



ONTARIO LEGISLATURE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME
PROGRAMME DE STAGES À L'ASSEMBLÉE
LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

CANADIAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE SCIENCE POLITIQUE



MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly

FROM: Dr. Peter P. Constantinou
Academic Director, Ontario Legislature Internship Programme

DATE: October 2020

SUBJECT: **The 2020-2021 Ontario Legislature Internship Programme (OLIP)**

For 45 years, the Ontario Legislature Internship Programme has welcomed recent university graduates to Queen's Park to work with backbench Members of Provincial Parliament. The non-partisan Programme was established by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the Canadian Political Science Association to provide a unique educational opportunity for young graduates, while offering practical support to Members.

Ten Ontario Legislature interns have arrived at Queen's Park eager to assist Members with their duties, and I am writing to you now to inform you about how to apply to have an intern placed with your office.

Since early September, the interns have been working from the safety of their homes in accordance with public health directives. They are using this opportunity to learn about how the Legislature responds and adapts in uncertain times. I am confident that while working remotely, this year's group of interns will succeed in making full contributions to your office, while meeting the standard of excellence that you have come to expect from the Programme.

The range of duties traditionally performed by interns for Members has varied widely and depends largely on the Members' priorities and responsibilities. Moreover, Members have often discovered that Interns offer a valuable perspective that is bright, non-partisan and enthusiastic. Please see the separate enclosure "MPP Information Sheet" for more information.

OLIP Interns are chosen through a rigorous selection process based on academic excellence, personal maturity, and demonstrated interest in parliamentary government. The minimum requirement for a position as an intern is a degree from a Canadian university; however, the interns often possess, or are working towards, post-graduate degrees. In other words, the interns are prepared to learn, yet are already capable of being an effective member of your team.

To enable the interns to gain a broad understanding of the work of the Assembly, they are placed with two individual Members: approximately four months with a backbench government Member, and another four months with an opposition Member. **Ministers, and leaders of recognized parties are not eligible.** The interns observe protocols of strict confidentiality during and after their placement with Members.



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Interns working for Opposition Members in the first term will spend their second term with a government member and vice versa, so that in each term, five interns work for the government's party and five with opposition parties.

Please note that having an Intern in your office **will not incur any additional costs to you**. The interns are paid with a stipend provided by the Programme.

If you would like to meet with the interns to discuss the possibility of having one of them assigned to you in the current year (which runs until June), please complete and submit [the application form](#) as soon as possible (no later than **October 22nd, 2020** please). This will help to better match your needs with the interns' talents and interests. The interns will then call to arrange a virtual meeting with you. We will advise you of your placement by October 30th, 2020.

Interns are not to be issued BlackBerries, cell phones or any other equipment that requires a contract. The Programme will not pay for any expenses incurred for such equipment along with any expenses to furnish the Intern with a workspace. **Interns have been supplied with Assembly laptops and access to Office365.**

Programme Activities

Normally, Members are encouraged to take their interns with them to their constituencies at least once during their time together and, if necessary, the Programme can assist in covering any related expenses. However, given restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, this aspect of the placement may not be possible this year until it is safe to do so.

As part of the Programme, the interns visit other legislatures to broaden their understanding of parliamentary institutions and Canadian politics. In past years, the interns have visited the House of Commons, the Quebec National Assembly and other provincial assemblies. This year, they will be participating in this aspect of the Programme virtually. There is also an academic aspect to the Programme, in which interns attend seminars with prominent figures in Ontario public life and prepare research papers on legislative matters. We try to ensure that these opportunities do not prevent the interns from performing their duties by scheduling such events when the House is not sitting. However, there are occasions when this is not possible, and occasionally they may need time out of your office for such commitments. Should your intern have other Programme commitments, we will advise you on the dates and times as soon as they are known.

The Programme is very popular, and there are always more MPPs who request a placement than we have interns to fill them! As such, I would encourage you to please contact us as soon as possible so we can arrange a meeting with our interns.

