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Employers reap rewards of Ryerson LPP's work-ready candidates

By AdvocateDaily.com Staff

The work placement portion of Ryerson University's [Law Practice Program \(LPP\)](#) gives employers access to a group of work-ready candidates eager to make an impression, says [André Bacchus](#), the program's assistant director.

The four-month placement makes up the second half of the LPP, hot on the heels of the practical training component, which sees candidates running their own virtual law firm in seven areas of law — administrative, business, civil litigation, criminal, family, real estate, and wills and estates.

Bacchus says that solid foundation of real-work skills — which includes practical research, interviewing clients, conducting negotiations, drafting documents, arguing motions, docketing time, managing trust accounts and issuing invoices — puts participants in the perfect position to adapt quickly to their new employment environment.

"One of the biggest benefits that our employers have commented on is that our candidates are able to hit the ground running. Employers are often surprised by how much our candidates know and can do," he tells [AdvocateDaily.com](#). "It's not like getting a law student right out of law school with no practical experience.

"They already know many of the tasks they're expected to do in practice because they've been focusing on them for four months, which is something law schools don't touch on," he says.

Bacchus says some of the businesses and organizations who accept LPP candidates also offer articling positions for law students taking the other route to practice. But the LPP's shorter term has opened up opportunities for many law firms and in-house legal departments who may have believed legal trainees were out of the question. That's particularly true for those running smaller operations and sole practices, he says.

"It's a big financial and administrative commitment to sign someone up for 10 months, and many employers are not able to make it work for monetary or workflow reasons," Bacchus says. "But four months is much more feasible, especially when the candidates are in a position to integrate that much quicker."

Candidates are encouraged to treat the placement as an audition for a full-time role — and employers also benefit from that approach, he says.

"The employer gets to try someone out before making a long-term commitment that could work for both parties," Bacchus says.

In some cases, he says LPP candidates make such an impression that employers have created new roles to keep them on a full-time basis, even if they entered the process without intending to make a permanent offer.

"Once they offer the placement, they can understand the benefits more clearly," Bacchus says. "If a candidate makes themselves an invaluable member of the team, and is contributing positively, it's easier to make the case for a permanent hire — adding new opportunities in the marketplace and opening doors."

Ryerson's LPP is now entering its fifth full year, giving law firms and employers time to familiarize themselves and become comfortable with the concept. Bacchus says many have embraced it, including Bay Street legal giants, various provincial government ministries, small and sole practitioners and a host of major corporations.

Some employers are so confident in the program that they have moved their LPP recruitment process to earlier in the year to beat the rush. Around 65 employers advertised their postings in the summer, allowing them to conduct interviews and hire LPP applicants before the first week of the 2018-2019 program begins when more than 260 candidates are expected to enrol.

"That's a benefit to some employers who don't want to be overly burdened in the fall when they are a bit busier and less able to focus on recruitment," Bacchus says. "This way, they can get a jump on it and have one less thing to worry about."

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