



Position Description

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| Position Title: | Information Officer |
| Team: | Operations |
| Reports To: | Assistant Manager, Early Resolutions |
| Affiliation: | Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union (COPE), Local 343 |

A. Position Summary

The Ombudsman functions as an independent and impartial officer of the provincial legislature who investigates and resolves complaints with respect to maladministration within the provincial government and its organizations, including boards, tribunals and agencies. Complaints are dealt with by telephone, email, in person and in writing and in both official languages.

The information officer is responsible for providing support to the Early Resolutions team by reviewing and processing incoming complaints and ensuring that they are properly documented and entered into the Office's case management system. The information officer also analyses incoming complaints and identifies and flags high profile, serious, sensitive and potential systemic complaints according to management guidelines and direction. The information officer provides a response to complaints which are assessed to fall outside of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction as well as complaints which may be resolved through the provision of information and referrals –responses may be provided in writing or by telephone. The information officer also conducts research, runs reports on the office's case management system to obtain statistical information and makes inquiries as assigned and under direction of the early resolutions managers. The position also provides administrative support as needed including acting as a back-up for the records and archives technician.

The information officer reports in the first instance to an assigned assistant manager and ultimately to the manager of the Early Resolutions Team. The information officer works as part of a larger team and is expected to work collaboratively and maintain effective and constructive working relationships and communications with colleagues in addition to members of the investigations and SORT teams.

B. Summary of Responsibilities

Complaint Handling

- Receives complaints and inquiries including by mail, email, fax and internet and enters information into the Office's case management system.
- Conducts a preliminary review and assessment of the incoming complaint to identify whether it may fall within or outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction and to also identify the relevant organization complained about.
- Ensures that all required information is documented in the office's case management system in relation to incoming complaints, including coding of the complaint for statistical purposes.
- Analyzes complaints to identify main issues and flags complaints which are judged to be exceptionally serious, sensitive, high profile or systemic in nature, according to pre-defined guidelines and direction provided by management.
- Identifies complaints which appear to be urgent or time sensitive in nature and which may need to be prioritized so that they can be brought to management's attention for appropriate action.
- Conducts research and provides appropriate information and referrals in response to complaints, which may fall outside of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.
- Conducts research and provides information and referrals in response to complaints which may fall within the Ombudsman's jurisdiction and which can be resolved through the provision of information and referrals.
- Communicates necessary information to complainants by phone or email and may prepare correspondence to respond to complaints, where appropriate.
- May attend interviews and meetings with complainants or other stakeholders in person and by phone in order to provide support and assistance to early resolution officers and investigators.
- Provides assistance on the review and investigation of complaints as requested by management including conducting research and reviewing documentation.
- Other complaints related duties as assigned by management.

Caseload and File Management

- Effectively manages a caseload of complaints, using a variety of strategies and ensures a timely and relevant response to all complaints assigned.
- Triage and prioritizes complaints as appropriate to ensure appropriate, timely and relevant responses.
- Immediately flags and brings forward exceptionally serious, sensitive and high profile complaints including systemic issues to management's attention.
- Regularly ensures that timelines and deadlines are met and that all complaints are dealt with in a timely fashion without undue delay.

- Uses the office's case management system to effectively manage caseload and to ensure complaints and case related activities are properly documented.
- Ensures paper complaint files are well documented and organized.

Other Responsibilities

- Conducts research and runs statistical reports as requested by manager using Office's case management system.
- Shares information with colleagues on relevant complaint issues and trends including through informal briefings at team meetings.
- Provides administrative support and assistance as needed including in the scanning of documents into the office's case management system.
- Acts as back-up as needed for the Office's records and archives technician and for administrative support positions within the office.
- Other related duties as assigned by management.

C. **Position Qualifications**

Education: Post secondary education preferably in the social sciences or in a related field or an acceptable combination of education and experience.

Experience Requirements: Recent experience in complaints intake and providing information and referrals in response to complaints in an Ombudsman or similar type organization.