I am sure you will find that an intern can make a valuable contribution to your office! Please join us in this exciting Programme – now part of Queen's Park for 45 years!

If you have any questions, please contact our Programme Manager, Elisa Natarelli, at admin@olipinterns.ca



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Information Sheet for Members: 2020-2021

WHAT CAN AN OLIP INTERN DO FOR YOUR OFFICE?

OLIP interns are recent university graduates who can help you and your staff in many ways. For example, they can assist with day-to-day office work such as preparing mailings and performing routine clerical tasks, as well as research and writing projects and planning special events. In some cases interns can carry the office when there are staff shortages or absences; most frequently, they are a short-term addition to the office team.

We encourage Members to allow interns to make full contributions to your offices by giving them substantive assignments and permitting them to observe as many aspects of your work as possible. This may include shadowing you in meetings at Queen's Park and in your constituency, and observing proceedings in the House and committees on a regular basis. The interns are diverse in their talents and interests: some of them are interested in policy and writing while others may be well-suited to attending stakeholder meetings on your behalf. We suggest that you sit down with your intern at the start of the placement to discuss the role the intern will fill in your office, and that you also spend some one-on-one time mentoring the intern.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Ontario Legislature Internship Programme has been in place at Queen's Park since 1976. From its inception, all interns have split their time between serving Members from the government and opposition sides of the House. Indeed this is one of the cornerstones of our status as a non-partisan programme.

However, we know that information about matters dealt with in your office would be valuable to another party. Therefore, all interns are carefully and frequently counseled about the need for discretion in their dealings with one another and those who are not part of your office team. The requirement for confidentiality carries over to the interns' meetings with officials, stakeholders and other participants in the Ontario and Canadian political scenes. Confidentiality has always been critical to our success and, as we enter our 45th year, we can safely claim that OLIP is a success!

We assure you that the interns will meet your expectations of confidentiality, but we also ask you to make your confidentiality requirements clear if there are extraordinary factors in your own case.



This “week in the life of an intern” will give you an idea of the kind of the work the interns typically do:

<p>MONDAY 8:30am: Review MPP mail, sort invitations, and respond to letters 10:30am: Watch Question Period on TV at desk while completing work 12:00pm: Lunch 1:00pm: Get letters to constituents or stakeholders proofed by MPP’s staff and then MPP. 4:00pm: Meet with MPP to review work completed and discuss future tasks 5:00pm: Go to reception at Queen’s Park</p>
<p>TUESDAY 8:30am: Review and send letters composed on Monday 9:00am: Open mail and put any invitations into MPP’s calendar 10:30am: Go to Question Period 12:00pm: Meet other interns for lunch 1:00pm: Start research for MPP’s upcoming Private Member’s Bill 3:00pm: Attend a stakeholder meeting with the MPP 5:00pm: Go to reception at Queen’s Park</p>
<p>WEDNESDAY 8:30am: Open and review mail 9:00am: Meet with MPP to discuss research for Private Member’s Bill and potential stakeholders 10:00am: Work on Private Member’s Bill suggestions by MPP 12:00pm: Lunch 1:00pm: Attend a briefing with the MPP and the Ministry 2:00pm: Obtain contact information and call/email potential PMB stakeholders 4:00pm: Review work completed so far with MPP’s Executive Assistant</p>
<p>THURSDAY 8:30am: Begin writing speech for Private Member’s Bill 10:30am: Attend Question Period 11:30am: Debrief with MPP about weekly tasks, Question Period, etc. 12:30pm: Meet other interns for lunch 1:15pm: Formulate a topic for a Member’s Statement and write the speech. 3:00pm: Send the Member’s Statement to MPP and, upon approval, to the Whip’s Office for review 4:00pm: Respond to emails, make a list for next week’s priorities, and check mail</p>
<p>FRIDAY 9:00am: Individual meetings with Admin Team 9:30am: Meeting with interns and OLIP administrative team 10:30am: Meeting with a former Premier or intern, Sponsor, or someone of interest 12:30pm: Meeting with OLIP sponsor at their office, sometimes including a free lunch! 3:00pm: Work on intern business such as planning trips, organizing receptions, writing magazine articles or getting new sponsors</p>

As you can see, the Interns spend Fridays with the OLIP administrative team and are not available to your office on those days.



