

POSITION DESCRIPTION
Research Officer

POSITION SUMMARY/PURPOSE

This position provides confidential, non-partisan research and analysis to MPPs, Legislative Committees and officials of the Legislative Assembly including conducting research and policy analysis and preparing written and oral reports. The position also produces various general distribution research reports and electronic information products as part of Branch publications program.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Undertakes confidential written and oral research projects, involving often complex public policy issues in response to requests made by MPPs including Cabinet Ministers, the Speaker, and officials of the Assembly; these assignments are subject to strict and tight deadlines. Assists clients in identifying issues and focusing research requests to meet their specific information needs; negotiates deadlines; designs appropriate research strategies; searches for and collects information from various print, electronic and personal interview sources. Analyzes and presents policy alternatives and recommendations. Produces high quality written reports that are comprehensive, factually accurate, balanced, objective, non-partisan, timely and clearly presented. Provides oral briefings, information and advice to MPPs, their staff, and officials of the Assembly.
2. Undertakes written research projects in response to requests from the Committee Chair and other Committee members. Presents written and oral briefings in public hearings. Provides required advice in areas related to the Research Officer's field of expertise, co-ordinates activities of expert witnesses and consultants. Attends all hearings, including night sittings and weekend travel with Committees as required. Summarizes all written and oral submissions in specifically formatted reports to tight deadlines. Drafts committee reports. Works closely with the Clerk of the Committee on administrative matters. Responds to public and private questions from MPPs. Lawyers in the position also review and evaluate Ontario regulations to ensure their compliance with the Standing Orders.
3. In the capacity of subject specialist, provides advice and assistance to the Director and Legislative Library and Research Services (LLRS) branch Managers. Provides guidance and advice to other research officers and research librarians both collectively and individually. Provides input into the selection and hiring of research officers in the specialist area. Acts as mentor to entry level and contract research officers, providing guidance and expertise on project and committee work. Edits research reports for content.
4. Researches and writes issue papers and contextual notes for electronic information products on topics relevant to MPPs for publication by the LLRS; researches and writes short, public briefing

papers for Ontario's MPP delegates and the Speaker for their participation in various parliamentary and state conferences.

5. As required in the absence of the Manager, performs delegated responsibility for supervising staff, assigning, editing and approving research reports.
 6. Represents Legislative Research Service on various Division and Assembly administrative committees or work groups. Oversees work of office staff as required. Keeps the Manager informed of all research activities for individual MPPs and committees.
 7. Performs other related activities as required. Keeps up-to-date on professional and related skill development.
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JOB REQUIREMENTS

Training/Knowledge:

- Requires a specialized post-graduate degree in an academic discipline granted by a university of recognized study and 5 to 7 years progressive experience in policy analysis to provide authoritative advice and recommendations in response to research analysis and report development, review/approve work of Research Officers, complete a range of comprehensive research projects, write sophisticated technical and analytical papers.
- Position requires comprehensive expert knowledge in subject field and research methodologies, theories and principles; generalized expertise and ability to work in diverse interrelated areas of public policy; knowledge of client service needs/priorities; knowledge of Ontario's political/policy process, government structure and of the parliamentary process, committees and their roles. Requires knowledge of computer technology systems and various software applications/databases to utilize programs and electronic resources in the performance of job tasks.
- Lawyers in the position must be members in good standing of the Law Society of Upper Canada.

Judgement:

Under the direction of the Manager, Legislative Research Service, the position sets goals and works within broad functional policies and program objectives/procedures to effectively undertake confidential written and oral research projects in response to requests made by MPPs, Committee members and officials of the Assembly. The position identifies problems or situations that need to be addressed and takes appropriate action. Position analyzes complex issues based on a review of factual information and produces high quality oral and written reports to tight deadlines.

Judgement is required in understanding and responding to client needs, negotiating research focus with clients, defining specific research problem, determining the required information, selecting appropriate research methodology and strategy, and conducting analysis within policy mandate of Legislative Research Service. Position independently makes all immediate decisions for research process. Position seeks consultation with the supervisor in regards to contact with media, activities that may be politically sensitive, volatile or that might impact on the professionalism of the branch.

Judgement is required to maintain objectivity, impartiality, and non-partisanship in the performance of all duties.

Confidentiality:

Position must use discretion in the course of providing and receiving confidential information for research reports/projects, as well as when preparing research and sitting in committee meetings, must use discretion and tact in responding to questions appropriately.

Impact:

The impact of inaccurate or incomplete information would be felt by committees, MPPs, Caucuses and Assembly officials and could result in the loss of confidence with impact throughout the division; may also lead to legislative and administrative decisions based on incomplete or erroneous information; delay in the process and political embarrassment.

Contacts:

Works cooperatively with internal contacts such as MPPs, Chairs of Committees, Clerks, Assembly officials, LLRS, iDivision and other Assembly staff to gather up-to-date information, co-ordinate collection of data for research and work in project teams, ensuring efficient service delivery. Communicates effectively with staff at all levels of the Assembly as well as external contacts such as other senior Ontario and Canadian government/legislative officials, other foreign jurisdictions, experts/academics/consultants, professionals, NGOs and community/service agencies in the exchange/provision of information related to the Legislative research/public policy matters. Position communicates effectively with internal and external contacts to negotiate research focus and present complex materials regarding public policy issues, including oral briefings, ensuring that collection of data and background information support the overall goals of the organization.

Supervision:

No formal supervisory responsibilities. Delegated responsibility for supervising staff; assigning, editing and approving research projects in the absence of the Manager.

Working Environment:

Position operates computer, using a keyboard and mouse. Works in alternating positions when doing research. Position requires sustained levels of VMA concentration when reading and synthesizing large volume of material, including attending committee meetings, listening carefully and anticipating questions. Position works in private office.