

Job Description

Job Title:	Graduate Program Coordinator and Advisor
Department:	Geography and Environmental Management (GEM)
Reports To:	Administrative Manager/Officer
Jobs Reporting:	None
Salary Grade:	USG 7
Effective Date:	December 2023

Primary Purpose

The Graduate Program Coordinator and Advisor enhances the quality of the graduate student experience, and is a key contributor to student success, responsible for the smooth and efficient operation of the graduate programs in a manner consistent with the unit's goals and objectives. The scope of the position encompasses operational leadership and program management, admissions, graduate academic counselling and advising, degree progression and completion, graduate calendar changes, scholarships and funding, student communications, and serves as the primary point of contact for prospective and current graduate students during their studies. This position reports to the Administrative Manager/Officer and is also accountable to the Associate Chair/Director for Graduate Studies.

This is a common job description used across multiple academic units within the Faculty of Environment.

Key Accountabilities

Graduate program administration including, but not limited to:

- Provide strategic counsel and direction to the Associate Chair/Director Grad to ensure full operation of the graduate programs in compliance with UW policies and procedures.
- Provide consistent and accurate academic advice on UW policies and procedures related to graduate studies to students, faculty, and staff.
- Active member of the Graduate Studies Committee as a consultant and resource, provide strong leadership and knowledgeable guidance for agenda items, optimize the effective delivery of the graduate programs, and facilitate the implementation of new programs and processes compliant with UW policies and procedures. Monitor motions through all levels of approvals. Gather background information as needed to support decision-making and graduate program initiatives.
- Responsible for ensuring the UW Graduate Calendar reflects accurate information on programs, plans and courses, coordinating changes with the Associate Chair/Director Grad, Faculty of Environment office and other academic units as needed.
- Advise on content for unit graduate web pages, including all unit level graduate forms, ensuring they are regularly reviewed and updated.
- Provide strategic input to unit executive for course offerings, course scheduling considerations, enrolment projections, enrolment anomalies, and any other statistical reporting and general advice as needed for senior unit administrators and relevant committees.
- Coordinate with the Administrative Manager/Officer all requests for adjunct appointments, cross appointments, and ADDS status for graduate student supervision and committees.
- Supporting the Administrative Manager/Officer and Chair/Director with documentation and logistical support required for the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) and site visits. Where a program is recognized and governed by professional accreditation requirements, sourcing and providing additional records, and participation in related meetings.

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- Serve as graduate program representative as needed on special projects and committees.

Recruitment and admissions including, but not limited to:

- Respond to inquiries regarding application procedures and graduate programs, providing accurate and timely information and managing the volume and complexity of inquiries.
- Evaluates Masters, PhD, and graduate diploma applications by reviewing transcripts and educational institutions, calculating admission averages, reviewing reference letters, confirming English language proficiency certification, and confirming GRE scores, if applicable.
- Determines qualified applicants from foreign universities by applying expertise on educational systems that differ according to country and institution.
- Communicates with applicants regarding problems with their application.
- Liaison for the International Visiting Graduate Student applications, ensuring all steps are followed and documentation received and submitted for processing.
- Responsible for preparing Offer of Admission/Acceptance Letters for accepted applicants, ensuring correct interpretation and adherence to graduate regulations indicating financial commitments from the department/school and submission of the recommendation to the Graduate Studies Office.
- Submits denials to system for unsuccessful applications.
- Represents the unit at graduate recruitment initiatives and events and provides feedback on marketing materials.
- Responsible for preparing the unit's graduate orientation and providing incoming students with information to prepare for their programs.

Academic records management and student advising including, but not limited to:

- Responsible for ongoing development and evaluation of appropriate procedures for managing admissions, enrollment, program/plan changes, grade submissions, milestone completions, graduate student annual reports, degree completion approvals, and other processes related to graduate students and program activities, including coordinating PhD comprehensive/qualifying exams and masters thesis defences.
- Advise graduate students regarding course selection, exam regulations, academic deadlines, program status, deadlines and/or thesis submission and defenses.
- Primary contact advising students in crisis, providing direction to resources in a confidential manner.
- May require immediate action to connect students with resources or practical assistance. Maintains in-depth knowledge of university and community supports available to students for crisis management, well-being support, financial support, or other needs.
- Maintain accurate academic records: initiating, collecting, and submitting time extension petitions and student progress reports, assisting with enrollment (permission numbers), verifying convocation eligibility, monitoring completion of degree requirements, and ensuring students are registered each term by government count date.
- Monitors the submission of all student grades including grade revisions and keeps the Associate Chairs/Directors, Graduate Studies informed of issues as necessary and ensuring incomplete grades are completed.

