



uOttawa

Faculté de droit
Faculty of Law

Centre des carrières et du développement professionnel
Career and Professional Development Centre

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE: STUDENT PROPOSED INTERNSHIP (SPI)

INTERESTED IN COMPLETING A STUDENT PROPOSED INTERNSHIP (SPI)?

A Student Proposed Internship (SPI) is one of many experiential learning programs available to law students at the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law. Intentional exposure to hands-on, practical learning during law school can lead to professional skills-building and greater employability when you enter the job market.

SPIs are a fantastic way to start getting experience working in the legal field *and* obtain units for an unpaid practical learning opportunity (an SPI is reflected on both your transcript *and* your resume). And, since it is an unpaid position, it is often easier to find opportunities, allowing you to target a practice area interest or specific employer of interest.

Excited to find a placement but not sure where to start?

This is a step-by-step guide to help you to both ***find*** a SPI opportunity that you are interested in, ***secure*** it with your future SPI employer-supervisor, and then get it ***approved*** by the Career and Professional Development Centre (CPDC).

STEP 1: FIND A PLACE TO COMPLETE YOUR SPI POSITION

P2P Survey on The Source

One way to find an employer who may be interested in hosting you as an intern is to look at the responses from former student interns via our Peer-to-Peer Survey database, accessible on The Source.

In this database you will see where students have interned in the past and gather useful information regarding their experience. In addition, you can narrow your search result by employer type or area of law.

Here are the steps to access this information:

1: On *The Source*, click on 'My Account' and select 'P2P Mentoring Network'

The screenshot shows the 'The Source' website interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Overview', 'Core', 'Documents', 'Counseling', 'Employment', 'Exp. Learning', 'Credentials', 'Activity', 'Survey Responses', 'Pathways', 'Comms', and 'Login As'. Below this is a search bar and a 'Jobs & Internships' section with links for 'OCI', 'Events', 'Employers', 'Resources', and 'Book Appointment'. A central banner features a photo of students and the text 'Date limites: Stages : été 2023 et année scolaire 2023-2024' with a 'Plus de détails' button. On the right, a dropdown menu is open, showing 'Notifications', 'My Documents', 'Surveys', 'My Account', and 'Help & Feedback >'. The 'My Account' option is circled in yellow. At the bottom, there are four icons representing different services or documents.

2: Click on the “Search” Tab

Overview Core Documents Counseling Employment Exp. Learning Credentials Activity Survey Responses Pathways Comms Login As

Open in a separate window

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Jobs & Internships OCI Events Employers Resources Book Appointment

Home / My Account / P2P Mentoring Network

My Surveys **Search**

Search by any category below for summer evaluations. If searching by Employer, less is more. Only enter the first name of the employer for best results.

Employer

Student

3: Narrow your search results accordingly (Employer Type; Practice Area; Country; Province)

Overview Core Documents Counseling Employment Exp. Learning Credentials Activity Survey Responses Pathways Comms Login As

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Home Jobs & Internships Documents Events Career Connections Book Appointments Jobs/Mentor Employers Surveys Resources My Account Personal Academic Emails & Notifications P2P Mentoring Network

Student

Employer Type

- Association
- Bar Association
- Business
- Clinic
- Corporation
- Crown Attorney
- Executive Search/Consultants
- Federal Government

Position Type

- 1L Summer
- 2L Summer
- 3L Summer
- Student Proposed Internship
- Fellowship
- Part Time
- Other

Practice Areas

- Aboriginal
- Academic
- Administrative
- Alternative Career
- Agriculture & Farming
- Animals
- Banking
- Block Chain

Country

Province

This will provide results of employer-supervisors who have taken on other students for a SPI.

When you find one that matches your interest, consider reaching out to the student who previously completed their SPI at that location to get more information about their experience and work environment to see if it would be a good fit for you. It would be helpful to also do some research on the employer yourself, again to ensure that it aligns with your values and the experience that you hope to achieve through the placement.

Once you are satisfied that you would like a placement at the location, you can then reach out to them directly to see if they are still willing and able to take you on as a SPI student for your desired semester.

We usually recommend contacting no more than 2-3 opportunities at a time, as this reduces the need to reject multiple opportunities in a situation where all of the potential locations agree to take you on for a SPI.

IMPORTANT: Entering an SPI agreement with an employer-supervisor, whether verbal or written, is equivalent to accepting a job; you are expected to follow through with your commitment until you complete your SPI. While we understand that law students have endless opportunities to pursue experiential learning while in law school, renegeing on an SPI commitment in order to pursue a different opportunity can have negative impacts on your professional reputation and reflect poorly on the SPI program as a whole.

