

askON Student Opportunity

Organization: askON, Ontario College Library Services (OCLS)

City: Virtual

Province/State: Ontario

Country: Canada

Category: Library (Academic)

Job Type: Volunteer

Duration: September 2025 – April 2026

Date Posted: May 26th, 2025

Application Deadline: June 11th, 2025

Description and Duties:

The askON virtual reference service, a service of the Ontario Colleges Library Service (OCLS), delivers real-time chat and SMS reference services for 12 of the province's college libraries.

askON is seeking to recruit first or second year MLIS/MI/LIT candidates, and recent graduates (within a year of graduation) from MLIS/MI/LIT programs to volunteer as askON student operators. Under the direction of the askON service lead at OCLS and with mentorship of askON library staff, students will be given the opportunity to learn and practice their virtual reference skills in a live collaborative chat & SMS reference service environment.

Students will receive instruction from the askON team and will be scheduled for one to two one-hour shifts per week. There is flexibility within scheduling to fit with school, work, and other commitments. Shifts will be in the evenings and during weekends. At this time, we are seeking volunteers who can commit to the Winter academic semester (September 2025 - April 2026).

askON shifts can be filled from any location provided the operator has access to a computer with high-speed Internet connection.

Desired Qualities:

- MI/MLIS/LIT candidate or recent graduate, with a special interest and/or coursework/experience in reference service
- Familiarity with a wide range of databases, e-resources, and publicly available internet resources
- Experience in a post-secondary reference environment highly desirable but not

required

- Strong desire to work in a research and reference environment
- Well-developed interpersonal and communication skills
- Self-directed, motivated, and reliable
- Fast typing speed: 60 wpm+, comfort with real-time chat conversation
- Familiarity with the askON service
- Computer and high-speed internet connection required

Compensation:

This is a volunteer position. However, participants receive the opportunity to develop and practice virtual reference skills in a busy provincially scaled virtual service. Those who participate will receive a letter of reference testifying to their training and engagement with askON.

Additional Information:

What's in it for you?

- Extensive training that will strengthen your reference skills.
- Experience in virtual reference service delivery, a skill that may be desirable to employers.
- Opportunity to network with college library staff who work on the service with you.
- Mentorship by professionals in the field.
- A reference letter from askON that testifies to your participation.

What do you have to do?

- Be prepared to participate in a half-day virtual training session prior to the start of the Fall semester. Additional training may be scheduled throughout the Fall and Winter semesters.
- Commit to covering up to two one-hour shifts on the askON service during the Fall and Winter semesters (September 2025 - April 2026). Shifts will be scheduled in the evenings and during weekends.
- Sign a privacy & confidentiality agreement.
- Complete training on AODA standards.

How to Apply:

If you are interested in applying, send your resume and cover letter in a **single electronic file** (PDF or Microsoft Word with a file name convention of LastNameFirstName_askON) by email to Lauren Rupert at askON@ocls.ca by the June 11th, 2025, at 12 p.m. Please mention your anticipated graduation date, or indicate that you are a recent graduate, in your application. OCLS welcomes and encourages applications from people with disabilities. Accommodations are available on request for candidates taking part in all aspects of the selection process.

Due to the anticipated volume of responses, only candidates selected for an interview will be contacted. We thank everyone for their interest.

To learn more about askON please visit us at: <https://www.ocls.ca/services/askon-virtual-reference/>