participating in the A2JF program in their first year of law studies. Nous avons d'autres bourses pour les étudiants francophones dans notre programme A2JF pour les aider à défrayer le coût de leurs études de droit.

En plus des évaluations langagières et des tuteurs, nous offrons un « Bilingual Buddy Program » dans lequel vous serez jumelés avec un étudiant bilingue de deuxième ou troisième année qui aura déjà suivi des cours de droit en français dans le passé. Your "buddy" will be able to provide guidance to you throughout your studies and answer any questions you may have regarding bilingual courses, "l'école d'été" in France, the French language moots and internships, and more. We encourage you to take advantage of this resource as it provides a valuable opportunity for you to get acquainted with your bilingual peers in the legal profession. Last but not least, we offer a course called "Passeport du droit en français 1" that is scheduled for two to three hours each month. Passeport brings together first- and upper-year students in the A2JF Concentration to attend seminars on themes relating to the bilingual practice of law in Western Canada and the access to justice needs of francophone communities. Vous développerez progressivement votre compréhension de la langue française et vos compétences en communication tout en créant des liens avec vos collègues bilingues qui vous seront très utiles lorsque vous commencerez la pratique du droit. This course offers great networking opportunities with lawyers in the community.

While you may be apprehensive about pursuing part of your legal studies in French, please know that the two bilingual courses offered in first year (Legal Methods and Passeport) are evaluated on a pass/fail basis. This provides students the opportunity to strengthen their French abilities without worrying about their grades.

There are many benefits to enrolling in the A2JF program at Robson Hall. In addition to developing your legal skills in French, students have found that participating in the A2JF program has been an asset in applying for articling positions and clerkship opportunities. Students who completed courses within the A2JF Concentration have obtained articling positions with various employers, including Justice Canada and large law firms in Winnipeg, Toronto and Calgary, as well as clerkships at the Tax Court and the Federal Court of Canada.

Students in the program have also accomplished great success academically and in moot competitions. The gold medalist for 2023 was a student who completed the program. Our bilingual students who participated in the Bastarache Moot in 2023 won second-best pair overall and second and third best oralists. Our bilingual students also placed second in the French stream of the 2023 Canadian National Negotiation Competition and won the Spirit of Negotiation Award for the French stream of the 2024 Canadian National Negotiation Competition.

To learn more about these exciting opportunities please consult the [Concentration in Access to Justice in French webpage](#) and the University of Manitoba's [Academic Calendar](#). If you have further questions, please email FrancaisJuridique@umanitoba.ca. We would be happy to connect you with a buddy and answer your questions.

Finally, please get in touch to let us know of your interest **by August 15th** (and sooner is always better) to help us plan a warm welcome to the Access to Justice in French Concentration. This will also allow us to communicate with you before law school starts to provide information about courses and Orientation activities focused on the students in our program.

Au plaisir,

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