

Banking and finance

This section focuses on the full spectrum of lending and borrow work, including acquisition, asset-based, structured and project finance transactions. Financial services regulatory matters are also considered, as are banking litigation and fintech affairs, though the key focus of this section lies in mainstream financing.

Business immigration

This section assesses firm's capacity to advise on the full array of an employer's immigration programme, including recruitment, workforce planning, HR policy and global mobility. Relevant work may include standalone counselling, as well as immigration mandates connected to cross-border corporate transactions.

Cannabis

This section considers the entire array of work within the medicinal and recreational cannabis industries, from M&A, investments and financings through to disputes, regulatory work, commercial agreements, advertising/marketing and IP matters. Firms who can showcase a broad breadth of services at a market leading level will achieve the highest rankings.

Capital markets

This covers the full breadth of equity, debt and securitisation capital markets work for issuers, arrangers, underwriters and sponsors. This can include note and debt issuances, IPOs and delistings, note programme work, capital raisings and green bonds. This category also includes related regulatory and contentious work. Public M&A and share purchases do not fall under this category, but under Commercial, corporate and M&A.

Competition and antitrust

Work in this table includes cartel investigations and enforcements, merger control, abuse of dominance and restrictive practices, among other competition-related matters. Matters before the Competition Bureau and Competition Tribunal, in addition to those held in the courts, are naturally considered, as are matters pertaining to the Competition and Investment Canada Acts.

Construction

This section considers legal work carried out for all types of participants in the construction industry, both contentious and non-contentious. Construction mandates covering commercial and residential property, infrastructure, energy and mixed-use developments will all be relevant in this section, among others.

Corporate and M&A

This table considers all forms of mergers, acquisitions, buyouts and takeovers, as well as purchases of shares in companies, plus joint ventures, incorporations, and commercial deals (e.g. a distribution agreement or a large outsourcing). Corporate governance would also be covered here though the core focus is certainly M&A. Transactions handled on behalf of private equity entities will be considered.

Dispute resolution

This table covers all manner of contentious matters, including litigation and arbitration. Highly ranked practices will have significant and specialist experience in acting on a variety of proceedings and will be able to demonstrate involvement in high-value and complex (perhaps even precedence setting) disputes in the Canadian courts. Disputes from all sectors (banking, real estate, commercial, tax, competition, energy etc) are considered. Class action matters are also applicable here.

Energy and natural resources: Mining/Oil and Gas/Power

These tables are focused on the firms handling major work for clients within these three sectors. Work could include project, transactional, development, project finance, regulatory and contentious matters, among others. Top-ranked firms will be able to demonstrate a broad breadth of services and a tenacity for high-value, significant mandates.

Environment

This section assesses environmental litigation in addition to advisory, regulatory and transactional support. Specific examples of work which will be considered include project assessments, waste management, compliance procedures, enforcement actions, permitting, risk assessments and the environmental aspects of M&A.

Indigenous Law

This section considers the full spectrum of matters relating to Canada's indigenous communities. Work handled on behalf of indigenous governing bodies and businesses, political organisations, communities or individuals will be considered, as will matters where the client is a third party, the Crown or a federal/municipal government body. Examples of work considered include land issues and acquisitions, injunctions, regulatory proceedings, self-government agreements, environmental assessments, project proponents and permitting, among others.

Infrastructure Projects

This section covers the full array of infrastructure project-related work, from financing, investments, procurement and project development through to complementary areas such as environmental and indigenous law. Firms will need to demonstrate expertise in a broad range of project classes to achieve a top ranking. Purely construction focused teams will also not achieve a higher ranking here as there is a separate table for this line of work.

Insurance

For this section, we consider contentious and non-contentious work. The main driver of standout work will be high-stakes litigation. Relevant work includes but is not limited to general/commercial liability claims, D&O disputes, major professional liability disputes, energy-related disputes, and aviation and maritime insurance claims. Non-contentious work would look at a variety of corporate, financing, and commercial transactions for clients in the insurance industry. This section will also consider advice on the regulatory components of the creation of new insurance products.

