Job Description

Job Title:	Executive Assistant to the VP, Research and International (VPRI)
Department:	Office of the Vice President, Research and International
Reports To:	Executive Director, Office of the Vice President Research and International
Jobs Reporting:	None
Salary Grade:	USG 8
Effective Date:	July 2025

Primary Purpose

The Executive Assistant formally reports to the Executive Director, Office of the Vice-President, Research and International (OVPRI), and will work with the VPRI on a day-to-day basis. The VPRI has specific responsibility for maintaining the autonomy and intellectual independence of the University in matters related to research, and for fostering an environment that promotes a high standard of scholarly activity. The VPRI also has extensive Committee/Board responsibilities both within and external to the University.

The Executive Assistant is responsible for maintaining the VPRI's daily schedule and itinerary and also for providing overall administrative and executive assistance for all activities under the VPRI's portfolio of responsibilities. This includes the provision of organizational secretarial and administrative support as needed as well as liaison on behalf of the VPRI with senior administrators across the University and in Corporations and Government departments across Canada. The Executive Assistant must perform at a high level, ensuring that the Office of the VPRI functions in an efficient and professional manner. This includes interacting with and providing support to the Associate Vice-Presidents (AVPs), Directors across the various units within the Office of the VPRI, as appropriate. The Executive Assistant interacts and works closely with the Executive Director daily.

Key Accountabilities

Executive Support & Schedule Management

Keep the VPRI fully prepared, informed, and optimally scheduled.

- Maintain and prioritize the VPRI's complex calendar, coordinating internal and external meetings across multiple time zones.
- Monitor the VPRI inbox, identify urgent or emerging issues, and draft or redirect responses as appropriate.
- Gather agendas, presentations, web-sourced backgrounders, and briefing notes so the VPRI can chair or contribute effectively to internal and external meetings.
- While the VPRI is off-campus, manage priorities, resolve issues in consultation with the Executive Director, and provide timely updates.
- Field and triage calls and visitors, ensuring courteous and professional interaction on the VPRI's behalf.

Portfolio & Office Administration

Ensure seamless daily operations for the VPRI and leadership team.

- Schedule all internal meetings, such as senior leader strategy retreats, onboarding for new Strategic Initiatives staff, etc.

- Liaise frequently with the Offices of the President, Provost, Deans, AVPs, and Directors within the Office to share information, secure input, and align schedules.
- Maintain an orderly filing, correspondence, and retrieval system (paper and electronic); manage photocopying, printing, and general office logistics.

Stakeholder, Committee & Board Liaison

Enable effective engagement with governance bodies and external partners.

- Schedule and coordinate meetings with government officials, corporate executives, funding agencies, and international collaborators, balancing multiple calendars.
- Collect committee and board materials so the VPRI can lead or participate with confidence.
- Serve as a primary contact for senior administrators, faculty, and executive assistants across the University, who wish to connect with the VPRI directly or have the VPRI participate in a meeting, internally or externally.

Event & Delegation Coordination

Deliver high-impact events that advance Waterloo's research mission.

- Plan and execute delegations, receptions, and high-profile visits hosted by the VPRI, ensuring flawless logistics from venue to protocol.
- Lead orientation sessions for senior research leaders (e.g., Deans, Associate Deans-Research) to showcase OVPRI services and supports.

Travel & Financial Administration

Provide end-to-end travel and accurate financial processing.

- Book national and international travel, prepare detailed itineraries and documentation, and track changes in real time.
- Reconcile travel advances, expense claims, and monthly P-card statements with precision and in accordance with University policy.

Confidentiality Records and Compliance

Safeguard sensitive information and uphold institutional integrity.

- Handle confidential correspondence, signatures, and reports, with the utmost discretion.
- Maintain secure records, protect reputationally sensitive information, and exercise a consistently high degree of accuracy and accountability.

**All employees of the University are expected to follow University and departmental health and safety policy, procedures and work practices at all times. Employees are also responsible for the completion of all health and safety training, as assigned. Employees with staff supervision and/or management responsibilities will ensure that assigned staff abide by the above, and actively identify, assess and correct health and safety hazards, as required.*

Required Qualifications

Education

- University degree, business administration preferred, or equivalent education and related experience within a senior executive office.

Experience

- 3-5 years of C-level administrative experience.

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Familiarity with University of Waterloo (or similar institution) governance structures, policies, and administrative protocols, with the judgment to interpret and apply them appropriately.

- Proven ability to handle highly sensitive and confidential matters with discretion, tact, and full compliance with privacy legislation and institutional standards.
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills, including strong proofreading abilities and the capacity to prepare clear, concise, and professional correspondence, briefing materials, and presentations for senior audiences.
- Demonstrated ability to interact effectively and respectfully with a wide range of individuals, including senior administrators, faculty, government officials, and industry partners, using diplomacy and cultural sensitivity in high-stakes or nuanced situations.
- Strong client service orientation, with the ability to anticipate needs, navigate sensitive issues, and adapt to different personalities, motives, and interests.
- Ability to work independently while contributing actively to team goals; fosters collaboration, trust, and positive working relationships within and beyond the immediate team.
- Excellent organizational and time-management skills to manage multiple competing priorities and complex tasks under pressure, while maintaining accuracy and attention to detail.
- Strong working knowledge of best practices for administrative processes, combined with proficiency using current technologies (e.g., Microsoft 365, virtual meeting platforms, and enterprise systems) to streamline operations and enhance effectiveness.
- Demonstrated ability to remain motivated, resilient, innovative, and solutions-focused when faced with evolving demands, ambiguity, or unexpected challenges.
- Familiarity with the Canadian research funding landscape, including Tri-Council agencies (CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC) and relevant compliance and reporting requirements.
- Experience supporting the planning and execution of high-profile events, delegations, or senior-level visits involving internal and external stakeholders.
- Commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and Indigenization, with the ability to reflect these values in communications, interactions, and decision-making.

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** The Executive Assistant facilitates high-level internal and external relationships on behalf of the VPRI, engaging regularly with senior University leadership, governance bodies, academic units, and research centres. Externally, the role supports connections with provincial and federal ministries, research consortia (e.g., OCUR, U15), and assists the VPRI in fulfilling responsibilities tied to various board memberships.
- **Level of Responsibility:** This position supports the Vice-President, Research and International and reports to the Executive Director. The position has responsibility and accountability for serving as the first administrative point of contact to the VPRI. Highly complex, confidential issues are involved which may bring different levels of government, corporate leaders, faculty, staff and students, often high risk of impact on institutional reputation if not handled well.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** Problem solving is a critical skill for this position. Unexpected issues and/or conflicts may arise, and the incumbent must be capable of analyzing problems and quickly solving issues. Makes decisions with respect to the most efficient use of VPRI's time (i.e. meetings, events, travel) and seeks advice when required. Is expected to work independently carrying out all tasks.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands**: Minimal demands typical of an administrative position operating within an office environment. This position works collaboratively with all members of the Office of the VPRI. This requires outstanding customer service, sound judgment, a strong work ethic and an ability to work under very challenging time constraints, constant interruptions, and changes to priorities.

Some flexibility in working hours is required. Use of a work phone allows the Executive Assistant to be accessible to leaders within the Office, including the VPRI.

- **Working Environment:** There is some exposure to disagreeable and frustrated individuals, that is typical of an administrative position. There is exposure to stress and pressures associated with this role.