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Research Services

Context:

Research Services provides research and analysis services to Members and Committees of the Legislative Assembly, the Speaker and the Clerk.

Work prepared by research staff is confidential, objective and impartial. Research staff will not initiate services, present personal opinions, suggest political strategies or canvas support for Members' activities.

Research reports are prepared according to the instructions of the requesting Member or Committee. Reports are not intended to reflect the opinion of research staff. Committee reports will adhere to the rules, practices and parliamentary precedents of the House.

2.02.01 Research Services for Members

Availability

Research services are available to all Members. Members may request information or analysis of any topic of interest to them in their role as Members. Regular briefings may also be requested on issues Members want monitored and analyzed on an ongoing basis.

Services for Cabinet Ministers are limited to matters outside the mandate of their assigned departments. Requests must directly relate to the Minister's duties as a Member on behalf of his/her constituency.

Confidentiality

Research services and any material subsequently generated are confidential. The identity of the person making a request, and Members' areas of interest, are kept confidential at all times. All Members' projects are kept in a secure area.

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When more than one Member requests similar research, similar reports may be issued. However, Members will not be informed of other Members who have requested similar information.

Distribution of a Member's project is at the discretion of the Member for whom it was produced. A Member who intends to table or otherwise make research information public is encouraged to discuss this with the Director. If a research project is distributed by a Member, the identity of the research staff must be kept confidential.

Making a Request

Research requests should be submitted to the Director, on the approved form. The scope of the request should be clearly defined. Research staff will assist with drafting research requests if required.

Requests must be made directly by the Member. Research staff are not mandated to accept assignments from constituency assistants, executive assistants, departmental officials, other staff or constituents.

The Director will assign research projects to research staff on the basis of workload, expertise and familiarity with the subject matter, taking into consideration the preferences of the Member.

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Priority

Research staff may not be able to begin a project that is very time consuming while the House or Committees are sitting. Extensive, long term projects require the approval of the Director.

Projects are handled on a 'first come, first served' basis. Research staff should be advised of deadlines and other relevant information when a request is made. Where a Member submits several requests, the Member must prioritize the requests. The Director is ultimately responsible for ensuring balance and fairness to all Members.

Scope of Services

Research staff can assist Members by:

- obtaining background information and documents on a subject, including interjurisdictional research;
- preparing briefing notes or other analyses of an issue;
- editing correspondence or other written material prepared by the Member, where the correspondence or material relates to research information or analysis provided; and
- providing background information for the preparation of Members' Statements, Questions and speaking notes for debates in the House.

Projects are prepared according to the specifications of the requesting Member.

2.02.02 Research Services for Committees

Assignment to Committee

The Director of Research and Library Services will assign a Research Analyst to each Standing Committee. In some circumstances additional research staff may also work with the Committee.

The Committee Researcher will work closely with the Committee Chair and Members to identify research needs and reporting formats.

Scope of Services

Research staff can assist Committees by:

- attending Committee meetings;
- highlighting and clarifying central issues before the Committee, including legislative, budgetary and policy matters;
- obtaining background information and documents on issues before the Committee including, interjurisdictional research;

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- preparing briefing notes and other analyses of Bills, Business Plans, the Main Estimates and other issues before the Committee;
- delivering oral briefings to the Committee;
- summarizing submissions made to the Committee and drafting reports as directed by the Committee; and
- carrying out other research duties as identified by the Committee.

The Committee must approve a research request made by the Chair or a Member of the Committee.

Confidentiality

Research services provided to a Committee are confidential to that Committee, subject to the direction of the Committee or the House.

External Resources

Occasionally Committees may require the assistance of additional expertise in a specific discipline to assist with the review of a subject. When this occurs, the Committee Researcher and Committee Clerk will arrange for external assistance, as directed and approved by the Committee, and will ensure that working relationships are coordinated.

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2.02.03 Restrictions

Research staff will not attempt to obtain information respecting persons or organizations that is not within the public domain. Research staff will not act as liaison between a Member and any person or organization or act as representative for a Member in any context.

2.02.04 Concerns

Questions or concerns respecting this policy, the quality or delivery of research services or the role of research staff should be brought to the attention of the Director of Research and Library Services or the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

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