

## Job Description

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<b>Job Title:</b>	Early Engagement Specialist
<b>Department:</b>	Student Success Office
<b>Reports To:</b>	Senior Academic Development Specialist
<b>Jobs Reporting:</b>	None
<b>Salary Grade:</b>	USG 10
<b>Effective Date:</b>	January 2020

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### **Primary Purpose**

The Early Engagement Specialist will lead the development of a cross-campus early engagement strategy that promotes a campus culture that is focused on factors that proactively contribute to a student's success in University. Using their knowledge of best practices, literature and research related to student engagement, student retention, and psycho-educational interventions, the Specialist serves as an expert in the areas of early engagement and early intervention. They work collaboratively and strategically with key stakeholders (including faculty, staff and students) to identify opportunities for cross campus alignment of initiatives that proactively contribute to a student's success in University. They will be called upon to consult in the design, delivery and implementation of early engagement initiatives, and where necessary, they will develop initiatives at the institutional, faculty and department level to support Waterloo's overall engagement strategy.

### **Key Accountabilities**

#### **Strategic Direction and Leadership**

- Leads the development of the cross campus early engagement strategy including the creation of training and communication plans, intervention and engagement initiatives, as well as sharing best practice research and developments at other institutions.
- Provides strategic direction and leadership surrounding the development of policies, practices, programming and services that promote a cross campus early engagement strategy that contributes to student success in university (e.g., PAC-SMH, reading week, foundation term, etc.)
- Recruits and oversees Project Leads who will provide leadership to interdisciplinary teams (e.g. working groups) to promote the vision and successful implementation of an early engagement strategy on campus that supports the mission of the Student Success Office, as well as the universities mission and strategic plan.
- Ensures that the strategic direction of early engagement strategy is in alignment with principles and practices on campus (e.g. Policy 46).
- Provides leadership to promote a culture of collaboration among other staff and faculty with early engagement interest, knowledge and expertise (e.g., staff of Counselling and Psychological Services, the Student Success Office and Associate Deans in the respective faculties and Privacy Officer).
- Uses research and best practices to inform strategy development and evaluation of program and services
- Acquires a solid understanding of faculty and institution's goals and priorities as it relates to enhancing student engagement and academic success.

- Collaborates with key stakeholders within the SSO and across campus to create a comprehensive strategy to meet the needs of our campus.
- Provides consultation to faculty and campus partners in order to ensure faculty and department level training and communication plans, interventions and engagement initiatives are in line with and support the development of the cross campus early engagement strategy.

### **Student Service and Program Development**

- Develops and oversees the cross campus early engagement strategy by simplifying best practices from literature and research related to student success; including retention, student engagement, psycho-educational interventions and customizing to the needs of our Waterloo audience.
- Identifies the unique needs of Waterloo students surrounding early engagement including, but not limited to specific at-risk populations (e.g. transfer students, Foundation Term students) and determines proactive ways to support their success on our campus.
- Determines how existing services and programs are in line with early engagement, the strategic priorities of the SSO, and campus and how these can be leveraged to meet the unique needs of specific at-risk populations (e.g., transfer students, Foundation Term students).
- Identifies current trends and forecasts future development in one-on-one strategies and programs to enhance the one-on-one interactions between support providers and students at both the Faculty and Institutional level.
- Establishes performance indicators and assessment methods to evaluate individual initiatives, as well as institutional priorities related to early engagement including the development of learning outcomes, program goals and objectives and success metrics.

### **Training & Mentoring**

- Provide support, education, training, shadowing and feedback to staff, faculty and student leaders who work with students in one-on-one environments (e.g., providing coaching strategies to individuals who work with students in one-on-one settings).
- Responds to the needs of the campus by the development and training of others in one-on-one strategies and programs designed to promote and enhance early engagement.
- Connects at-risk students to appropriate campus services/resources and/or provides individual coaching as appropriate in an ethical, considerate, confidential and responsible manner.
- Be one point of contact for distress/crisis related concerns, if needed in the office, along with others trained at the SSO. Consult with senior leadership in the office where appropriate, around training for staff

### **Relationship Building**

- Participates in and contributes to regular team, department, and campus wide meetings as appropriate. In particular, liaising with Campus Wellness and AccessAbility.
- Develops and maintains excellent working relationships with faculty, staff and campus partners to foster an environment for the transferring of ideas, skills, and/or resources around early engagement; at-risk learners; and one-on-one interactions between support providers and students.
- Consults with key stakeholders to identify gaps and opportunities for enhancing the engagement of our students.
- Represents the SSO at campus wide meetings.

*\*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**

- Completion of a Master's degree or equivalent education and experience in a related field (e.g., Educational Counselling, Counselling Psychology, Student Services).
- Registration, certification or license from an appropriate College or certification (e.g., certified with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association, Registration with the College of Social Workers)

#### **Experience**

- Experience working in a post-secondary student services setting providing one-on-one support is required
- Program/project management experience is required
- Experience training/mentoring student staff is required
- Experience training/mentoring staff and faculty around one-on-one support for students in a post-secondary student services environment strongly preferred

#### **Knowledge/Skills/Abilities**

- Demonstrated knowledge of best practices in counselling and psycho-educational interventions, student learning, student development, one-on-one student service, and student advising is required.
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively, build consensus and be sensitive to the needs and interests of various stakeholders, and contribute to the functioning of a diverse team both within the department and across the institution.
- Strong political acumen to understand the needs of the organization surrounding early engagement and the ability to frame, build networks, initiate and manage change, as the early engagement strategy takes shape.
- Proven ability to take initiative and be both creative and flexible.
- Strong oral and written communication skills, excellent organizational skills, and sound judgment.
- Demonstrated ability to interpret and apply research surrounding best practices in one-on-one strategies and programs for post-secondary learners.

### Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Builds relationships with key support services including Campus Wellness and AccessAbility Services
- **Level of Responsibility:** The job has specialized work with minimal supervision
- **Decision-Making Authority:** The Specialist may modify, where appropriate, training and learning strategies to meet diverse student needs.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** Minimal demands typical of a position operating within a fast-paced service oriented office environment; extensive periods of sitting and concentrated use of visual senses. Requires close attention to detail, thoroughness and accuracy
- **Working Environment:** Work is located in a comfortable indoor area, although location can change. There is minimal exposure to disagreeable conditions. The Specialist may at times coach and/or interact with people who are upset, angry, aggressive, unstable or unpredictable (i.e., occasional emotionally charged issues with students who require counselling)