

Job Description

Job Title:	Academic Officer
Department:	Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (GSPA)
Reports To:	Director, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs
Jobs Reporting:	N/A
Salary Grade:	USG 8
Effective Date:	February 2023

Primary Purpose

The Academic Officer supports graduate studies academic affairs, including the process for new program development and revision of existing programs, management of the Graduate Studies Academic Calendar (GSAC) and related curriculum management components, and graduate studies regulatory publications and guidelines development and oversight. The incumbent provides expertise and advice to Faculties and departments on the graduate program development and change process, and further is responsible to track and oversee implementation of program changes. The GSAC and Graduate Studies regulatory publications provide official information as approved by Senate Graduate and Research Council (SGRC), Senate, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council).

Key Accountabilities

Regulates development and structure of graduate studies programs

- Consults with departments and programs, often as the first point of contact, that are exploring the development and implementation of either new or novel programs, or considering major and minor modifications to existing programs. Offers direction on the implementation strategy and how to successfully navigate regulations and approval processes.
- Provides regulatory expertise and advice on academic process and content to departments and programs, committees, and other academic support units (e.g., Cooperative and Experiential Education (CEE)).
- Ensures all graduate regulatory elements are considered and upheld during program development or modifications. This includes ensuring all graduate program changes or development uphold standards established by a) the Quality Council framework, b) the UW Institutional Quality Assurance Process, and c), University policy, regulations, guidelines, and requirements.
- Co-develops departmental program revision templates/forms (proposals/motions) with the department/program to advise on regulatory considerations, such as program requirements, admission requirements, courses/milestones, implementation timelines, approval timelines, and student/applicant impacts. Once approved, this content is inputted into the GSAC, and other University systems, such as Quest.
- Coordinates implementation within GSPA of new programs and changes to programs; which includes working closely with the GSPA Systems team and Admissions team to ensure that all elements are correctly captured within the student information system (Quest) and/or the application system (Slate).

Graduate studies policies and regulatory publications

- Manages and tracks the review of submissions to SGRC/Senate that will result in changes to graduate studies regulations, policies, and guidelines.
- Editor and publisher of the GSAC.
- Tracks and implements changes to the GSAC approved by SGRC, Senate, and the Quality Council.
- Oversees the implementation of regulatory changes in the GSAC, and ensures proper dissemination of changes (e.g., email communications, website, forms).
- Functional lead for the development, management, and ongoing improvement of the GSAC, including archival (paper) copies.
- Key contact for managing all inquiries, problems and technical developments related to the GSAC and curriculum management system.

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- Responsible for curriculum management, ensuring that department and program stakeholders both understand and fully engage with the approval process.
- Oversees the graduate studies workflow within curriculum management software. This includes the set-up of workflow processes, maintenance of all electronic assets within the system, determining and managing access controls within the system.
- Maintains accurate and detailed lists of all graduate programs and other data contained within the GSAC.
- Works with other members of GSPA to ensure consistency between the GSAC and other sources of information, such as Quest and the online admission system (Slate).

Communications and information distribution

- Informs GSPA staff (in particular Records, Systems, Admissions, and Communications teams) and relevant Faculty stakeholders of imminent or approved curricular/regulatory changes to trigger required implementations and actions.
- Proactively identifies the impact of anticipated or approved curricular changes to operations, systems, external and internal facing communications (e.g., website), program structure, curriculum, admissions, and/or degree requirements (where possible).
- Manages and maintains graduate studies and postdoctoral forms; ensures timely and regular updates as required.

