#### Trent University LogoOPSEU JOB DESCRIPTION

**Job Title:** Program Administrator

**Job Number:** A-503 | VIP: 1997

**Band:** OPSEU-6

**Department:** Environmental & Life Sciences Graduate Program

**Supervisor Title:** Program Director

**Last Reviewed:**  June 17, 2024

#### **Job Purpose:**

Under the direction of the Graduate Program Director and in collaboration with the program Administrative Assistant the Program Administrator is responsible for the management of data, records, implementation of procedures, policies, applications and program directives as it relates to students, faculty and adjunct faculty. They are responsible for the co-ordination and implementation of M.Sc. and Ph.D. thesis defences for the program. They are responsible for advising graduate students, faculty, adjunct faculty and current students regarding regulations, protocols and interprets policy and procedures. Responsible for the course timetable, course registration, instructor postings and grade sheets. In cooperation with the School of Graduate Studies is responsible for the organization of OGS and NSERC scholarship applications from students in the program. Is the representative for the program on the Symons graduate seminar series and is the program library coordinator.

#### Key Activities:

* Responsible for co-ordination of graduate student thesis/dissertation defences for both M.Sc. and Ph.D. students, candidacy and conversion exams. Provides one on one guidance to students preparing for their thesis defence or their candidacy or conversion exams. Assists students in the development of timelines for completion and reviews regulations and protocols in setting up their examinations. In collaboration with the Administrative Assistant organizes all required forms, contacts external examiners, schedules defences with external and internal members of committee, sets up video and/or audio conference (if applicable). Organizes all program required examinations for students, co-ordinates Chairs for thesis defences, Ph.D. candidacy exams and conversion exams. Reviews regulations and final defence/examination reports to be forwarded to the graduate studies office. Liaises with external examiners and adjunct faculty from government, and other outside institutions and universities. Reviews and approves all travel expenses incurred by external examiners and submits them for payment.
* Provides support to graduate students, giving counsel and advice. Informs and advises Director of any developing situations. Addresses and advises potential new graduate students, Trent and adjunct faculty, current students, and the public. Answers questions, responds to complaints, advises students and faculty of potential courses of action, addresses concerns, provides program and university information by interpreting policy and regulations. Acts as an effective representative and spokesperson for the program. Receives, interprets and responds to verbal and written information with clarity. Provides advice and leadership by recommending changes and improvements to existing program policy, protocols and procedures with a view to ensuring maximum program efficiency and client satisfaction. Conducts part of orientation presentation to incoming program graduate students.
* Responsible for tracking students and ensuring students are registered each term, including monitoring enrolment, leaves of absences, etc., including collection and transmission of paperwork (registration forms, financial support forms, annual progress reports – see below).
  + Monitoring times to completion for all graduate students; notifying students if they are required to apply for an extension.
  + RFA’s, etc.
  + Responsible for ensuring progress reports are submitted annually for all graduate students; this requires liaising with all graduate supervisors and students (both need to sign) to ensure completion of forms.
  + Tracking of graduate student information, including committee meeting dates, structure of supervisory committees, meeting dates, etc. and entry of data into graduate student database.
  + Grade submission for all graduate courses to office of graduate studies; monitors all outstanding grades/incompletes.
  + Manages program scholarships. Responsible for coordinating the scholarship committees and student applications for the program scholarships. Providing the final list of winners to the graduate studies office.
* Responsible for coordination of course timetable. Working with the program Director they are responsible for putting together the course offerings and organizing times and locations for courses. Liaise with faculty and adjuncts and formulates schedules for classes. Manages enrolment, maintains a historical collection of syllabus and course offerings as required for program OCGS governmental review. Updates calendar copy. Also responsible for organizing the program executive meetings, taking minutes and providing data and information as needed to the executive and particular to the program director.
* Manages all graduate student space for ELS students. Allocates office space, provides key codes and keys. Arranges for repairs and maintenance. Purchases all desks and office equipment. Purchases computers, furniture, speciality software and works closely with IT and communications. Responsible for management of program budgets and library coordinator. Manages and makes all purchases for the program. Authorizes all program reimbursements to students. Advises director of program capital needs and provides him/her with annual projected budget. Working with faculty and students the program administrator is responsive for purchasing materials for program holdings in Bata Library. They are also responsible for the library budget.

#### Education Required:

* University Degree (Honours).

#### Experience/Qualifications Required:

* Two (2) years of related experience in an academic environment.
* Demonstrated program solving abilities.
* Demonstrated proficiency in the use of MS Office (specifically Word, Excel, and Access) and Colleague. Experience with computer networked environments, Internet and web browsers.
* Ability to maintain confidentiality
* Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
* Demonstrated excellent interpersonal and customer service skills, with the ability to interact effectively with students, faculty, office staff and the wider community.
* Excellent organizational and time management skills. Ability to work accurately in stressful conditions with multiple demands, tight deadlines and changing priorities.

#### Supervision:

* No formal supervision of others is required.

**Job Evaluation Factors:**

##### Analytical Reasoning

Ability to problem solve in stressful situations.

