

Job Title: Specialist, New Student Transition (Graduate Students)
Department: Student Success Office
Reports To: Manager, New Student Transition
Jobs Reporting: None
Salary Grade: USG 9
Effective Date: May 2022

Primary Purpose

The Specialist, New Student Transition (Graduate), is responsible for designing, implementing, and maintaining integrated programs intended to support a successful transition for new and incoming graduate students into the university. This requires the Specialist to be knowledgeable and up to date on the unique needs of graduate students with special attention and focus on international students and priority populations (e.g., Black, Indigenous, Students of Colour and historically underrepresented groups). The Specialist will work collaboratively and strategically with key internal and external stakeholders and is responsible for overseeing the implementation of graduate transition programs including day to day operations, decision making and program leadership. The Specialist will work closely with the Manager, New Student Transition and New Student Transition (NST) team to ensure programs are well integrated, responsive to the needs of the faculties and campus partners and are achieving desired outcomes. The Specialist demonstrates a commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism through their leadership, program design and operational practices.

The Specialist has three primary areas of focus: 1) Design, implement, assess and maintain graduate student transition programming; ensure initiatives are well-integrated and coordinated into the overall new student transition strategy, 2) Be knowledgeable and up to date on the needs of incoming graduate students, including priority populations (e.g., Black, Indigenous, Students of Colour and historically underrepresented groups and international graduate students) and 3) Maintain positive working relationships with key campus and faculty partners and graduate students.

Key Accountabilities

Program Development and Administration

- Develops, coordinates, and maintains targeted programs and initiatives designed to ensure the successful transition of new graduate students for all three academic terms via virtual, in-person or hybrid offerings.
- Apply research, best practices, and knowledge of student trends to develop and execute specialized programming for priority graduate student populations, including priority populations (e.g., Black, Indigenous, Students of Colour and historically underrepresented groups) and international graduate students.
- Leverages resources, knowledge, and expertise in the SSO to assist in the design of transition programs when appropriate in partnership with the SSO leadership team and campus partners.
- With the Manager, New Student Transition and SSO leadership team, identifies and develops additional supports/initiatives for graduate students throughout their academic career beyond existing transition programming.

- Provides guidance to stakeholders on campus who support new student transition programs/opportunities to create an engaged and inclusive community of University of Waterloo graduate students.
- Contributes to the overall graduating student experience by assisting UWaterloo's convocation team to support fall and spring convocation ceremonies.
- Applies an equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism lens to all program design elements.

Relationship Building

- Works closely with both the NST team and International Student Experience (ISE) team to ensure programs and strategies complement one another and, when appropriate, are consistent in delivery and outcomes for all incoming students.
- Collaborates with campus partners to ensure students are provided with necessary support, resources, and information pertinent to their University of Waterloo experience. Key campus partners include but are not limited to: Graduate Student Association, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs, Campus Housing, Campus Wellness, AccessAbility Services, Community Relations, and all Faculties and affiliated University Colleges as applicable.
- Facilitates strong working relationships with SSO colleagues, particularly the NST and ISE teams, and collaborates on strategies that will support the successful transition of new graduate students and contribute to an overall positive graduate student experience across multiple portfolios within the SSO.
- Establishes and maintains a network of relationships with external organizations (e.g.: Canadian Association for Graduate Studies, etc.) to remain up to date on new research, strategies and initiatives in orientation programs and new student transition literature.
- Participates in and contributes to regular staff, department, and Faculty specific meetings as appropriate.

Staff and Volunteer Development

- Provides strong leadership to student staff including setting clear and reasonable goals and expectations, providing on-going feedback, and establishing a strong foundation for performance through comprehensive training and on-going professional development as required.
- Outlines clear expectations and responsibilities for student staff and volunteers, as they relate to graduate student transition programming.
- Responsible for the recruitment, hiring, selection, ongoing training, appreciation, and recognition of student staff, including co-op students. Works closely with staff in the SSO, particularly the NST and ISE teams, to ensure compensation and appreciation of student staff and volunteers is equitable.
- Maintains consistent and appropriate levels of communication with student-staff and volunteers to ensure ongoing engagement and accountability.
- Provides support to UWaterloo's convocation team to recruit, train, and schedule a small team of campus volunteers for each ceremony.

Research and reporting

- Strong understanding of the graduate student experience at the University of Waterloo, particularly priority populations (e.g., Black, Indigenous, Students of Colour and historically underrepresented groups) and international students.
- Applies current research, best practices, student development theory, and student trends to design intentional, proactive, and responsive orientation programs that are in line with the needs of our students and Faculty partners.
- With the NST Manager, the Specialist contributes to the strategic priorities of their portfolio, providing regular progress reports and updates to internal and external partners.

- Works closely with the NST Manager to summarize and disseminate key research related to new student transition programming for graduate students.
- Connects regularly with the ISE team to share information related to the new student experience for international graduate students.

**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 required; Master’s degree or equivalent experience in a related field (e.g., Leadership, Higher Education, Student Services) strongly preferred.

Experience

- Demonstrated experience working in post-secondary student services with student, staff, and faculty.
- Experience working with a student association/student government considered an asset.
- Program/project development and management experience is an asset.
- Demonstrated experience working with graduate students is preferred.
- Volunteer management and student staff supervision experience – particularly in a student leadership capacity an asset.

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- A record of and commitment to participating in ongoing learning and engagement in the areas of equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and accessibility. Demonstrated experience applying this learning to their leadership and program development/design.
- Foundational understanding of the graduate student experience based on research, literature and best practice related to student retention, engagement, and development.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate clearly, work collaboratively, build consensus and be sensitive to the needs and interests of various stakeholders, both within the department and across the institution.
- Demonstrated ability to use and interpret data to make decisions and communicate results effectively to various stakeholders.
- Exceptional organizational skills as well as the ability to multi-task, manage, and forecast required resources.
- Proven ability to take initiative and be both creative and flexible.
- High degree of political acumen.
- Demonstrated ability to contribute to and thrive in a collaborative environment and to apply a positive team approach to working with colleagues within and outside of the SSO.
- Demonstrated ability for coaching graduate-level student staff in event management, facilitation, and program content development.

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Specialist communicates with NST Team and other teams within the SSO to ensure all employees are informed and knowledgeable about transition initiatives related to graduate students. The Manager is responsible for ensuring strong working relationships with a wide variety of stakeholders across campus. Key partners include the GSA, the

GSPA, central campus services and the faculties. The Specialist communicates effectively, building collaboration and ensuring student-focused transition programs.

- **Level of Responsibility:** The Specialist is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the graduate student transition portfolio, setting priorities and managing internal and external expectations of this area. They are ultimately responsible for the hiring and supervision of graduate student leaders as required to support events and programs. As well as, for managing the day-to-day operations of the area, managing workflow, and communicating realistic expectations for student staff and volunteers.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** The Specialist will make decisions in collaboration with others about the programs and services offered to support graduate students, particularly in relation to the strategic priorities of the NST Team and SSO. The Specialist will make decisions in collaboration with campus partners, student leaders and others within the SSO around program offerings. The Specialist will be required to think on their feet during programming days and solve problems with good judgment and poise.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** There are minimal demands typical of a position operating within an office environment including: periods of extensive sitting and concentrated use of visual senses. During programming days there is the potential for extensive standing, lifting, carrying and/or handling objects.
- **Working Environment:** Much of the time is spent sitting in a comfortable position in an open space office. There is a frequent need to give close attention to various stimuli such as written material. There is minimal exposure to disagreeable conditions. Some weekend and evening work will be required throughout the peak period for this position: June - September (including Labour Day weekend), and October.