



# Student opportunities with Ontario's Ombudsman





ONTARIO'S WATCHDOG  
CHIEN DE GARDE DE L'ONTARIO

The Ontario Ombudsman's Office oversees more than 500 provincial ministries, boards, agencies and tribunals, as well as broader public sector organizations such as municipalities, universities and school boards. We take complaints from the public and help thousands of people cut through government red tape to resolve serious problems every year. The issues we look at, from newborn screening to cancer drug funding to services for people with disabilities, are interesting and complex, affecting millions of people in Ontario. The Ombudsman also investigates complaints about closed municipal meetings in municipalities that haven't appointed private investigators. Work with us and you'll play a role in making recommendations to improve how these programs are delivered.



## Ombudsman Ontario Legal Services

This team, led by the office's general counsel and comprised of ten lawyers, ensures the office functions within its legislated mandate and provides expert advice to investigate and resolve complaints. Our Legal Services team works closely and collaboratively, and students will have the opportunity to work on real, substantive files leading to improved governance in Ontario, under the direct mentorship of experienced counsel. Students may also work with our world-renowned Special Ombudsman Response Team, assisting as it conducts high-profile systemic investigations such as our investigations into billing and customer service at Hydro One, insider wins at the province's lottery corporation, fairness and transparency at the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, and services for adults with developmental disabilities in crisis.



*General Counsel Laura Pettigrew leads a session on interviewing witnesses during the Ombudsman's annual Sharpening Your Teeth advanced investigative training course, while General Counsel Wendy Ray discusses the Office's role and function with a municipal delegation from Beijing.*

- Members of the Legal Services team regularly represent the Ombudsman's Office at provincial, national and international conferences.
- Students may have the opportunity to attend hearings at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to observe and note progress and positions on legislation affecting the Ombudsman's jurisdiction.
- Legal staff often participate in meetings with senior decision-makers in the Ontario public service to resolve complex complaints.
- Legal staff may travel around the province to carry out investigations, including municipal closed meeting investigations.



# Working with Ontario's Watchdog

Working with the Ontario Ombudsman is a unique opportunity to help ensure accountability, transparency and fairness in Ontario's public sector. Working here means working in the public interest in a challenging, dynamic, service-oriented environment. It also means learning something new – from **A**[dministrative tribunals] to **Z**[oning by-laws] – every day.

*"I have learned more about different areas of law than I thought possible in my short time at the Ombudsman's Office. It's exceptionally rewarding work."*

*-Former articling student*

## The OO Student Experience

As a student working with our Office, you'll be part of our nimble Legal Services team and will work directly with counsel and other operations staff. Within our team, students carry their own caseloads and work on a number of projects to support complaint resolution and corporate services. In this way, you'll learn by doing, taking on increasing responsibility over the course of your time here under the supportive mentorship of experienced senior counsel.

Every day in Legal Services is a little different.

- Conducting legal research and providing advice and analysis to the Ombudsman and staff members on a range of topics, including administrative, education and municipal law;
- Investigating complaints, including reviewing relevant documentation, interviewing witnesses, and producing investigation reports;
- Preparing litigation-related documents;
- Assisting in developing training and complaint resolution tools;
- Developing organizational policies to meet legal requirements; and
- Participating in stakeholder outreach about the Ombudsman's role and function.

Students are encouraged to take advantage of training opportunities, which may include participating in Sharpening Your Teeth, a three-day investigative training course that attracts participants from around the world. Our students leave the Office feeling confident they've worked on substantive, meaningful issues.



# The Ombudsman Advantage

Our students work on important, high-profile issues affecting hundreds or thousands of Ontarians, including some of the province's most vulnerable people. They have the opportunity to be part of a highly-skilled team and play a hands-on role making a real difference, both in resolving individual issues and during our systemic investigations.

Students will enjoy a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose that can only come from working for a public interest organization, be it through informal discussions in the open-concept work environment or through the many social and charitable staff events.

The unique breadth of experience gained by working with Ombudsman Ontario opens doors to other public sector organizations. Those who have spent time with the Ombudsman's office have gone on to work for other Officers of the Legislature, other Ombudsman offices, professional colleges, and in other public sector organizations.

As a public sector employer, the Ombudsman's office offers students flexibility around hours of work and personal commitments.

With the Ombudsman's Office located in the heart of downtown Toronto at Bell Trinity Square, students benefit from a central location on the subway line, a gym in the building, and close proximity to everything downtown Toronto has to offer for work-life balance.



@ont\_ombudsman



Ontario Ombudsman

ombudsman.on.ca

# Frequently asked questions

## **What does Ombudsman Ontario look for in a summer or articling student?**

We look for:

- Excellent academic standing, particularly in courses related to administrative law, public law and legislation, legal procedure, access to justice, research, dispute resolution, and professional responsibility
- Demonstrated interest in righting administrative wrongs and helping resolve individual issues, be it through your work experience, volunteerism, or educational focus
- Demonstrated writing skills
- Hands-on legal or related experience, including:
  - Drafting legal documents
  - Assisting on legal files
  - Preparing briefs
  - Researching legal and/or public policy issues
  - Working with vulnerable populations

## **Is Ombudsman Ontario affiliated with a specific law school?**

No. We select the best candidates from the applications we receive. In the last five years, we have had articling and summer students from the University of Ottawa, McGill University, the University of Toronto, and Osgoode Hall.

## **When should I apply?**

You can apply anytime by following the instructions on our website. Ombudsman Ontario follows the Law Society of Upper Canada's Articling Recruitment Procedures for articling and summer students. We traditionally attend on-campus interviews for second-year summer students at the University of Ottawa, Western University, Queen's University, the University of Toronto, Osgoode Hall, and Windsor University.

## **What should I include in my application?**

Your application must include a cover letter detailing your interest in the Ombudsman's Office and related experience, detailed resume, writing sample, law school transcripts, and reference list. You may also include other documents demonstrating skills and aptitudes (such as other writing samples, performance reviews, etc).

## **To whom should I direct my application?**

Following the protocol identified on the job posting or on the website ([ombudsman.on.ca](http://ombudsman.on.ca)) is the best approach. Sending your application directly to someone in our Office may delay its review. You may address the cover letter to "The Hiring Committee."





# Does this sound like you?

You're eager to learn and interested in public sector law and oversight.  
You're committed to improving the public service and to social justice, as shown  
by clinic or volunteer work.

You have experience working with the public, in particular with  
vulnerable populations.

You have extensive and proven research and writing skills.  
And above all, you have a strong sense of ethics and fairness.

*Ombudsman Ontario follows the Law Society of Upper Canada's Toronto rules and timelines for  
recruiting articling and summer students. Read more at [ombudsman.on.ca](http://ombudsman.on.ca) or  
contact us at [careers@ombudsman.on.ca](mailto:careers@ombudsman.on.ca).*