

Job Description

Job Title:	International Student Support Specialist
Department:	Student Success Office
Reports To:	Manager, International Student Experience
Jobs Reporting:	None
Salary Grade:	USG 8
Effective Date:	November 2022

Primary Purpose

The International Student Supports Specialist is accountable to the Manager International Student Experience, for advising and providing direct support to international students as they navigate issues of varying complexity and offering case management services by facilitating support efforts and connections to multiple supports across student services and academic units. The Specialist is an advocate for international students and consults with key stakeholders across campus to determine opportunities for addressing international student challenges, identifying supports, and streamlining processes.

The Specialist will be highly knowledgeable and up to date on best practices, literature and research related to international students, their experiences, challenges, and needs.

The Specialist will work closely with the Manager, International Student Experience, Immigration Consultants, international students including student groups, Student Service units, and Faculties.

Key Accountabilities

Case Management and Advising

- Directly support international students and staff who support international students in navigating issues including complex issues, which includes supporting international students in accessing resources, supports (both on- and off- campus) and help where there is no clear path forward
- Establishes effective processes and procedures for the implementation and operation of international student supports
- Develop student support plans (including engagement of on campus resources and services) and follow up. The support response is scalable and tailored to each student's specific needs
- Maintain confidential case records and a directory of resources
- Summarize and document advice given to each student to ensure continuity and consistency
- Assist students in understanding University policy and where policy has impact on student success
- Support connections to the Immigration consultants where immigration policy may impact student status and student success
- Develop and maintain a database of referral resources, services, and supports international students and their families are eligible for including regional, provincial, and federal supports
- Identifying and actioning on opportunities to provide enhanced support to international students, that is informed by the student voice, data, and other metrics
- Development and maintenance of support documentation, outlining goals, outcomes, and ongoing progress

- Uses current research to design intentional, proactive, and responsive supports that are in line with the needs of our students and faculty/campus partners.
- Maintains current knowledge base about international populations including students who are new to Canadian culture, English language-learners, graduate international students and other international populations
- Monitor, develop, adapt, and track email communications via the ISE inbox, support the training and development of international student experience staff response to ISE inbox email communication that reflects a student centered and supportive voice in communication

Relationship Building and Collaboration

- Foster and maintain positive working relationships with Immigration Consultants, Academic Advisors, AccessAbility Services, Counselling Services, Campus Wellness, Student Awards and Financial Aid, Student Financial Services, Campus Housing, Safety Abroad, WUSA and GSA to identify, lead and/or support initiatives that support international student success
- Engages advisors, faculty, staff, students, and campus partners in meaningful conversations about factors that contribute to student success, retention, student engagement and development. This is accomplished through fostering an open and transparent dialogue and encouraging a highly collaborative and collegial relationship with all campus partners and stakeholders including students
- Responsible for the development, implementation and maintenance of communication resource that shares knowledge and updates on eligible international student supports, resources, and services with stakeholders, including but not limited to community supports, on-campus supports and other provincially and federally services that contributes to the success of international students
- Works collaboratively with the Communications and International Student Experience team for the development of the monthly International Student Connection Newsletter
- Participates in and contributes to regular staff and departmental meetings as appropriate.
- Participates in and contributes to various internal and external meetings. It is essential that the Specialist practice diplomatic facilitation and sound judgement while working with stakeholders
- Works closely with other staff in the SSO to ensure a coordinated and integrated approach to international student supports

Crisis Management and Support

- Establish protocols and interdepartmental collaboration to effectively support international students in times of crisis, emergencies, conflicts, and other critical incidents in the home country of international students'
- Ensures on-going support to international students as they navigate crisis and scaling of supports as appropriate
- Monitors government sources of information and other agency information on the development of world crisis and events that impact international students
- Identify, develop and execute processes, response plan and scalable outreach to respond to crisis that impacts populations of international students, may require collaborative work with campus partners
- Collaboratively work with the Manager, International Student Experience, the Communications team and other senior leaders to strategize, develop and execute communication plans that create awareness and communicates supports, resources and services available to international students

Research and Evaluation

- Maintains a strong understanding of the international student experience at the University of Waterloo through review and interpretation of international student data