Scholarship coordinator including, but not limited to:

- Responsible for the administration of a variety of internal and external scholarships coordinated by the University and advising students of scholarship deadlines and application requirements.
- Review applicants for eligibility, ordering transcripts, and calculating transcript averages, checking for accuracy, editing, and tracking applications.
- Organize and record ranking meeting results, ensuring that all applications are complete and appropriately signed.
- Maintain records of allocations and disbursements.
- Liaise with staff in the Graduate Studies and Post-doctoral Office for issues related to scholarship

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payments, award applications and supplementary funding.

Financial administration including, but not limited to:

- Responsible for managing and tracking Graduate student funding ensuring that financial obligations to each graduate student are met, honouring financial commitments as set out in offer letters.
- Determine teaching assistant requirements each term to support undergraduate courses and graduate funding obligations.
- Responsible for assisting the Associate Chair/Director(s), Graduate Studies and Associate Chair/Director Undergrad with allocating teaching assistantships.
- Prepare and process Teaching Assistantship and Research Assistantship contracts and Scholarship Nomination forms as required.
- Administer and maintain accurate financial records for scholarships managed by unit/Faculty and provides input to support the decision process of the nominations for these graduate scholarships.

The following accountabilities may be shared with or assigned to other roles within the unit:

Course scheduling including, but not limited to:

- Collect and summarize unit teaching constraints for the Chair/Director's approval; submit the unit timetable for courses each term in consultation with the Chair/Director.
- Determine course reserve and section needs; resolves scheduling issues affecting enrolment.
- Co-ordinate course scheduling with other Faculty of Environment departments/schools in cases of held-with and cross-listed courses to ensure that core courses do not conflict with elective course offerings.
- Schedule course offerings each term by the Scheduling department's deadlines.
- Review final course schedule for accuracy and meeting unit's needs; Create a conflict free class schedule for all programs.
- Submit final examination schedule and ensure midterm and exam timeslots are current, complete and conflict free.
- Maintain online course repository, ensure all syllabuses are submitted and published each term.

Administrative support including, but not limited to:

- Provide support for the organization of any guest lectures, workshops, and events within the unit.
- Create, update, and maintain content on the website through actively seeking content from faculty and school members.
- Provide assistance and back-up support to other administrative staff, as needed.
- Create/maintain a current job procedure manual for this position.
- Other duties as assigned.

**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, or equivalent education and/or work experience.

Experience

- Demonstrated experience in graduate student program management, including experience in and commitment to providing academic support and counselling for graduate education and training.

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- Demonstrated experience mentoring students for success.
- Excellent knowledge of and demonstrated experience interpreting University of Waterloo policies and procedures as they relate to graduate programs.
- Experience in dealing with conflict resolution and the ability to proactively anticipate potential challenges and take the initiative to rectify situations.

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Ability to work both independently and collaboratively, developing and maintaining effective working relationships.
- Excellent leadership/mentorship and interpersonal skills to present as a friendly, professional advocate for the unit and its activities.
- Proven listening, oral and written communication skills to foster good working relationships with a variety of clients including students, staff and faculty.
- Proven ability to communicate with graduate students, including distressed and academically struggling students and the ability to deal appropriately with confidential information.
- In-depth and current knowledge of the unit graduate curriculum, academic requirements, policies, procedures, and best practices.
- Superior analytical and problem-solving skills and attention to detail.
- Excellent organizational skills to manage multiple priorities in a high-pressure environment with changing deadlines and large volumes while maintaining detailed record documentation.
- Understanding and acceptance of managing diversity concepts, including self-awareness, in terms of understanding culture, identity, biases, prejudices and stereotypes. A willingness to advocate for change when institutional practices present barriers to different groups.
- Working knowledge of Microsoft Office Suite, SharePoint, as well as other UW specific programs.

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** This position requires communication with a wide range of internal and external contacts to obtain, clarify and discuss information. When dealing with students, the incumbent must be able to present and discuss information and problems, leading to resolution. The position requires sensitivity to the needs of a wide client base, including potential students/applicants, faculty, staff, current students, international students, students registered with Accessibility Services and alumni.
- **Level of Responsibility:** The position has specialized work with minimal supervision, provides guidance to others and works closely with the Associate Chair/Director, Grad , Administrative Manager/Officer and unit Chair/Director.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** : The incumbent must be able to make decisions independently, determine priorities, and will constantly be required to make discretionary judgments. Any issues beyond the scope of the above outlined responsibilities would be escalated to the Associate Chair/Director Graduate Studies, or the unit Chair/Director.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** Exposure to a fast-paced student-centred environment with frequent interruptions. Work requires focus and concentration but is usually performed in a private office.
- **Working Environment:** Environment is predominantly office-based, regular working hours, occasional evening/weekend work. There are multiple and/or tight deadlines beyond one's control. Work volume varies at different times of the year. Possible exposure to difficult situations and interactions with individuals who are upset, in crisis or experiencing significant stress.