

Job Description

Job Title:	Executive Assistant
Department:	University Relations
Reports To:	Vice-President, University Relations
Jobs Reporting:	None
Salary Grade:	USG 8
Effective Date:	December 2020

Primary Purpose

Reporting to the Vice-President, University Relations (VPUR), the Executive Assistant (EA) is responsible to support the VPUR to achieve their priorities, which includes oversight of the operations of University Relations. This position provides continuity within University Relations (UR) as leadership changes. University Relations includes Marketing & Strategic Initiatives, Community Relations & Events, University Communications and Government Relations.

The Executive Assistant is responsible for maintaining the VPUR's daily schedule and itinerary and for providing overall administrative and executive assistance in respect of all activities in the VPUR's area of responsibility. This includes the provision of organizational, secretarial and administrative support as needed as well as liaison on behalf of the VPUR with senior administrators across the University, with corporations and government departments across Canada. The EA must perform at a high level, ensuring that the Office of the VPUR functions in an efficient and professional manner. This includes providing support to senior directors/associate vice-presidents as appropriate.

The Vice-President, University Relations portfolio encompasses a wide variety of professional activities including high-level involvement on a number of internal and external committees and organizations. The Executive Assistant ensures the VPUR is prepared for all meetings and events.

This position requires a high degree of acumen, integrity, tact, diplomacy and time-management skills; the flexibility to adapt to changing executives and priorities; the ability to work as part of a team; an in-depth knowledge of the university environment, including university structure, policies and procedures. The incumbent must be able to work independently in terms of daily management of the Office, and yet recognize the emergence of problems and issues that require the attention of the VPUR.

Other positions reporting to the Vice-President, University Relations include the Associate Vice-President Marketing and Strategic Initiatives, the Associate Vice-President Government Relations, the Associate Vice-President University Communications, the Senior Director Community Relations and Events, the Financial Officer and the Executive Officer.

Key Accountabilities

Administrative support to the Vice-President, University Relations

- Control and coordinate all scheduling and management of the VPUR's calendar.
- Provide advice, options, recommendations and decisions regarding all aspects of the VPUR's calendar based on the VPUR's priorities, timelines and objectives to ensure the Vice-President's time is being used effectively. Exercises judgement in determining whether issues or requests for meetings/events are appropriate or best referred elsewhere.
- Brings matters of priority to the attention of the VPUR.
- Keep the VPUR well informed of sensitive issues related to meetings or events.

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- Ensure the VPUR is fully prepared and supported for meetings, events and other engagements by means of briefing notes, documents, speaking notes, attendee listing and agenda items, etc.
- Prepare and organize support materials required by the VPUR by researching, analyzing, composing and/or synthesizing and formatting documents. This includes researching websites for relevant information prior to meetings of the VPUR for internal and external meetings.
- Must have a broad knowledge of the various activities and responsibilities of the VPUR in order to prepare materials required for effective participation in, or chairing of, both internal and external meetings and committees.
- Proactively offer advice regarding meetings and events that should be initiated by the VPUR.
- Track and ensure appropriate follow-up occurs on requests for approval and requests for information ensuring all deadlines are met.
- Maintain management of the office during the VPUR's absence while keeping the VPUR informed of priorities and urgencies arising.
- Work with UR senior leaders to manage the preparation of the VPUR's presentations and reports to Board of Governors, Executive Council, Senate, etc., ensuring all critical dates and deadlines are met.
- Act as a point of contact between the VPUR and UR senior leaders to ensure the effective flow of information and follow-up.
- Interact frequently with the Office of the President, Provost, and other senior administrators to relay information, seek advice and engage parties in visits/events/meetings.
- Contact senior corporate, university and government officials to coordinate meetings on behalf of the VPUR.
- Coordinate and manage arrangements for receptions and functions hosted by the VPUR.
- Coordinate the gathering of requested information and documents to assist the Secretariat's Office with Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) requests.

Daily functioning of the VPUR office

- Manage email from the VPUR generic email account and respond to or disseminate as required.
- Maintain a bring-forward system to ensure all correspondence is responded to effectively and in a timely manner.
- Maintain files, correspondence, and a retrieval system including highly confidential files on major prospects, contracts, government files under discussion and negotiation.
- Review and filter information, issues, mail, telephone calls, etc., and disseminate information to other members of the VPUR's team including drafting correspondence that may be required by the VPUR.
- Compose e-mails on behalf of the VPUR on own initiative and as instructed.
- Reviews for consistency and accuracy all drafted correspondence submitted to the VPUR. Ensures the appropriate action is completed in a timely manner to meet all deadlines, approvals and signature requirements.
- Prepare a regular update from key functional UR areas by requesting information, following-up on actionable and priority items. The frequency of this update will be adjusted as appropriate.
- Prepare and/or review all presentations for VPUR (which includes PowerPoint).
- Monitor VPUR profile on social media, particularly LinkedIn and suggest posts when appropriate.
- Provide a confidential sounding board for ideas, plans and providing advice and criticisms; critical analysis; perspectives; options and alternative approaches.
- Use discretion in handling incoming information and follow-up.
- Monitor, respond and prepare the VPUR for all speaking engagements.
- Manage the VPUR's travel arrangements, complete travel claims and manage the VPUR itinerary including the provision of documentation, meetings materials and background information as required.

