

Job Description

Job Title:	Assistant Director, Student Awards & Financial Aid
Department:	Office of the Registrar
Reports To:	Director, Student Awards & Financial Aid
Jobs Reporting:	Financial Aid Assistants
Salary Grade:	USG 11
Effective Date:	April 2018

Primary Purpose

The Assistant Director, Student Awards and Financial Aid (“the AD”) manages the administration of government financial aid programs which are the cornerstone of the University of Waterloo’s undergraduate enrolment management strategy and a key elements in University of Waterloo’s response to the Ontario government’s expectation to provide access guarantees. The AD is the manager responsible for the Student Awards and Financial Aid (SAFA) division of the Registrar’s Office.

These responsibilities include effectively managing resources allocated to the Government Financial Aid programs; providing effective administrative support systems; interpreting government financial aid policy and applying it effectively so that UW students access all sources of aid; applying detailed knowledge of the UW student body in assisting in the provision of locally administered financial aid; providing effective direction and leadership to staff, including enlightened change management; ensuring fair performance evaluations; providing job-related training and encouraging staff participation in personal and professional development on an on-going basis.

Key Accountabilities

Decision Making

- Leads resolution of complex problems acting as a resource for daily inquiries and issues within team.
- Reviews appeals and special case conditions
- Apply sound judgement and comprehensive job knowledge to solve complex problems related to financial aid processing
- Makes decisions by weighing several factors, some of which are partially defined and entail missing pieces of critical information

Team Leadership

- Facilitate effective internal communication and team building with the result that SAFA staff are flexible and adept at dealing with the heavy workload and constant change imposed from outside the University
- Provide positive motivation and support to staff
- Assist in the design of the organizational structure for the SAFA office. This includes the effective recruitment of staff and their orientation, training, fair performance evaluations and ongoing professional development
- Encouraging staff participation in personal and professional development on an on-going basis
- Responsible for maintaining current job descriptions for direct report to ensure they reflect current and up-to-date practices

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Administrative Support Systems

- Coordinates the activities and sets the daily priorities that takes into consideration conflicting priorities.
- Oversees the development or modification of operational procedures as new systems are developed.
- Works in partnership with the Financial Aid Systems Manager and team.

Government Financial Aid Administration

- Ensures that all policies and procedures are interpreted correctly, executed efficiently and that UW student needs are satisfied.
- Prepares files and responds to MAESD inspections that are regularly performed.
- Ensures that high record keeping standards are created and maintained at all times.
- Sets the limits of discretion that can be exercised at various levels within the SAFA Office and ensures that exceptions are adequately documented and consistently fair.
- Sets the tone for fair and compassionate oversight of appeals and exceptions

Communication and Customer Service and Outreach

- Assist in the creation and execution of proactive Financial Aid communications pieces. This also includes social media and website management.
- Represents the University of Waterloo at various recruitment events.
- Develop and present informative financial aid related sessions/presentation to prospective and current students, parents and others with the Director.
- Provide individual financial aid counselling to provide students and/or their families with information and advice.

Interpretation and Application of Government Financial Aid Policy

- Assist the Director in assessing the impact of policy changes on the SAFA Office and the university at large, and must plan and coordinate the implementation of revised policies and procedures in the SAFA office.
- Apply comprehensive job knowledge related to OSAP policies and procedures to ensure applications are complete and accurate.
- Keep up to date with program and policy changes to the OSAP program.
- Stay abreast of current research, philosophies and practices related to post-secondary financial aid programs in order to evaluate their relevance.

**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 suitable combination of education and equivalent work experience

Experience

- Strong managerial experience and leadership skills dealing with diverse teams and situations.
- Understanding of issues and trends affecting post-secondary education.
- Proven ability to deal with difficult or sensitive situations with tact and diplomacy.
- Strong organizational, interpersonal and analytical abilities.
- Experience interpreting complex policies.

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

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- Excellent communication skills, both written and oral, for varied audience
- Advanced working knowledge of MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- High degree of planning and coordination skills.

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Must maintain a productive working relationship with managers and staff in the Registrar's Office, Deans and Associate Deans, College Heads, Cooperative Education and Career Action, numerous Faculty and College based personnel who deal with financial aid, scholarships and customer service matters, and managers and department heads in other administrative departments. Must also work effectively with the senior managers at other Ontario Universities and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development.
- **Level of Responsibility:** This position is responsible and accountable for the results of the Financial Aid Assistants output.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** Accountable for decisions related to the operation of services related to financial aid. Works directly with the Director, Student Awards & Financial Aid to address necessary changes resulting from strategic plans, academic decisions, university-wide initiatives, and government legislation.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** Minimal demands typical of an administrative position within an office environment
- **Working Environment:** Travel – Minimal; Working Hours – Regular working hours, some evening/weekend work required; Risk – physical and psychological – Psychological risks – The incumbent must be sensitive to the often extreme and prolonged stresses under which SAFA and other staff in the office must work. This role involves moderate psychological risk resulting from unavoidable exposure to hazardous, disagreeable or uncomfortable environmental conditions. This role involves exposure to emotionally disturbing experiences and/or interactions with people who are upset, angry, abusive, aggressive, unstable or unpredictable (e.g. students or parents who have escalated an issue, staff or faculty upset with a decision), irregular and/or high volumes, multiple and/or tight deadlines beyond one's control, and interruptions (e.g. phone calls, e-mails and unplanned but urgent support requests at different times of year).