Get Creative: Network, LinkedIn, Google

If you have looked through the survey results in the P2P Mentoring Network and you still have not found anything that sounds interesting to you, it's time to get creative!

Reflect on the type of practice area and work environment you would like to explore further. Perhaps one of your 1L courses piqued your curiosity, or you've always dreamed of working for a particular organization. Now is your chance to exercise your entrepreneurial muscle and connect with an interesting and rewarding opportunity.

Reach out through your network and see if an opportunity comes up. Consider referring to 'Connect with Opportunities and the Profession: The Informational Interview' guide in the Source for more information on how to do so.

Do a search on *LinkedIn* to see where lawyers that you are interested in work.

Do a search in *Google* for a desired location or area of law.

STEP 2: SECURING YOUR SPI POSITION

So, now that you have found a position (or a few positions) that you are interested in, the next step is to reach out to a potential SPI employer-supervisor.

An effective way of doing so is send them either an email, the address which you can usually find on their website, or a LinkedIn message with the following:

- Brief introduction of who you are (e.g. your name, your faculty, your year in law school, what area of law you are interested in, any relevant experience);
- Brief explanation of the SPI program, the type of work to be completed, important dates, the number of hours to complete and the units in exchange for the practical learning;
- Why you are interested in completing a SPI position with this employer-supervisor or organization; and,
- Request for a follow-up conversation.

If it is an email, feel free to attach your updated (and edited, without any spelling or grammar mistakes!) resume, for their reference.

Still not sure what to say in your introductory email requesting a SPI position?

The following is an example of an effective email to a potential employer-supervisor asking them whether they are open to discussing your interest in completing a SPI position with them. You can use this e-mail example to inspire the drafting of your own.

Example Email

Email title: Request for Student Intern Position – Student Proposed Internship – University of Ottawa Faculty of Law Common Law Program

Email body:

Dear (Insert name of potential employer-supervisor),

My name is (insert your name) and I am a law student going into my (insert year) year at the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law in the Common Law program.

I am reaching out to you to ask whether you (**optional:** or someone else at your firm/office) have the capacity to take me on as a student during the (**select one:** summer/fall/January/winter) term (insert year).

I am interested in completing a student proposed internship with you (OR: with your office/organization) because (insert reason why you are interested in this organization specifically). I have also attached my resume, for your reference.

The Student Proposed Internship program is 115 hours of unpaid law-related work, for which I will be able to get a class-worth of three (3) academic units.

Please let me know if you are free within the next two weeks for a quick discussion about the possibility of me completing an internship with you/your office.

Many thanks,

(Your name & contact information)

Sent your message and haven't heard back yet? Follow-Up!

As we know, lawyers can be busy people.

So, if you do not hear back within a week of sending your message, please do follow-up with a kind message asking whether they received your initial message and noting that you would be happy to connect with them at any time to discuss the opportunity further.

Example Follow-Up Email

Email title: Request for Student Intern Position – Student Proposed Internship – University of Ottawa Faculty of Law Common Law Program

Email body:

Dear (Insert name of potential employer-supervisor),

I am following up on my message from last week, requesting whether you/your office have/has the capacity to take me on as a student during the (**select one:** summer/fall/January/winter) term (insert year).

Please let me know if you are free within the next two weeks for a quick call to discuss further.

Many thanks,

(Your name & contact information)

If you still have not heard back a week following your follow-up message, time to go back to Step 1 and do another search for a different place that you would be interested in. Persistence is key!

STEP 3: SUBMIT YOUR SPI APPLICATION FOR UOTTAWA APPROVAL

Congratulations! You have received an offer for a SPI position!

You now have to complete the final step in this process, to submit your SPI application package to the Common Law Faculty's Career and Professional Development Centre (CPDC).

Outlined at the following website: <https://www.uottawa.ca/faculty-law/common-law/student-centre/courses/internships/information-student-proposed-internships> are all of the details, guidelines, rules, regulations, processes and FAQs for your review.

Remember that you do need to have final approval from the CPDC **before** starting your SPI position, so be sure to submit your SPI application package in the **Brightspace portal: Common Law: Demande de stages | Internship Applications** by the SPI deadline and/or as soon as possible. You must submit the application at least 10 working days *before* the proposed start of your SPI position.

Still want to discuss your SPI options or approach?

Should you want to further discuss a potential SPI or your SPI placement search, we invite you to schedule an appointment with **Anna Jeffery**, Professional Development Counsellor in The Source.

All the best & happy searching!