I.e.: student comes in highly agitated by breakdown in relationship with Supervisor. They are afraid of how this will impact their thesis, their research and ultimately their ability to obtain a reference for a future job. You need to be able to calm the student down, really listen to them and sort through what they are saying. Evaluate the impact and scope of the problem and provide solutions or avenues they can explore to assist in a resolution.

Advising faculty regarding intake of potential new students.

I.e.: faculty may have positions open in their labs for graduate students. They frequently bring potential students in to speak with the Administrator about the program, funding levels, what it is like to be a graduate student at Trent and particularly the graduate program. The faculty member will also discuss the availability of graduate teaching assistantships and other means of program financial assistance for potential students (international fee waivers, program scholarships, etc.)

##### Decision Making

The program Administrator must work with a very high degree of independence and initiative. They are expected to provide direction to students in distress, advising faculty looking for new students, managing thesis defences, making all program purchases including library acquisitions for the program collection.

They are required to manage the program academic timetable, organize classes (with both Trent students and students from other universities), work with instructors and manage enrolment. They are also required to organize and complete projects depending upon the time of year. This includes admissions, orientation, special events, scholarship competitions, convocation, etc.

If a student is looking at dropping out of the program and ultimately out of the University. The Administrator listens to the student, and suggests a course of action which they believe will rectify the situation and solve the problem. It has contained in the past a plan which sees the student and the Administrator working with their course instructor to receive an extension to complete academic work, with their supervisor to develop a plan to complete research along a timeline and with the student to manage their time better. The Administrator followed up with the student on a weekly basis for a few months and ensured a positive outcome. This course of action allowed the student to reduce their stress and see they were capable of completing their requirements. They were then able to graduate.

The Administrator is also advising on any major purchasing decisions for the program. For example, the program has a computer lab specifically for their graduate students. This lab is a standalone facility which allows the students to run research specific software programs. It requires all equipment to be purchased and maintained by the program. The Administrator met with the science facilities computer technician and discussed the requirements and budgetary constraints of the computer lab. The Administrator took a lead role in purchasing new computers, a networked printer, processor, electrical, data lines and furniture. This allowed the Administrator to showcase the computer lab to potential students and allowed the current students a much better, more up to date facility in which to work.

##### Impact

Every day the Administrator meets with students under stress. Creating plans of action enabling students to reduce their stress levels and complete their academic and research work allows the program and ultimately the university to retain students. Student retention is a major concern for the university and our overall financial picture. Providing an atmosphere of empowerment and wellbeing for the students gives students who, when graduated, will recommend Trent to others.

University regulations require an external examiner for each Ph.D. defence. The Administrator acts as the point person and contract person for the program and the university when working with an external examiner. The environmental & life sciences graduate program has completed 50-60 or more defences and exams annually. If the Administrator does a poor job with the external examiner the program and the university will suffer degrading of their reputation with other universities and agencies. The student may not receive a well-executed defence. They may have undue stress or delays because of mishandled logistics or treatment of the external examiner.

The Administrator independently schedules all M.Sc. and Ph.D. defences, conversion and candidacy exams with the examining committees.

Another example of the impact of actions and decisions made by the program Administrator involved the discussions with potential students and supervisors. The Administrator plays a central role in matching potential students and supervisors. Supervisors contact the Administrator on a regular basis for updates and information on prospective students. The Administrator reviews the students’ application, and discusses the program, regulation, requirements, what the expectations of the student might be among other things. It allows the student to ask questions they may not feel comfortable asking a prospective supervisor. It also provides the student with questions they should be asking a prospective supervisor. The supervisor then meets with the Administrator to get her/his impression of the potential student. If the Administrator feels the student is not a good fit due to their background or possibly personality conflicts and does not mention this to the supervisor it could create real problems in their labs. As well, the Administrator may see a student who is really ready for graduate work and strongly feels this student will be a great asset to the faculty lab.

##### Responsibility for the Work of Others

The Administrator is responsible for all departmental student and faculty data.

##### Communication

Internal:

* The Program Director
* The Program Executive
* The Program Faculty
* Adjunct faculty
* The School of Graduate Studies
* The Chairs of; Chemistry, Geography, ERS, Biology and Forensics.
* Communications Department
* Assistant to the VP and Dean of Arts & Science

##### Motor/ Sensory Skills

* Hand dexterity for keyboarding and writing
* Filing of paper and occasionally moving boxes of files
* Lifting presentation equipment and doing set up
* Hearing for phone, meetings and discussions
* Sight to see the computer screen and presentations
* Vocal to talk or use computer activated software

##### Effort

Mental:

* Able to sustain concentration in a noisy, frequently disruptive work environment from various sources, i.e. phone, students, faculty.

Physical:

* Typing for long periods, answering emails and/or writing reports.
* Bending to file documents.
* Carrying and lifting of computer or presentation equipment.
* Sitting for long periods of time.

##### Working Conditions

Physical:

* Sustained keyboarding.

Psychological:

* Distressed or angry students and/or faculty.