

INFORMATION for OLIP APPLICANTS

Origin and Purpose of the Programme

The Ontario Legislature Internship Programme (OLIP) has been in operation at Queen's Park since 1976 and is similar in nature and purpose to the Parliamentary Internship Programme for the House of Commons of Canada, which was established in 1969. Although the rationale for the Internship Programme is to provide assistance of various kinds to backbench Parliamentarians in a highly political environment, both Programmes are administered by the Canadian Political Science Association to assure their scholarly nature, independence and political neutrality.

Interns are able to supplement their academic training with valuable practical experience at the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It is expected that they will become thoroughly familiar with the procedures and conventions of the Legislature. Those Interns who return to academic life are more likely to carry out research on legislative bodies and, because of their experience, will be able to give students a better understanding of the important role of the Legislative Assembly in the provincial political system. In addition, it is hoped that they will contribute in some measure to increasing public knowledge and appreciation of the work of the Legislature.

Finances

From the outset the programme has been supported by a substantial grant from the Legislative Assembly through its Board of Internal Economy. However, private donations have been an important element in OLIP financing. A list of sponsors can be found on our website. As well, we have received donations from private individuals, including a number of former Interns.

This Programme is entirely contingent upon external funding outside the control of the CPSA. If at any time this support is withdrawn, without adequate notice to the CPSA, we may not be able to operate the programme in its entirety. The CPSA assumes no liability for any loss or damage should this occur.

Selection Dates

The competition closing date for applications is **February 28, 2011**. Interviews will be held in late April and successful candidates will be notified soon after the interviews are completed.

Selection

After the closing date, copies of all applications are sent to every member of the selection committee for examination. Subsequently the committee meets and chooses about 24 candidates for in person interviews in Toronto (no exceptions are made, all applicants must attend in person on the dates chosen). The choice is based upon several factors, including academic excellence, letters of recommendation, and the declared motivation of the candidate. Therefore, applicants should keep the following in mind:

1. They should take **academic excellence** to mean that they must have strong records as indicated both by their transcripts and their letters of reference.
2. Candidates should try as much as possible to obtain academic letters of reference from **individuals who know them well** and are likely to be recognized by the selection panel as clearly authoritative in attesting to the suitability of applicants to serve as a legislative Intern.
3. Although there is no requirement that applicants be political science majors, candidates will assist the selection panel greatly if they emphasize, in their explanation of what they believe they can derive from the Programme, how their academic training has equipped them for an Internship.

4. They should present evidence, through their transcripts and letters of reference, that they have **sufficient knowledge of Ontario politics, and the parliamentary system of government** to be able to submit a paper, at the end of the Programme, which genuinely contributes to the scholarly study of the Ontario legislative system.

The application form asks candidates for a letter outlining the kinds of activities they would expect to perform as an Intern, and the value of the Internship to them. The response to this question is clearly of **considerable importance** in providing guidance to the selection committee.

Interviews are held at Queen's Park and last about thirty minutes; those chosen for interviews can expect to be questioned on a variety of topics. Following these interviews a maximum of eight Interns are chosen. The competition is open to recent graduates of Canadian universities (or in exceptional cases of other post-secondary institutions) who are Canadian citizens, permanent residents or landed immigrants; visa students are not eligible to be Interns. In the case of candidates chosen for an interview, the C.P.S.A. will pay, when necessary, for transportation, lodgings, and related expenses.

Stipend

The stipend for 2011-2012 is 20,000, payable in equal installments, for the period September 1 to June 30 plus an additional payment once a satisfactory academic paper has been submitted. Because the stipend is regarded by Revenue Canada as a scholarship, no deductions are made by the C.P.S.A., however taxes may apply depending on your previous earnings. In addition to the stipend, Interns receive financial assistance to help defray the costs of trips to other legislatures (in Ottawa, Quebec City and elsewhere), as well as travel to members' ridings if they are some distance from Toronto.

The Internship Year

September is set aside as an orientation period. The aim is to provide Interns with a comprehensive overview of the legislative process in Ontario and to that end, many meetings are held with Members, officers of the Assembly, and other officials in the Provincial Government whose work relates to the legislature. After the orientation period the first assignment of Interns to Members is made. The basic principle underlying the system of allocation is that every Intern spend one term working with a backbench Member on the Government side and another term working with a backbench Member on the Opposition side. The first term extends from mid October until the end of January, and the second term from early February until the middle of June. During these months Interns will continue to meet on a regular basis with elected politicians, public officials and other participants in the legislative process. In addition, the Interns visit Ottawa and Canadian provincial capitals, and possibly in an American state capital, learning about legislative and political processes. Interns also host visits from other Interns.

Papers

Each Intern is required to write a paper on some aspect of the legislative process. The topic will be chosen in consultation with the Director. An additional \$1,000 will be paid to Interns upon the submission of a satisfactory research paper.

Former Interns

The majority of former Interns are in jobs or academic programmes for which the Internship experience is valuable. Former Interns are now working in journalism, law, government (including at the Legislature itself) and business (often in government-business relations). Many continue their studies in law, political science, history, public administration and business after the Internship. Opportunities for former Interns are plentiful and worthwhile!