

Job Description

Job Title:	Undergraduate Advisor/ Coordinator - Software Engineering
Department:	Electrical & Computer Engineering and School of Computer Science
Reports To:	Manager, Undergraduate Studies, Electrical & Computer Engineering
Jobs Reporting:	None
Salary Grade:	USG 6
Effective Date:	January 2018

Primary Purpose

The Undergraduate Advisor/Coordinator (Advisor) enhances the quality of the undergraduate student experience in Software Engineering (SE) and is a key contributor to student success. The Advisor plays a critical role in student retention, persistence, and success. The Advisor supports students in meeting the heavy demands related to the professional academic programs and curricular requirements. This position provides ongoing advice, guidance, and problem solving to address any obstacles to academic success and help students meet their learning needs. The incumbent reaches out to students in a timely manner and provides guidance to those who are experiencing difficulties within the academic environment.

The Advisor works closely with the Director and Associate Director to manage the day-to-day operations of the Software Engineering programs. They advise students, develop a schedule for courses and exams, process changes/revisions to the Undergraduate Calendar, and other academic responsibilities. Because Software Engineering is a joint program, the Advisor must coordinate and work in partnership with faculty and staff in both Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) and School of Computer Science (CS).

Key Accountabilities

Academic Advising and Student Support

- First point of contact for undergraduate students, and assists or redirects students as necessary
- Assists students in comprehending department, Faculty and University policies and procedures, and applies rules to their specific cases
- Facilitates resolution of academic problems, conflicts, concerns, etc. with Associate Director and/or Manager Undergraduate Studies (Manager)
- Advocates on behalf of students having difficulties who require accommodations/allowances or non-standard arrangements
- Monitors progress of academically “at risk” students and works proactively with them to encourage their success
- Advises students about alternatives, limitations, and possible consequences of academic decisions pertaining to course selection or program decisions
- Advises students regarding academic sequence changes and other co-op issues
- Provides advice or direction on academic issues to help students cope with stressful circumstances or negative academic decisions, such as continuation in a program or withdrawal from the University
- Assists students in accessing services, resources and workshops to improve skills, build student resiliency, and increase academic success
- Manages sensitive situations and resolves complaints at an early stage to minimize conflict and prevent escalation
- Assesses student needs during periods of personal and academic crisis and refers to Health Services or Counselling as necessary
- Works with students to prepare documentation regarding student appeals/petitions, etc. and advises students regarding documentation required to properly assess each case

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- Provides procedural guidance on petitions, withdrawal from the University, and other academic issues, as well as making recommendations regarding plans of action
- Interprets applicable regulations, determines appropriate action, recommends academic decisions, and prepares summaries for review by Associate Director

Undergraduate Program Administration

- Ensures students meet minimum enrollment requirements and assists students with course registration and resolution of problems, as required
- Identifies academic progression issues, notifies students who are at risk, and utilizes proactive intervention strategies for students
- Works with the Associate Director on petition and motion cases, and creates petition summaries for the committee
- Collaborates with ECE and CS to create a conflict free class, mid-term and final exam schedule
- Coordinates and proctors deferred examinations and supplemental exams
- Provides background information, research, advice, and administrative support in the academic decision-making process
- Liaises with Co-operative Education and Career Action office
- Confirms completion of degree requirements for convocation with the Registrar's Office
- Maintains Undergraduate student database (SE Advisor) with all relevant information
- Ensures consistent application of policies and procedures
- Maintains a comprehensive understanding of, and keeps current on University, Faculty and Department academic policies, procedures and requirements
- Sends proposed and approved calendar revisions to the Faculties of Engineering and Mathematics, and tracks progress through various committees in Engineering and Math
- Coordinates and takes minutes for the SE Board, SE Operations Committee, Recruiting Committee, Curriculum Committee, and Divisional and Class Representative meetings
- Provides support to periodic internal and external program reviews, including program accreditation

Communications and Relationship Building

- Implements communication and outreach strategies to influence student retention through relationship development
- Coordinates class prof meetings and liaises with class representatives to keep students informed of undergraduate matters
- Schedules targeted communications around relevant support services needed at certain times in the term
- Maintains the Software Engineering webpage
- Ensures faculty and students are notified of relevant program information, events, requirements, changes, etc.

