

Job Description

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| Job Title: | Research Analyst |
| Department: | Campus Housing |
| Reports To: | Assistant Director, Student Development and Residence Experience |
| Jobs Reporting: | Student Researchers (5) |
| Salary Grade: | USG 9 |
| Effective Date: | March 2020 |

Primary Purpose

The Research Analyst is responsible for leading and supporting all research activities in order to assist the department's senior leaders, managers and staff in evidence-based decision making and in understanding recent trends in practice and scholarly research findings regarding the impact of on-campus living experiences on student learning. They are knowledgeable about student development theoretical approaches in higher education, educational strategies and relevant research and literature on university students and residential experiences. The Research Analyst is accountable to the Assistant Director for leading research projects and supporting data analysis which inform operational and strategic evidence-based planning, evaluation, assessment, communications, and decision-making for the purpose of assuring the department's mission and vision attainment.

The Research Analyst is part of an interdependent and collaborative team committed to integrating the student voice and connecting research and evaluation to our practice in order to continuously build on our understanding of our students' wants and needs and on our knowledge of how living environments contribute to student success. Our curricular approach facilitates the design and delivery of experiences and services so that students achieve priority developmental and educational outcomes.

Key Accountabilities

Research Planning, Implementation and Analysis

- Conduct research projects to investigate and evaluate the impact of residence experiences on student success and to assess the effectiveness of activities that support student learning in a residential environment.
- Develop and apply appropriate research methods into experiences related to a student's living environment in order to evaluate and document evidence of student learning.
- Design qualitative and quantitative instruments and processes appropriate for data collection tasks for the purpose of informing strategic decisions.
- Collect qualitative and quantitative insights from key stakeholders in the department, across the university, and from higher education associations (e.g. OACUHO, ACUHO-I, NSSE, ACPA, NASPA) to optimize findings.
- Collect, analyze and use research data and findings from surveys, interviews, literature reviews, and other primary sources for the purpose of informing operational effectiveness.
- Engage in effective and efficient research project management.

Communicating Research Insights

- Prepare reports of findings for both internal and external distribution.
- Ensure that research findings and statistical information is conveyed in an easily understandable manner using appropriate reporting formats and software programs for a wide range of specific audiences so that it can effectively inform practice and strategic decisions at various levels.

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- Use advanced evaluation frameworks and tools to optimize research findings.
- Effectively communicate to people from a wide array of experiences any limitations of the data to avoid misinterpretation of the results.
- Make formal and informal presentations to individuals and groups, both internally and externally, to generate awareness of research results and to inform practice and decision-making.
- Produce reports and make presentations that contribute to the knowledge base of higher education, specifically university student housing, student affairs, and personal development in general.
- Assist management with writing interim and cumulative program and activity reports, memos, data summaries, abstracts, and publications to provide research results for both internal and external stakeholders.
- Be knowledgeable and raise awareness of current trends, publications, and advancements in research related to university student housing, learning environments at post-secondary institutions, and student development.

Collaboration and Consultation

- Support the Assistant Director in fostering a culture within SDRX, and the management team in general, of research informed practice, processes and structures.
- Seek out opportunities to support and expand research opportunities across campus with institutional data as well as relevant faculty member-based research.
- Serve as a departmental expert on and advisor for the management, configuration, and interpretation of research data analysis, including software, collection procedures, and evaluation techniques, providing instruction, advising and coaching to managers and staff.
- Generate new ideas and proposals for collaborative (institutional, provincial, national, international) grant funded, endorsed and/or sponsored research projects, based on the department's vision and priorities, the University's strategic plan, and trends in higher education student affairs and/or student housing associations' research priorities.
- Consult with SDRX Managers, department project leads, the Office of Research, and Institutional Analysis and Planning to ensure that data is collected, interpreted, and reported in accordance with University policy, standards and higher education best practices.
- Contribute to relevant department and campus committees and groups, providing awareness and insight on the research proven benefits of residence on student learning.

**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

- Master's degree required, preferred from a social science field, emphasizing research and evaluation and/or assessment, such as psychology, social psychology, sociology, higher education, student affairs or related degree.

Experience

- An applied social scientist with a minimum of three years in a research/evaluation role, experience with program design, logic model building, evaluation plan creation, as well as strong skills in data analysis and the use of databases.
- Expertise in both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques, data management and statistical reporting.

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- Experience with both scholarly and applied research methods.
- Experience satisfying ethical review procedures required when conducting research.
- Demonstrated experience with project management, leading teams and delegating to achieve results through teamwork.
- A practiced and confident report writer and presenter of research findings.
- Highly proficient in the use of SQL, Access, Excel, and SharePoint; as well as the use of statistical software packages such as SPSS and/or SAS.

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Specific areas of knowledge and focus include but are not limited to: residential environment literature, learning and cognitive developmental, academic classifications, unique student populations, high-impact practices, and academic progression and achievement.
- Strong statistical analysis skills, program evaluation and data management skills.
- Knowledge of social science research methods and familiarity with student affairs/higher education assessment philosophies and practices is preferred.
- Strong skills and experience in both quantitative and qualitative research (methodological design, instrument selection, statistical analysis, results interpretation).
- Demonstrated ability to maintain an up-to-date understanding of trends, publications, and research of student housing, learning environments, and student development theory.
- Demonstrated experience employing a participatory approach to research, and working collaboratively and effectively in a team setting.
- Demonstrated level of maturity, competence, diplomacy and professionalism.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills demonstrated through reporting to a variety of stakeholders at various levels.
- Knowledge of emerging trends in university student populations.
- Interested in, curious about, and motivated by research related to student learning in higher education and more specifically within campus residential environments.
- Demonstrated complex problem-solving skills with ability to work autonomously.
- Self-motivated, able to take initiative and to identify research topics and opportunities related to supporting and informing the department's mission and vision.
- Capable of spotting patterns and trends and the ability to distill large amounts of information into succinct, clear actions and recommendations.
- Ability to influence, negotiate and resolve conflicts.

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Internally this position will interact regularly with the Associate Director and SDRX Managers (Residence Life, Residence Learning, and Residence Services), the Project Manager, Strategic Initiatives and Assessment, as well as the department's Senior Management Team. This position will collaborate often with other staff in the Department of Campus Housing and will occasionally interact with campus partners (IAP, Office of Research, MUR, Registrar's Office, SSO, WatCACE etc.), and colleagues at other universities and colleges across North America.
- **Level of Responsibility:** This position is responsible for all of the accountabilities listed above.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** This position is responsible and accountable for executing all SDRX research-related activities and decisions in consultation with Assistant Director, Student Development and Residence Experience, SDRX Managers, and the department's Senior Management Team.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** The responsibilities of this role occur primarily in an office setting and require frequent use of a computer. Some infrequent duties require moderate physical demands resulting in slight fatigue, strain, or risk of injury.

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- **Working Environment:** Regular working hours, some evening/weekend work required. Minimal exposure to disagreeable conditions. The role involves some exposure to stress as a result of pressures associated with handling multiple ongoing demands, time management, and priority setting. There may be unusual hours or schedules, multiple and/or tight deadlines beyond one's control and constant interruptions (i.e. phone calls, emails and unplanned but urgent requests) that are impacted by varying student volumes at different times of year resulting from working within a student residential environment.