Personal Suitability:

The Information Officer position requires a candidate with a high level of integrity and professional competence. They must be of good character, reliable and capable of being trusted to handle confidential, sensitive and personal information using the appropriate safeguards and discretion. The incumbent must possess excellent interpersonal skills and must be capable of projecting a professional, competent and capable image in their internal and external dealings, including with complainants and other stakeholders. All communications must be handled with a high level of respect, courtesy and professionalism. Information officers must also be capable of demonstrating excellent judgment, initiative and discretion that is commensurate with the position.

Language Requirements:

Proficiency in oral and written communication in the English language is required. Proficiency in oral and written communication in French is considered an asset.



Skills and Abilities

- Ability to review and document complaints, assess jurisdiction and identify relevant individual and potential systemic issues, according to direction and guidance provided by management.
- Ability to conduct research and to identify potential referrals for complaints which may fall outside of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction or which may be resolved through the provision of information and referral.
- Ability to manage a high volume workload, prioritize issues and tasks and meet deadlines.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills including the ability to effectively communicate with individuals who may be distressed or emotionally distraught or who may face other challenges.
- Ability to use a personal computer including word processing and email programs and the internet.
- Experience using a complaints management database is considered an asset.
- Knowledge of and/or experience in working with provincial government organizations including boards, tribunals and agencies is considered an asset.

D. Work Environment

The Office of the Ombudsman offers a highly charged, demanding, energetic and challenging work place with opportunities to work on interesting cases directly affecting the citizens of Ontario. We emphasize a hard-working productive environment that encourages professional development and teamwork.

Physical Environment: The information officer works in an open-concept workspace which is designed to facilitate team work and frequent consultation and professional communication among colleagues.

Hours of Work and Travel: Hours of work per week are established by the Collective Agreement and individual work schedules are established and approved by management. The information officer may be called upon to work overtime from time to time as needed depending upon workload volume.

Access to Confidential Information: The information officer must ensure that the confidentiality obligations of the Ombudsman, as set out in the *Ombudsman Act*, are adhered to and must routinely handle confidential information using appropriate safeguards and discretion.



Teamwork and Supervision: The information officer is expected to work collaboratively with their team members and colleagues on the investigations team and elsewhere in the Office. The information officer is supervised by a dedicated assistant manager and is provided with guidance and direction in order to carry out their day-to-day work. They are expected to work with a certain degree of autonomy however and exercise initiative, using appropriate judgment to determine when consultation with management is appropriate.

Time Pressures: The information officer ensures the timely processing of complaints received by the Ombudsman including that they are entered into the office's case management system so that they can be assigned and a timely relevant and response provided. The position requires the ability to deal professionally and competently with a high volume of work. The incumbent must be capable of dealing with competing demands and priorities and highly organized in their work. A maximum amount of flexibility is required in order to ensure that complaints are dealt with in a timely and responsive fashion.

Effect of Errors: The information officer documents complaints and conducts a preliminary assessment in order to determine jurisdiction and identify the organization involved. They also conduct research and provide referral information. This is done according to clear guidance and direction provided by management. Failure to present a professional, courteous and competent image or to provide accurate and timely information or results has the potential to have adverse impacts for individuals and on the office's credibility and reputation and ultimately its operations.

Freedom to Make Decisions:

The information officer documents complaints and conducts preliminary assessments and flags complaints according to clear guidance and direction provided by management. They are expected to take a principled approach to the work, using sound judgment and common sense and ensuring that the organizational principles of the office are respected, such as integrity, professionalism, timeliness, thoroughness and accuracy and relevant and meaningful responses to complaints. Advice, guidance and support is provided on a regular basis from managers. The information officer may make recommendations to the manager on the handling of individual complaints based upon defined guidance and direction.

Interpersonal Communications and Contacts

Information officers may be called upon to deal with complaints and inquiries from members of the public and are expected to be capable of managing communications with judgment and discretion and a high degree of integrity and professionalism. All communications are done as a delegate of the Ombudsman and must be handled with a high level of professionalism, courtesy and respect and demonstrate a level of competency that is commensurate with the position.