

**Legal Supplier**

Ryerson's Law Practice Program boasts perfect placement record

By AdvocateDaily.com Staff



Ryerson's [Law Practice Program \(LPP\)](#), now in its fourth year, has a 100-per-cent placement rate securing four-month work placement opportunities for law school graduates.

But [André Bacchus](#), the program's assistant director, tells [AdvocateDaily.com](#) Ryerson is constantly searching for new opportunities to allow candidates the chance to gain hands-on legal experience.

"Historically, there were some work environments that didn't have strong participation in articling placements," including in-house legal departments as well as small and sole practices "where they found that the 10-month articling stint was too long," he says.

The long-held tradition sees a law school graduate article under another lawyer for 10 months before being called to the bar. But securing those positions was becoming a challenge so the Law Society of Upper Canada offered a new path and Ryerson took up the challenge for a three-year pilot project. It was extended by another two years and is now in its fourth year.

In each of the first two years of the program, the LPP worked with 220 lawyers in training, and in year three, 230 lawyers participated. Bacchus says the program was successful in finding work placements for all of them.

The eight-month program is split into two phases, and begins with a practical training component where candidates run their own virtual law firm in seven areas of law — administrative, business, civil litigation, criminal, family, real estate, and wills and estates — doing practical research, interviewing clients, docketing time, managing trust accounts and issuing invoices, "doing all the things one needs to do in developing their core skills to be an effective practitioner."

Then they do a four-month work placement, Bacchus says.

"When they're out there in practice, these skills are going to help them succeed in building a strong foundation to serve the public. That's the ultimate goal," says Bacchus.

LPP participants also get hands-on exposure to technology — existing and new — often through the Legal Innovation Zone, another Ryerson-based incubation program where new technology for the profession gets support entering the market.

Bacchus says while some legal offices have resisted committing to a 10-month articling position, a four-month placement is more doable. And the program's participants, he adds, are able to hit the ground running.

"We've seen an uptake in support for our candidates in the area of small and solo practitioners where they really don't have the time and the resources to train, but they do want to contribute," he says.

Often, this leads to permanent positions. But that may mean that law office isn't available to take on a candidate from the next cohort. As a result, says Bacchus, recruiting more positions and getting information out to legal offices is an ongoing job.

"Our program is really for the profession by the profession. We don't have professors or people lecturing. In fact, it's all about hands-on learning. We have practitioners involved in the training component who act as trainers and assessors, supervising and assessing the work of the candidates," he says. "We also have the practitioners supervising the candidates during the work placement when they're on-site with them."

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