Regulates Graduate work integrated learning (Grad WIL) programs

- Advises core Grad WIL group on key attributes of existing types of WIL re: credit (milestone vs. course, etc.) and format (co-op, practicum, internship, research, etc.) to ensure alignment with academic requirements and regulations.
- Provides expert advice on how to ensure alignment of Grad WIL models with academic program requirements and regulations as determined by internal and external regulatory bodies.
- Provides guidance and advice, in consultation with the GSPA Systems team, on how best to capture various Grad WIL models on student records.
- Collaborates with the core Grad WIL group on assessing the feasibility, and effective implementation, of Grad WIL models (e.g., student status, approval processes, etc.).
- Designs and develops tracking mechanisms for the various Grad WIL models, in consultation with the GSPA Systems team.
- Serves as main GSPA point of contact for units interested in adopting Grad WIL to: a) advise on which Grad WIL models will best meet program goals/needs (from an academic/feasibility perspective), b) advise on the steps required to implement the desired Grad WIL model (e.g., approval pathways, timelines, documentation, requirements, referrals to WIL partners), and c) develop the required documentation to implement program changes via the approval process (in collaboration with the unit).
- Works with all units with existing Grad WIL elements to ensure alignment with new Grad WIL models (processes, procedures, and requirements) following the steps for new programs/implementations.

**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

- Bachelor's degree

Experience

- Minimum 5 years experience with University policies and graduate studies and postdoctoral regulations, policies and practices
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills; excellent proofreading and editing skills
- Strong project management skills, high degree of planning and coordination skills
- Successful experience meeting multiple and concurrent deadlines and managing small and large-scale projects
- Excellent relationship management skills for work with a variety of partners across campus
- Experience working with university-wide stakeholders, including Faculty and department contacts, to meet deadlines and execute projects

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Proven outstanding writing, editing, and proofreading skills related to content in a variety of platforms
- Ability to structure, edit, and create suitable content for a variety of platforms (e.g. website/publications)
- Demonstrated ability to thrive in an integrated and collaborative team environment and to apply a positive team approach
- Strong organizational skills coupled with the ability to handle multiple tasks, meet deadlines, and excel in a fast-paced environment characterized by changing priorities
- Excellent attention to detail
- Strategic and tactical thinking, weighing risks and applying sound judgement to decision making
- Ability to make decisions in the absence of all relevant information
- Ability to negotiate and mediate between diverse stakeholders, often with competing priorities

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Communicates with colleagues in Faculties/departments (Associate Deans, Graduate Officers/Chairs, etc.); works with service units to support new programs and program changes (Academic Program Reviews & Quality Assurance, Intuitional Analysis & Planning, CEE, etc.); close working relationship with GSPA colleagues.
- **Level of Responsibility:** This position must provide expert advice and guidance to stakeholders across campus. As the primary contact for graduate program structure, must support department and program level decision making, and respond in a timely and fulsome manner. Accountable to university community to ensure that the GSAC is a correct and accurate representation of programs and policy as applied to Graduate Studies. Responsible for guiding the academic units in adhering to regulations, and fostering collaboration among a variety of stakeholders across campus to achieve a shared goal.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** Primary contact for GSAC, curriculum management, program development and revision, structure of Grad WIL. Provides expertise and advice regarding program change and approvals processes. Makes decisions by interpreting and applying regulations and guidelines internal and external to the University, sometimes with incomplete information. Makes decisions on exceptions on a precedence-based basis, sometimes with unspecified rules. Decisions made in this position impact the graduate academic programming of the University, and compliance with academic regulations. Responsible for decision-making related to procedures for program development. Overly complex and contentious decision-making is escalated to the Director, GSPA and AVPGSPA.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** Office environment (up and down from desk), dealing with distractions in the work environment. Requirement for high attention to detail related to editing content and text and maintaining strict timelines to ensure publication deadlines.
- **Working Environment:** Office working environment with frequent need to give close attention to various stimuli such as written and verbal information. The work is varied, and priorities must be juggled to ensure all projects are completed successfully. There are deadline pressures, while at the same time there is a demand for thoroughness and accuracy. This role involves moderate psychological risk resulting from unavoidable exposure to hazardous, disagreeable or uncomfortable environmental conditions. This role involves interactions with people who may be upset or angry.