

COUNCIL OF ONTARIO
UNIVERSITIES
Government Relations Officer (Intermediate Level)

The Council of Ontario Universities (COU) invites applications for the position of Government Relations Officer. COU is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion and will work actively to ensure equal opportunity to all applicants.

COU is the forum for Ontario's universities to collaborate and advocate in support of their shared mission to the benefit and prosperity of students, communities and the province of Ontario.

Our work advances postsecondary education through collective advocacy, sector collaboration and a range of shared services for our members, Ontario's universities. COU Secretariat is a collaborative team of professionals where each employee contributes directly to the success of the organization.

Reporting to the Manager, Government and Stakeholder Relations, the Government Relations Officer works closely with the Vice-President, Public Affairs, internal colleagues, and COU members to advance the interests of Ontario's universities with government, political parties and key external stakeholders.

This position plays a key role in both the strategic contribution and day-to-day execution of government relations activities – combining policy insight and operational excellence. The ideal candidate thrives in a fast-paced, collaborative environment, is a self-starter and brings exceptional attention to detail.

COU invites applications from experienced professionals with backgrounds in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. We offer a competitive total compensation package and a close-knit and collaborative work environment in the heart of downtown Toronto's Discovery District. The hiring salary range for this position is \$73,597-\$87,335/year plus benefits package (remuneration commensurate to relevant skills and experience).

Key Responsibilities

Government Relations & Advocacy:

- Contribute to the development, execution and refinement of COU's government relations and advocacy strategies and initiatives, including developing and maintaining a government correspondence strategy, as well as identifying new opportunities aligned with key government and stakeholder priorities and milestones.
- Seek new ways for government engagement to elevate the profile and priorities of Ontario's universities and ladder these ideas up to the Manager and VP.
- Monitor legislative and policy developments (e.g., Question Period, bills, consultations, announcements) and identify emerging issues, trends and opportunities.
- Prepare high-quality written materials, including briefing notes, submissions, backgrounders and correspondence.
- Support and, where appropriate, lead the development of advocacy and outreach plans for assigned policy priorities.
- Provide informed analysis of political context and government priorities to support strategic decision-making.
- Support issues monitoring and management by tracking developments and contributing to timely responses.

Stakeholder Engagement & Relationship Management:

- Support engagement with COU members and government relations colleagues across institutions to share intelligence and align priorities.
- Monitor key stakeholder activities and identify new opportunities to strengthen existing partnerships, as well as develop new stakeholder relationships.
- Assist in securing and coordinating meetings with MPPs, government officials and external stakeholders.
- Provide support for the Government Relations Officers (GRO), GRO Working Groups and other government relations related meetings, including preparing agendas, reporting on opportunities and issues, taking and distributing meeting notes, and following up on action items.

Project Coordination & Operations:

- Support the planning and execution of government relations events, including logistics, vendor coordination, speaker preparation and on-site execution.
- Coordinate internal and external meetings, including agenda development, note-taking and action tracking.
- Support cross-functional projects, ensuring deliverables are completed on time and aligned with organizational goals.
- Maintain organized processes and documentation to support team effectiveness.

Qualifications**Education:**

- Bachelor's degree in related field (e.g. political science, public administration, public policy, communications, or public relations) or equivalent experience. Formal training or certification in project management and graduate degree are assets.

Experience/Skills:

- Minimum five to seven years of increasingly responsible work experience, preferably in a university, membership organization or political setting.
- Experience working in government relations, public affairs, or strategic communications.
- Experience in stakeholder relations and management, advocacy and/or public policy.
- Strong political acumen and understanding of government processes, particularly in Ontario.
- Deep understanding of politics and political parties, as well as the bureaucracy and machinery of government, including legislative processes and proceedings.
- Excellent writing, research and communication skills, with the ability to synthesize complex information clearly and concisely.
- Have demonstrated project management experience in a fast-paced environment.
- Experience managing a project budget and ensuring results are delivered within budget.
- Event coordination experience is an asset.
- Experience supporting and coordinating cross-functional project teams.
- Experience working with senior-level employees and a diverse range of partners at various levels.
- A precise attention to detail and highly organized, with the ability to see the big picture and manage component parts of a project within a larger context.
- Analytical thinker with sound judgment and problem-solving skills.
- Self-starter with the ability to work independently while contributing to a collaborative team.



- Commitment to continuous learning and professional growth.
- Established network of government or stakeholder contacts is an asset.
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion through continuous improvement and modeling inclusive behaviours.

Existing Vacancy: Yes, a newly created position.

Those qualified are asked to submit a cover letter with resume, outlining your experience and suitability for the position as well as salary expectations, to PARecruit@cou.ca by **5 p.m. on July 22, 2026**.

Information regarding COU is available at www.cou.ca.

COU is an Equity-Focused and Equal Opportunity employer, committed to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) as part of its core values. EDI is a vital component of COU's strategic priority to achieve organizational excellence. COU will foster a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion by enhancing and developing programs, policies, and training that supports and educates our employees. We recognize and appreciate the transformative power of diversity in the workplace. We encourage applications from individuals who identify as members of equity-deserving communities.

COU is committed to providing an inclusive and barrier free recruitment process to applicants with accessibility needs in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). If you require an accommodation during this process, please inform COU of your requirements.

We thank all applicants for their interest, however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

Land Acknowledgement

The land on which the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) operates in the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, Anishnabek Nation and Haudenosaunee, and the treaty land of the Mississaugas of the Credit.

The territory is the subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Anishinabek and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

COU recognizes the historical and ongoing contributions of Indigenous peoples to our society, the historical and continuing injustices that Indigenous peoples endure, and the need for truth and reconciliation. COU is committed to forging a sustainable relationship with Indigenous partners based on principles of mutual trust, respect, reciprocity, and inclusion, towards making historic and significant progress in advancing the process of reconciliation in our communities, in our province, and across Canada.