Legal Counsel – Research Contracts

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Legal Counsel – Research Contracts

Office of Research Services

Temporary full-time from September 6, 2022 to September 5, 2025
Hiring #: 2022-0324

Please read the Application Instructions [1] before applying

The Office of Research at the University of Guelph (U of G) oversees a $163 million research enterprise across seven colleges, our regional campus at Ridgetown, 15 research stations and the University of Guelph/Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs partnership. Committed to supporting research programs across all disciplines, the University is dedicated to making communities, environment, food and health better. Our shared purpose is to: To Improve Life. Join our campus in the new role of Legal Counsel - Research Contracts to support our academic teams to carry out research initiatives and activities that support this mission.

The Office of Research Services (ORS) is a collaborative partner to faculty, department and college representatives as well as to senior management on legal matters arising from research. Specifically, ORS is responsible for the promotion and management of applications to research sponsors (proposals/research grants), research contracts, and numerous types of award agreements to enable the completion of research projects carried out by U of G faculty, staff and students.

Reporting to the Managing Director, Research Operations, the Legal Counsel – Research Contracts (‘LCRC’) is primarily responsible for providing general legal review of research proposals, applications and research agreements to be approved and/or signed on behalf of the University which present higher than normal risk to the University. The LCRC works on a wide range of agreements beyond research agreements pertaining to a particular principal investigator, project and sponsor (e.g., master agreements, inter-institutional agreements, international MOUs). The LCRC’s role will complement existing review and approval activities currently completed by the Office of Research Services. The LCRC will bring much-needed capacity and qualifications necessary for reviewing the wide range of research activities undertaken by the University.

The LCRC is responsible for preparing, reviewing, negotiating and managing research proposals and/or agreements for conformity with University of Guelph policies and procedures as well as Ontario and Canadian law. The LCRC seeks to protect the University and researchers from legal liabilities as a result of research activities conducted by University faculty members, staff and students, and to ensure that research agreements are signed in accordance with University, sponsor and government research policies.

The LCRC may, at times, provide strategic legal advice on research issues and matters to the Vice-President Research or Associate Vice-Presidents Research, provide mentorship support to other grants and contracts staff, and lead or assist with special projects, resource development and policy-related work. The LCRC also acts as the sole legal contact in the Office of Research Services during absences of the Manager Legal Review.

The LCRC works with a wide range of stakeholders across the university (e.g., faculty, students, postdoctoral fellows, staff, Associate Deans Research, College Research Managers etc.). The LCRC consults and coordinates research legal services with the Managing Director, Research Operations, Manager, Legal Review, Director, Research Support Services and at times, University's General Legal Counsel to maintain consistency in standards, risks assessments and legal advice. The LCRC must also liaise effectively with outside organizations such as research sponsors, other universities within and outside Canada, etc. The LCRC must maintain positive and
productive relationships with these stakeholders to effectively support, enhance and advance research at the University.

To be considered for this unique opportunity, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Hold a Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) or Juris Doctor (J.D.) or equivalent coupled with active membership with the Law Society of Ontario; licensed to practice in Ontario;
- At least five (5) years of experience in industry or in a university research administration/technology transfer office, negotiating, preparing and reviewing legal agreements;
- Demonstrated knowledge of legislation and case law relevant to sponsored research, including intellectual property, confidentiality, privacy, and contracts;
- Experienced negotiator with proven contract negotiation and influencing skills;
- Proven experience in drafting and interpreting legal agreements and knowledge of standard government and industry terms for research agreements;
- Proven ability to develop creative solutions and provide effective legal advice across a wide range of legal matters with significant complexity and risk exposure;
- Advanced communication skills with the ability to effectively present legal opinions, arguments and information clearly in a manner relevant to the audience;
- Demonstrated commitment to professional ethics and integrity;
- Strong interpersonal skills, diplomacy and tact with demonstrated ability to establish and maintain collegial, collaborative and service-oriented relationships with people from different backgrounds in a complex and multi-stakeholder environment;
- Strong computer skills, including experience and aptitude with electronic research administration tools like online databases, proposal submission portals, internet resources, spreadsheets and complex databases;
- Working knowledge of science, the research process, and the ability to read primary scientific documents (e.g., grant proposals) is an asset.

Classification P09

At the University of Guelph, fostering a culture of inclusion is an institutional imperative. The University invites and encourages applications from all qualified individuals, including from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in employment, who may contribute to further diversification of our Institution.

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