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THE PLACEMENT PROCESS

Fall Placement: November - February

Spring Placements: March - June

If you are interested in having an intern work in your office during the current programme year, here's what will happen:

- Complete the OLIP MPP application form by [clicking here](#). Applications are due at 5:00pm on **October 22nd, 2020**.
- You will be contacted by one of the interns to arrange a virtual interview – all ten interns will participate in this interview (in other words, there will not be ten separate interviews) and we request that both the MPP and your key Queen's Park staff participate.

Please note that the purpose of the interview is for the interns to learn about you, your office and your work; what we want to ensure is that there is a good match between what you need from the intern and what kind of experience the intern will have in your office. In contrast to normal staffing arrangements, the interns (with the help of the Programme's Administrative Team) will select the Members they wish to work for; you will not select the intern.

- Each term, five interns will be placed in the offices of backbench Members from the government's party and five will be placed in the offices of opposition Members.
- The second set of placements will also be based primarily on these interviews; there will not be a second set of interviews.
- All Members will be informed of the outcome of their interviews on **Friday, October 30th**.
- If you were selected for a second term placement, you will be introduced to the intern one week before the start date.

The Ontario Legislature Internship Programme has proved its worth to hundreds of MPPs since it was established over forty years ago. However, to build on that success, we need you. Please consider taking part!

For additional information about the programme, please contact Elisa at the OLIP office directly at admin@olipinterns.ca. Our website may be accessed at www.olipInterns.ca which contains a blog about the work of the Interns.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Ontario Legislature Internship Programme?

OLIP was established in 1976 as a non-partisan programme to provide a unique learning experience for recent university graduates and practical support for MPPs. OLIP is a well-known, widely respected programme at Queen's Park and among organizations that deal regularly with government.

Who participates in the Programme?

Students who are selected are considered top of their class, both academically and in terms of extra-curricular activities and community involvement. Competition for the internship is rigorous – only ten candidates are chosen each year.

What do interns do at Queen's Park?

During the ten-month duration of the programme, each intern completes placements in the offices of both a government party Member and an opposition party Member. Interns perform many functions for their Members such as writing and issuing press releases and correspondence, organizing events, drafting questions for Question Period, as well as writing speeches and statements. Interns may also spend time in their Member's constituency office and learn about issues in the riding. OLIP's reputation allows interns to meet and discuss issues with respected and influential political, social and economic actors.

Interns may also have the additional opportunity to complete "mini-placements" in other various offices. For example, interns have made positive contributions in the offices of the Auditor General, the Ombudsman, the Clerk and Legislative Research. These placements help the interns to understand the operation of the Legislative Assembly and the services that these offices provide to Members.

What are the other Programme requirements?

Each intern is expected to write an academic paper on any aspect of the Legislature. Paper topics tend to be inspired by the interns' direct experiences in the Programme. Interns are also invited to speak at the annual Canadian Political Science Association conference.

How does this Programme make an impact?

Interns have gone on to successful careers in both the private and public sectors. Former interns have gone to work for many different organizations, some of which sponsor OLIP today. Intimate knowledge of the legislative process, the who's who of Ontario's political scene and general Queen's Park culture have proven to be invaluable tools to the interns' careers in all sectors.



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Study tours and hosting other legislatures' interns

Study tours to other legislatures provide invaluable comparative perspectives that enhance interns' knowledge of the Ontario legislative process. OLIP interns also virtually host other intern groups from across Canada. In recent years, OLIP has hosted the Manitoba Legislative Internship Program, the Quebec Internship Program, and the Parliamentary Internship Programme (Ottawa). The Ontario Interns are responsible for setting the educational agenda and organizing visits and seminars to allow the visiting Interns to reach their programme goals.