

## Job Description

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<b>Job Title:</b>	Academic Development Specialist
<b>Department:</b>	Student Success Office
<b>Reports To:</b>	Senior Academic Development Specialist
<b>Jobs Reporting:</b>	Academic Skills Developer
<b>Salary Grade:</b>	USG 8-10
<b>Effective Date:</b>	January 2020

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### **Primary Purpose**

The Academic Development Specialist will lead the SSO's academic support strategy including the development, coordination and delivery of institutional and faculty level 'in-classroom' strategies designed to promote and enhance students' academic success. Using their knowledge of and experience in establishing and implementing best practices in teaching and learning approaches, student retention and engagement strategies, and student evaluation and assessment methodologies, they work closely with key faculty, staff, and student leaders to provide strategic academic support to students. The Academic Development Specialist designs and evaluates original strategies, methods and models that support the academic success of students in response to the needs of Faculty, Student Success Office (SSO) and institutional priorities.

### **Key Accountabilities**

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

- Leads the development of SSO's academic support strategy to enhance student success for specific faculties, populations or disciplines
- Makes connections between SSO priorities and goals, and Faculty and institutional goals and priorities as it relates to enhancing student success to provide recommendations around learning skills needs/supports to key stakeholders who support students' academic success (e.g. instructors, advisors, associate deans).
- Provides guidance/consultation to Faculty Relations Managers, and other members of the Student Success Office around how to strategically integrate learning skills (e.g. time management; numerical problem solving) into Faculties and/or programs based on particular student needs.
- Works closely with Faculty Relations Managers to align existing learning skills programs, supports, and services offered by SSO and campus partners to the SSOs Faculty and/or Population-specific (e.g. first-year; transfer; at-risk; graduate) student success strategy to avoid duplication in work and foster a sense of campus collaboration.
- Provides leadership to Academic Skills Developer. This includes setting clear and reasonable expectations, providing ongoing feedback and establishing a strong foundation for performance.

#### **Evaluation, Assessment, and Theory**

- Uses evaluation and assessment methodologies, and best practices from the literature to inform the Student Success Office's development of Faculty and/or Population-specific (e.g. first-year; transfer; at-risk; graduate) student success strategy in the SSO.
- Works with faculty and staff in identifying key factors that contribute to student success – both at the institutional level and the Faculty level
- Conducts analysis, creates reports and identifies projections to help us understand Waterloo learners. This includes, but is not limited to, data and information related to course specific attrition rates and predictive indicators.

- Identifies opportunities for the dissemination of analyses, reports and projections including tangibly connecting this information to student success and relevant academic support strategies and projects.
- Reads and contributes to current literature/current understanding related to student success strategies, retention, student engagement, student development and teaching and learning strategies. Summarizes and simplifies this knowledge for our key campus stakeholders.
- Establishes performance indicators and evaluation and assessment methods to measure achievement in all areas of responsibility including learning outcomes, program goals and objectives and individual program success

### **Relationship Building**

- Contributes to the development of innovative ways of working with clients and peers to ensure constructive and collaborative work dynamics to achieve positive outcomes
- Sets direction surrounding the creation of communication plans and messaging to specific audiences
- Applies change management expertise with new stakeholders and audiences
- Participates in and contributes to regular staff, department and Faculty wide meetings throughout the University as appropriate.
- Represents the SSO at relevant Faculty and department wide meetings as appropriate.
- Develops and maintains excellent working relationships with instructors, and other key stakeholders/faculty partners – particularly in designing and delivering in-class, and/or course-specific interventions.

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

- Designs student success strategies that package existing supports with the development of new content, programs and initiatives and are in line with the strategic priorities of the SSO, Faculty partners, and aim to promote and enhance student success. This includes but is not limited to determining how learning skill development can be integrated into the classroom.
- Informed by best practices and current research, leads the design, delivery and evaluation of faculty specific and SSO specific projects and programs that are part of the student success strategy. This includes but is not limited to developing online support materials, designing course specific interventions, and designing content for Faculty day programs.
- Collaborates with other members of the Student Success Office, and key faculty, staff, and student leaders, to design interventions for priority populations (e.g. first year students, graduate, transfer and exchange students). This also includes designing proactive interventions for students identified as being 'at risk'.
- Responsible for developing new content, programs and initiatives that are in response to the needs and priorities of our Faculty partners, are in line with the strategic priorities of the SSO and aim to promote and enhance student success
- Ensures that programs and initiatives designed and delivered are meeting the unique needs of each Faculty and are in line with faculty and universities strategic plans

### **Teaching & Training**

- Teaches courses, including UNIV 101/GENE 101, as determined by the Senior Academic Development Specialist
- Contributes to the development of best practices surrounding instructional methods, classroom design, and classroom management approaches for specialized student populations
- Trains instructors, advisors, student leaders, and SSO staff members to deliver learning skills content

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*\*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**

<p><b>Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• University degree from relevant discipline required.</li><li>• Master of Education or equivalent (e.g., Student Services) required.</li><li>• Teaching credentials (or comparable post-degree work with extensive experience required).</li></ul>
<p><b>Experience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Experience in an academic setting working with students, Faculty members/instructors and staff preferred</li><li>• Experience teaching in a university setting strongly preferred</li><li>• Program/project management experience is an asset.</li><li>• Experience designing and evaluating original strategies, methods and models that support the academic success of students is an asset</li></ul>
<p><b>Knowledge/Skills/Abilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledgeable and up to date on the needs of post-secondary students (particularly in a university environment) including best practices at other institutions, current trends, and forecasting future development in strategies to enhance student learning and development, retention and student engagement.</li><li>• Strong understanding of the needs of Waterloo students including priority populations including first year students, international, graduate, transfer and exchange students.</li><li>• Exceptional communication and relationship-building skills</li><li>• Proven influencing and teamwork skills, and the ability to lead co-workers in projects and teams</li><li>• Proven ability to take initiative and be both creative and flexible</li><li>• Strong organizational and time management skills, and sound judgment.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• Demonstrated ability to contribute to and thrive in a collaborative environment and to apply a positive team approach to working with colleagues.</li></ul>

### **Nature and Scope**

- **Contacts:** Builds relationships with key stakeholders including faculty members/instructors and key service providers including the Writing and Communication Centre, Library, and Centre for Teaching Excellence
- **Level of Responsibility:** The Specialist is responsible for managing the day to day operations of the Academic Skills Developer(s) including setting priorities and managing expectations, they are also responsible for ongoing performance management and yearly performance appraisals. Staff in the SSO will look to the Academic Development Specialist to inform evidence-based decisions on strategies and program development. The job has specialized work with minimal supervision. They are also responsible for building collaboration and consensus with internal and external partners.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** The Specialist will make decisions in collaboration with others about the strategic priorities of action to solve problem and to exert a positive influence on other stakeholders on behalf of the SSO. The Specialist may modify, where appropriate, content and or programming to meet diverse student needs.

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- **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. During teaching terms the Specialist may be standing for longer periods of time. 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)