

Support Job Position Description

Section I: Position information

Effective date	2026-07-01	☒ Update only	☐ Classification review
Position title	Graduate Advising Specialist		
Position number	999579		
Classification level	Range 1		
Position affiliation	AUPE		
Location	Virtual		
Department	Graduate Support Unit, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences		
Reports to	Coordinator, Graduate Student Services, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences		

Position summary

Briefly describe the main purpose(s) of the position.

This position requires multi-disciplinary skills to assume responsibility for the following:

- Responsible for administrative functions and processes for the graduate programs within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences which include one doctoral program, 2 master's programs, 4 graduate diplomas, 2 graduate certificates and one professional development program.
- Act as a primary liaison for graduate students, ensuring a seamless experience across the entire student lifecycle, including application and admission and program curriculum planning towards degree completion.
- Administrative support to the Coordinator, Graduate Program Directors, Associate Dean(s), and Dean, as appropriate.
- Work with a high degree of autonomy and is expected to work with a high degree of confidentiality.
- Must be able to determine priorities and have excellent time management skills.

Duties and responsibilities

Organize by key responsibility area and include % of time spent where possible.

Administrative Activities

(1) Student Inquiries- 15%

- Primary contact for graduate students in FHSS requires detailed knowledge of the entire cycle for all FHSS Graduate programs so that appropriate action can be taken on request, or an appropriate referral made if necessary. Note that there are important but subtle differences between the programs.

- Expected to have an understanding of other Athabasca University programs to ask appropriate questions to determine whether the graduate programs are the best fit for the person, based on their expressed interests.
- Act as a key contact for prospective and current students, conducting advising sessions regarding admission requirements and program curriculum.
- Records all student contact in SRM to maintain history.
- Assists prospective students with interpretation of AU regulations, policies, and requirements.

(2) Student Services- 75%

This position is responsible for student-related administrative processes for FHSS Graduate programs. These activities may include the following:

Application and Admission

- Advise students on application and admission processes and deadlines.
- Maintain status of applicant files for Admissions Committee.
- Handle follow up questions by students and Admissions Committee.
- Prepare related correspondence for offers of admission or rejection.
- Maintain application and admission files in AU Grad Apply.
- Contribute to continual improvements in utilizing AU Grad Apply.

Student Records

- Process Final Grade Reports in BANNER and/or GRADES.
- Update Banner with changes in student contact information and submits changes to Registry when necessary.
- Maintain accurate electronic files for students as needed.

Advising

- Provide in-depth information about FHSS Graduate programs including, where applicable, focus areas and course options available within each area.
- Assist current and prospective students with interpretation of AU/FHSS Graduate regulations, policies, procedures, and requirements.
- Facilitate student course selection and program planning based on the student's profile, in consultation with faculty members as needed.
- Formulate and distribute program plans for students.
- Refer students/prospective students appropriately to other programs or departments as needed.
- Refer students/prospective students to course-specific FAQ's, course syllabus websites and other online resources.
- Maintain database of student profiles, program plans and record of advice provided.
- Manage Digital Thesis and Project Room (DTPR) submissions.
- Processes degree audits in preparation for graduation.
- Maintain student status lists and follow-up with students who are not meeting program status.

Course Registrations

- Advise students on the availability of courses offered and registration deadlines.
- Process, monitor and maintain course registrations (individualized and paced study) for both program and non-program students.
- Maintain a “wait list” for non-program students and offers space in paced study courses, as space becomes available.
- Handle follow-ups required with Finance, Registry and Learning Services (Tutorial).

Withdrawals/Extensions/Letters of Permission/Transfer Credit/Learning Contracts/Study Plans

- Provide information to graduate students on relevant procedures.
- Process requests in conjunction with the appropriate Program Director as required.

Student Fees

- Provide alternate payment options as needed.
- Verify with Finance any discrepancies on student ledgers and takes steps to correct.

(3) General Office Administration- 10%

- Internal and external committees as needed
- Back up support within the FHSS Graduate office as needed
- Accept, from time to time, such additional responsibilities, duties and assignments as may be appropriate or required.

Occupational health and safety**Employees:**

Responsible to participate in the AU OHS program as required.

Supervisors:

Responsible for awareness of one's OHS Responsibilities as an AU employee and supervisor, for participating in the AU OHS Program as required, and for ensuring the participation of employees in the AU OHS Program as required.

See: <https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li008>

Classification factors**Context and complexity**

1. Extensive knowledge of all FHSS Graduate programs to advise students accordingly. Good understanding of the curriculum, and familiarity with how university students develop a plan of study.
2. Assist with course registration process with administrative staff, Program Directors, Course Production Coordinator, Finance and Registry.