Intellectual Property

Here we would be looking at a firm's ability to cover the full scope of IP legal work, across all types of IP (patents, trademarks, copyright, designs and digital forms of IP (e.g. software rights)), covering both contentious and advisory work as well as portfolio management, registration/filing/prosecution, and also anti-counterfeiting/anti-piracy work.

International Expertise

This section recognises firms and individuals who are able to provide standout Canadian law advice from abroad. All manner of high-end work can be submitted here, so long as it is led by a lawyer based overseas. We aim to recognise independent Canadian firms with this section and, as such, will not be able to consider submissions from international firms.

International Trade

Work in this area would include advising on anti-dumping, economic sanctions and trade embargoes, export controls, customs issues and trade remedy proceedings, investigations, international trade agreements, and WTO law.

Labour and Employment

This considers a mix of contentious and non-contentious work. Work may relate to collective actions, whistleblower claims, restrictive covenant disputes, senior executives, pay equity disputes, the employment aspects of transactions, restructuring, and employment-related investigations. While firms should demonstrate some evidence of drafting employment agreements and advising on internal employment policies, this should not form the basis of a firm's submission.

Media and Entertainment

Work in this space would consider reputation management issues, regulatory issues, rights issues, content production, licensing, advertising, corporate and commercial transactions, litigation and relevant financing matters. Firms will need to demonstrate a broad breadth of high-end work across a range of different industries (publishing, film, television, gaming, digital media etc) to achieve a Tier One ranking.

Pensions

Work handled on behalf of pension scheme trustees, scheme sponsors, employers, government bodies, administrators, service providers and regulators will be considered here, both contentious and non-contentious. Work provided could include plan design, plan mergers, pension investments, funding, governance, tax, benefit and regulatory matters, in addition to the full array of related disputes. Corporate support work, such as due diligence on corporate transactions is given less weight than unique, standalone matters for top clients

Real Estate

We are happy to consider all forms of relevant work (including property finance, disputes and leasing) though firms in the higher tiers will typically excel in respect of high-value transactional work and demonstrate full-service development capabilities. We would also advise that it is preferable to showcase a range of work at variety of asset classes (office, retail, commercial, hospitality, leisure, energy, residential etc) as we may penalise firms with a narrower offering (e.g., those that only undertake residential property work). Work will be assessed on scope, complexity, value and significance.

Restructuring and Insolvency

For this area, we are looking at firms acting for all parties involved in insolvencies, bankruptcies, administrations or other distressed financial or business circumstances. Involvement in domestic and cross-border restructuring will also be considered.

Tax

Covers all tax-related legal matters, including advisory work, the tax elements of wider corporate transactions, and tax disputes. Covers all corporate or business taxes, tax planning and trust arrangements for high-net-worth individuals, VAT, customs, and transfer pricing matters.

Technology

This section covers all manner of technology-related matters, from relevant M&A, outsourcing and disputes through to procurements, data privacy and regulations. Cybersecurity, e-commerce and payment systems are also considered, as are cutting edge trends such as AI. This is another section where firms much showcase a diverse array of top-end matters in order to achieve a high ranking. A varied array of industries should likewise be showcased in the work.

Telecoms

This is an industry focus section, considering work for clients operating in this industry. Work includes communication projects (such as expansions of communication networks, infrastructure projects and fibre broadband projects), spectrum auction and licensing work, satellite-related mandates, and network access issues. Regulatory work is also a key part of this practice area. Wider telecoms-related corporate transactions, disputes and advisory work are also considered.

Transport

Our Aviation table assesses firm's capabilities in commercial, regulatory, transactional, disputes and finance work for airlines and airports. Aviation-related personal injury work is likewise considered here. The Shipping section focuses claims concerning collisions, damage, loss and cargo, charterparty and disputes, as well as shipbuilding, shipping finance and ship sales and purchases. The Other Transport table considers the full spectrum of matters within the remaining transport sub-sectors, namely road and rail.