Special Events

- Plans and executes events designed to improve the undergraduate experience and support SE's priorities regarding the retention and engagement of undergraduate students
- Assists with coordinating logistics of the Fourth Year Design Symposium
- Participates in coordination of volunteers for recruitment events

Other

- Continued professional development through participation in academic advising workshops
- Recommends enhancements for ongoing process improvements or maximize the use of technology
- Maintains procedures and documentation pertaining to the responsibilities of the position
- Attends all meetings and training as required
- Other duties or projects as assigned by the Director, Associate Director, or Manager

Required Qualifications

Education

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent combination of education and/or experience

Experience

- 3+ years of administrative experience in an academic environment working with students

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- Academic advising or related experience in higher education preferred
- Experience interpreting complex policies and information, knowledge of undergraduate policies and procedures preferred
- Experience with student information and scheduling systems; Quest and Infosilem preferred
- Experience working with international students or people from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures an asset
- Experience in event planning an asset

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Intermediate proficiency in MS Office, SharePoint, databases
- Demonstrated advising skills with the ability to support students through difficult situations
- Proven ability to articulate and communicate guidelines or policies to others clearly and without error
- Excellent communication skills, including the ability to handle a wide range of queries and problems with tact, compassion and firmness required
- Demonstrated sensitivity, confidentiality and discretion in interacting with various stakeholders in regards to petitions, probation, academic misconduct and other academic matters
- Must have conflict resolution skills and the ability to deal with people who are irate, frustrated or upset
- Proven ability to exercise mature judgment and make thoughtful, informed and thorough decisions
- Proven ability to identify problems or issues, and probe for information, analyze key information, determine implications, and provide solutions
- Proven ability to respond quickly and decisively in a crisis situation in a calm and rational manner
- Strong diplomatic, negotiation, conflict resolution skills in order to handle difficult or complex situations
- Ability to objectively evaluate situations and identify when to refer to appropriate other resources
- Ability to retain, understand and apply a large amount of information and complex set up regulations and guidelines with minimal supervision
- Ability to work effectively independently and collaboratively with various stakeholders
- Attention to detail and accuracy are essential
- Proven ability to manage multiple priorities and handle high volume with a high level of initiative and flexibility
- Ability to learn new applications, systems and software programs is a requirement
- Must be adaptable and able to manage change well in an evolving environment
- Demonstrated ability to take initiative with a commitment to process improvement
- Comprehensive knowledge of academic programs, university policies and procedures as they relate to undergraduate studies an asset

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Internally: Director, Associate Director, Associate Dean of Engineering Office, Manager Undergraduate Studies ECE, Engineering First Year Office, School of Computer Science, Registrar's Office, Co-operative Education and Career Action, AccessAbility Services, Student Success Office, UW Bookstore, etc. Externally: publishers, parents/guardians, etc. The incumbent must act with sensitivity and discretion when interacting with students, parents/guardians, and faculty members regarding petitions, probation, academic misconduct and other academic matters. This position must maintain a high level of confidentiality, professionalism and knowledge to handle the volume and complexity of inquiries and to provide effective liaison between SE and other academic departments.
- **Level of Responsibility:** The position has defined duties and responsibilities and is expected to work with minimal supervision. The incumbent is expected to perform duties within established policies and procedures and according to an established calendar of events. The job requires the regular exercise of independent action within defined policy parameters. S/he provides guidance to others, including academic advice to students. Academic Advising is a major component of the academic, social, and personal support programs necessary to help students meet their learning needs. The Advisor influences student success and is fundamental to program effectiveness and student persistence. They need to have a holistic understanding of students and how their various issues may intersect, particularly related to progress in their academic program. Advising decisions directly affect the quality of the student undergraduate experience. Misinterpretation of University and faculty policies could cause students serious difficulties in obtaining their educational objectives, and may have adverse

academic consequences. Errors could adversely affect the reputation and credibility of the departments, Faculties, or University. This in turn affects recruitment and retention of students.

- **Decision-Making Authority:** Makes independent decisions regarding student advice, academic progression, etc. Has signing authority for approval of academic program changes, course changes, and recommendations to graduate. The Advisor must have a sound understanding of the policies and regulations pertaining to the University Calendar. They are expected to use judgment to make decisions based on existing policies and procedures. Consults with the faculty academic advisors or Manager to resolve cases that are more complex. Extraordinary issues are referred to the Associate Director with recommendations for solution or action. Errors in decision or information could impede the academic progress of a student and cause adverse relations with students, faculty and staff.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** Demands are typical of an administrative position that functions within office environment. Must possess mental fortitude and patience in cross-cultural and interpersonal relations with a large international clientele. Long periods of sustained attention and concentration to verify accuracy and completeness of student records.
- **Working Environment:** This role involves minimal psychological risk resulting from exposure to some disagreeable situations or conversations, or the requirement to enforce policy. There are deadline pressures and work priorities may change regularly as the volume of work varies with frequent interruptions and multiple demands from numerous clients. Overtime may be required during critical periods e.g. mid-term, final drop date, pre- and post-examination periods, and student events.