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- Maintains current knowledge base about international populations including international populations who are new to Canadian culture, English language-learners, graduate international students and upper-year international students; and uses knowledge and best practice in these areas to provide support to students
- Coordinate the collection of information for the purpose of data collection, ongoing improvement and to provide recommendations for student support initiatives
- Reads and interprets statistical information and data relevant to international student experience and international student supports and services to assess student needs, efficiency, relevancy, and for reporting purposes.
- Maintains deep knowledge about the unique needs of Waterloo international students particularly in the areas of sociocultural integration and barriers to student success
- Strong understanding of the international student experience at the University of Waterloo
- Responsible for and provide support for the planning, execution, monitoring, and reporting of student support related activities.
- Development, execution and revision of project plans, communication initiatives, reports, presentations and other project documents as requested.
- Supports the Manager, International Student Experience by conducting research, summarizing information, collecting reporting data and drafting reports relevant to the international student experience

**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 Bachelor's degree required; Completion of a Masters degree or equivalent education and experience in a related field is an asset.

Experience

- 3+ years experience working in post-secondary student services setting providing one-on-one support to students, preference given to candidates with experience supporting international students
- Experience working in an intercultural setting, with sensitivity to culture, language and politics when supporting students navigate complex issues
- Experience in case management or similar field
- Experience working as part of a team and independently
- Experience developing supports and support assessments from initiation to execution, developing communication strategies and report writing within a post-secondary environment.
- Program/project management experience is an asset
- Priority will be given to candidates with lived experience, specifically those who identify as members of the following designated groups: candidates who are racialized, former international students, women, persons with a disability; as well as members of the LGBTQ2+ communities

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Able to cultivate strong and influential relationships across the university campus. The Specialist will be required to deliver outstanding supports to international students, demonstrating care and commitment to international student success

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- Superior interpersonal skills including the ability to use tact and diplomacy while interacting with students and a wide range of internal and external contacts, particularly in engaging in challenging conversations
- Strong communication skills, both written and oral for the preparation of reports and making presentations.
- Ability to work on confidential and sensitive matters with tact and discretion
- Demonstrated initiative and strong skills in problem solving and decision making
- Highly knowledgeable and up to date on best practices, literature and research related to international students and their experiences at post-secondary institutions, familiarity with the unique needs of international students, nuances in international populations, challenges that affect their adjustment, integration, and barriers to success.
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively with diverse populations of students and intercultural sensitivity
- Proven ability to take initiative and be both creative and flexible.
- Demonstrated ability to use and interpret data to make decisions, and communicate results effectively to various stakeholders
- Proven ability to manage multiple demands, stay organized and prioritize effectively
- Intermediate skills in the following programs: MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Internal contacts: The International Student Supports Specialist works closely with other staff in the SSO to ensure a coordinated and integrated approach to international student supports. In addition to international students, the Specialist works closely with contacts in Housing and Residences, Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association, Graduate Student Association, Campus Wellness, AccessAbility Services, Waterloo International, Student Awards and Financial Aid, Student Financial Services and multiple contacts within the Faculties and Affiliated University Colleges. External Contacts: The Specialist works with community supports and resources
- **Level of Responsibility:** Responsible for ensuring the professional provision of student supports and advising services to students with minimum supervision. Representing the SSO in on-campus wide strategies and initiatives and developing relationships with external off-campus stakeholders. The Specialist works with a moderate degree of autonomy.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** The Specialist will often make decisions in collaboration with others but will also be required to make independent decisions about the most effective methods of advising students; determines the optimum course of action to solve problems and to exert a positive influence on other stakeholders.
- **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. Requires close attention to detail, thoroughness, and accuracy.
- **Working Environment:** Much of the time is spent sitting in a comfortable position, located in a comfortable indoor area, although may work out of various locations. There is a frequent need to give close attention to detail such as written material and information given verbally by students. There are times of high demand for service, and there is always a requirement for thoroughness and accuracy. Some exposure to disagreeable conditions where it is sometimes necessary to convey negative or unwelcome information to persons and to meet with persons who are upset and angry. Evening and weekend work is sometimes required, particularly during August and September, including Labor Day weekend