3. Must work on several diverse tasks at any given time with frequent interruptions under timelines and routinely revise priorities while maintaining accuracy.
4. The ability to work independently within a team setting while recognizing the need for keeping others informed as required.
5. The ability to manage numerous activities and show initiative in problem solving.
6. Responsible for all student related aspects of the administration for all FHSS Graduate programs.
7. Contribute to the creation and continual improvement of procedures to facilitate the efficient operation of the administration of the FHSS graduate programs.
8. Has access to confidential materials in the performance of responsibilities. Is required to uphold confidentiality and to conform to the regulations and guidelines as outlined in the University policies. Confidential information includes:
 - i. Student records including official transcripts
 - ii. Reports that contain sensitive information
 - iii. Program files
9. Must demonstrate diplomacy and tact in all interaction with prospective and current students, Faculty, and staff.
10. Must have an excellent knowledge of AU policies and procedures as they relate to the FHSS graduate programs to inform students.
11. Must be able to make quick, responsible decisions and respond quickly to both routine and unusual requests.
12. Must be able to obtain, assess, review, and verify all information that relates to a student's program of study.
13. Must demonstrate the ability to liaise with other university departments and staff in a professional manner.
14. Must be knowledgeable of the various AU platforms to ensure accuracy of use and identify potential workflow barriers.

Work problems

1. Effectively deal with students and prospective students who face barriers to post secondary education with respect, diplomacy and professionalism.
2. Must be able to differentiate between providing information, advising, and counseling, and when required, direct appropriate questions to FHSS professionals.
3. Responsible for the organization of a wide variety of complex work on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis to ensure efficient and timely operations.
4. Must demonstrate flexibility in managing frequent interruptions in a fast-paced environment with a heavy workload.
5. Must have exceptional problem-solving skills, and knowledge of when to act independently or seek assistance from other staff and stakeholders.
6. Must demonstrate accuracy and currency in maintaining student records.
7. Must understand the implications of and avoidance of errors regarding student records and advice.

Authority

This position is responsible for the following:

1. Respond to requests concerning graduate programs in FHSS and, when required, consults with supervisor and/or appropriate FHSS professionals to complete the request.
2. Exercise independent judgment in the assessment of program student needs or when required, consults with supervisor and/or appropriate FHSS professionals to complete the request. Will use initiative in the resolution of student problems.
3. Take responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of information relayed to prospective and current students and other organizations as error can have an impact on the University and student.
4. Collect and process student fees as needed.
5. Take responsibility for the organization of personal workload to maintain strict deadlines.
6. Work independently under a minimal amount of supervision.
7. Errors in advice given to students will have a serious impact on the student's academic career (i.e. unnecessary expense, delay of graduation). Must exercise good judgment and decision-making abilities in the interpretation and communication with students and prospective students.
8. Work independently under a minimal amount of supervision.
9. Errors in entering information in various computer programs used will have a serious impact on students.

Contacts and communications

1. Communicate with all levels of staff (management, academic, professional and support) on matters relating to the FHSS graduate programs.
2. Communicate with prospective, program and non-program students in the FHSS graduate programs, providing administrative assistance in all aspects of the learning journey.
3. Considerable daily contact with students, prospective students and other AU departments.
4. Will have access to extremely confidential material and must adhere to guidelines and procedures established by AU in accordance with Alberta's Protection of Privacy Act (POPA).

Signatures for section I

Incumbent signature		Date Select a date.
Supervisor signature		Date 2026-07-21

Section II: Qualifications

Qualifications

Includes education, experience, skills, abilities, and any other special qualifications required. The qualifications relate to the position not the incumbent.

1. A post secondary education in office administration with a minimum of 2 years experience within a post secondary educational institution. Undergraduate degree or college certificate preferred. An equivalent combination of education and experience may be considered.
2. Strong digital literacy and capability to troubleshoot basic technical issues independently.
3. Excellent interpersonal, administrative, and organizational skills. Must be able to coordinate several activities maintain accuracy along and meet strict deadlines.
4. The ability to work independently with minimum supervision, and to show initiative with problem solving.
5. Ability to work as part of a team to facilitate the student's learning process.
6. Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
7. Extensive knowledge of AU's policies and procedures, especially those that pertain to the FHSS graduate programs.

Signatures for sections I and II

Department Head signature		Date 2026-07-24
Executive Officer signature		Date 2026-08-10
Human Resources review		Date 2026-08-18