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- Prepare expense claims for others who may travel for work related purposes while sponsored by the Office of the VPUR.
- High degree of accuracy and accountability is required given the reputational component of the VPUR.
- Provide excellent and responsive service to media inquiries for the VPUR and/or forward to the applicable media specialist within University Communications.
- Must maintain utmost confidentiality of the VPUR's discussions and correspondence.

Governance

- Work with the Office of the President, Office of the Provost and the Secretariat Office on matters related to the VPUR's responsibilities for the Board of Governors, Senate, Executive Council and other relevant committees and councils.
- Ensure the VPUR is prepared, organized and updated on the progress of their priorities to strengthen their engagement with the Board, Senate, Executive Council and other relevant committees and councils.
- Manage the completion, monitoring and updates on the VPUR priorities work plan required by the Office of the President.

Financial Management

- Prepare the VPUR's expense claims ensuring compliance with UW financial policies and procedures.
- Using the corporate purchasing card (P-card) purchase required products ensuring all invoices, tracking of purchases and monthly statement reconciliation is completed following established University and/or University Relations guidelines, procedures and processing requirements. The cardholder ensures correct department, account and tax codes are applied to P-card invoices/receipts.

Website Management

- Coordinate the development and ongoing updates and improvements of the VPUR's website. Ensure the content is relevant, current and meets the objectives of the website while ensuring UW web design standards and guidelines are adhered to.

**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 equivalent experience and education.

Experience

- 3 to 5 years of professional experience providing administrative, calendar management, business process and project coordination to a senior leader.
- Experience in drafting senior level reports, correspondence and agenda planning.

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Familiarity with best practices for assessing, developing and implementing new business processes and procedures.
- The ability to identify and recommend emerging collaborative applications, tools, software and best practices such as Airtable, Smartsheet, Adobe Connect, Cisco WebEx, etc.

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- The ability to monitor, recommend updates and draft responses for social media platforms such as LinkedIn.
- Proven ability to build strong relationships and influence individuals at all levels of an organization, as well as external constituents.
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively and independently and thrive in a fast-paced entrepreneurial environment.
- Strong organizational and analytical skills in the gathering and manipulation of data.
- High level of maturity and empathy; highly developed interpersonal and influencing capabilities.
- Excellent communication (oral and written) with the ability to write communication on behalf of an executive.
- Strong technology skills along with excellent organizational skills and ability to manage complex detailed work.
- Familiar with University governance systems, policies, procedures, and knowledge of Waterloo web design standards/guidelines.
- Experience managing multiple schedules and meeting coordinates is an asset.
- Ability to adapt to varying management styles.
- Advanced: Outlook, MS Word and PowerPoint skills.
- A high capacity for work and a willingness to go beyond a regular work schedule to meet deadlines when required.
- Experience using web-based user interfaces to manage and maintain web content
- This position works independently and collaboratively and requires outstanding customer service, sound judgment, a strong work ethic and an ability to work under challenging time constraints with competing priorities.
- Highly complex issues are involved which may bring in different levels of government, media, corporate leaders, opinion leaders, faculty, staff and students – often high risk of impact on institutional reputation if not handled well.
- Collaborative team player comfortable leading as well as executing and taking constructive input from multiple sources.
- Ability to provide unobtrusive support to the VPUR and their team by earning their trust and confidence.
- Communicates effectively, precisely and professionally with internal and external sources.
- Proactive in anticipating the needs of the VPUR and the ability to manage tight deadlines and stressful situations.

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:**

Internal Relationships: The Executive Assistant to the VPUR facilitates internal working relationships between the VPUR (including the VPUR Office) and: the President; the Vice-President, Academic and Provost; the Vice-President, Research and International; the Vice-President, Finance; the Deans; Senate and its various Councils; the Board of Governors; Deans' and Executive Councils; and College Heads.

External Relationships: The Executive Assistant to the VPUR facilitates external working relationships between the VPUR and corporations and federal and provincial ministries. The Executive Assistant also assists the VPUR to execute the responsibilities of numerous board and committee memberships.

- **Level of Responsibility:**

Often manages highly confidential issues for the VPUR.

The Executive Assistant works very closely with the VPUR and the offices of other Vice-Presidents/Deans on matters to advance the priorities of the President and institution.

Highly complex issues are involved which may bring different levels of government, media, corporate leaders, opinion leaders, faculty, staff and students – often high risk of impact on institutional reputation if not handled well.

This position has responsibility and accountability for serving as the first point of contact for the VPUR.

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- **Decision-Making Authority:**

Problem solving is a critical skill for this position as unexpected issues and/or conflicts may arise and the incumbent must be capable of analyzing problems and quick-solve issues.

Makes decisions with respect to the most efficient use of the VPUR's time (e.g., meetings, events, etc.) and seeks advice when required.

Expected to work independently carrying out all tasks.

- **Physical and Sensory Demands:**

Minimal demands typical of a position operating within an office environment; periods of extensive sitting and concentrated use of visual senses; physical effort that may result in moderate fatigue, strain or injury, as a result of repetitive keyboard/mouse movement.

- **Working Environment:**

Physical Risks – no significant risk.

Psychological Risks – Minimal exposure to disagreeable conditions typical of a C-level office.