Athabasca University

Professional Job Position Description

Section I: Position information

Effective date 2022-06-01 ☐ Update only ☐ Classification review	
Position title	Program Officer, Faculty of Science and Technology
Position number	998563, 999720, 999889
Classification level	C
Position affiliation	☒ AUFA ☐ Excluded
Location	Home Office
Department	Faculty of Science and Technology
Reports to	Senior Associate Dean, Student Experience, Faculty of Science and Technology

Position summary

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

The Program Officer, Faculty of Science and Technology (FST) is an integral role for the excellence of the programs offered in the Faculty of Science and Technology and the overall student experience within the Faculty. The incumbent has full responsibilities for the management of programs and initiatives under the Senior Associate Dean, Student Experience portfolio.

The PO manages consultations for sensitive student issues and provides administrative counsel to Program Directors, Chairs, Associate Deans, and Deans on program development, marketing and technical barriers for students. Therefore, this position is a key resource for program related issues, processes, quality assurance, and decision-making with respect to the Faculty of Science and Technology program offerings. The incumbent will collaborate and advise a diverse group of staff, faculty, and external units while managing various activities, such as Program Reviews, new Program development, and regulation changes. While participating in the various Program Council's within the Faculty, the incumbent will provide recommendations on FST program offerings.

This position is responsible for developing and implementing short- and long-term plans and strategies to recruit students and market FST programs. Thus, this position will strengthen the engagement levels of prospective and current students from pre-enrollment to post-graduation to increase enrollment, improve completion rates and improve the overall experience of our students within the Faculty of Science and Technology.

The incumbent will require a high degree of professionalism and tact while performing this position. Reporting to the Senior Associate Dean, Student Experience, FST, the individual will be involved in various student and staff matters that requires a high degree of confidentiality and discretion. The individual will also be involved in various projects, budget analysis, coordination, and administrative duties, and will be required to prioritize and multi-task.

Duties and responsibilities

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

1. GENERAL MANAGEMENT

On behalf of a FST Associate Dean portfolio:

- Provides consultation, support and assistance to their assigned Associate Dean and Program Directors, as required.
- Coordinates partnerships and affiliations (e.g.: RAIC, public school boards (dual-credit).
- Plans and coordinates the logistics for a variety of educational opportunities and skill development for students (i.e. orientations, workshops, stem, Mitacs, work integrated learning opportunities (WIL), etc.).
- Serves as a contact with other FST teams, AU Departments, and collaborative partners while coordinating initiatives.
- Investigates, analyzes, mediates, resolves and responds to administrative concerns or as delegated by the Associate Dean or Program Director.
- Manages project activities (e.g.:. new initiatives, enhancements to processes/programs, etc.), including but not limited to, seeking feedback/approval from applicable stakeholders, the assignment of tasks to project team members, and the resolution of issues and competing priorities.
- Generation of documents (reports, process flows, project documentation, templates, procedures, etc.)
- Supervision of casuals, term staff, and contractors.
- Investigates and resolves e-text issues for students and faculty and also liaises with publisher to minimize course interruptions.

2. PROGRAM PLANNING/COORDINATION

- Plays a counseling role in program development, influencing program strategies developed by program directors and councils, suggesting solutions and balancing administrative constraints against the need for growth and addressing the challenges of delivery.
- Management of academic program reviews, setting up meetings, ensuring all needed documents are submitted, editing submitted documents as needed and ensuring the review is submitted to the correct council and tracking approvals.
- Facilitates program updates, and program plans; ensuring program issues and concerns are mitigated and recommended changes/enhancements are implemented.
- Analyzes data (e.g.: program health) and generates comprehensive reports to aid in program reviews, assessment, and the recommendations for program enhancements.
- Prepare program budgets and financial documents for new program proposals.
- Collaborates with Program Directors in the development of documentation for governance briefings on program initiatives and regulation changes.
- Oversee the program regulation change process, including development, revision, approval implementation and communication, etc.
- Communicates program updates to student advisors and other relevant centers (e.g. Registrar's Office).
- Consults with the Office of the Registrar regarding program changes.

3. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT/RETENTION COORDINATION

- Facilitate FST engagement/retention strategies and initiatives to ensure the academic success of students.
- Assist with focused marketing campaigns for FST courses and programs.
- Monitor & coordinate social media communications on behalf of the faculty.
- Coordinate the contacting, engagement, and follow-up on select cohorts of non-start students and help formulate remedies.
- Maintain a database of FST alumni to establish continuing contact with them on new course and program offerings.
- Collaborates with University Relations on mentorship initiatives and implements best practices within FST.

4. ADMINISTRATION/COMMITTEE SUPPORT

- Manages assigned Associate's Dean's calendar.
- Coordinates their assigned Associate Dean's meetings and schedule.
- Coordinates assigned Associate Dean portfolio (e.g.: academic misconduct, leaning outcome assessment, ARBRI).
- Provide FST Centre meeting support, including meeting scheduling, agenda creation, and the taking of minutes.
- Provide meeting support for other Faculty teams and committees, as assigned.

5. OTHER

- Contributes to University committees as applicable.
- Provides feedback and recommendations for process and program enhancements.
- Provide support for the Faculty's governance committee meetings as assigned.

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

Communication

The incumbent will act in the capacity of a professional level consultant to students, staff, faculty, and FST leadership and will provide policy and procedural clarification and guidance.

The position requires outstanding oral and written communications skills with the ability to deal with clients, including difficult ones, confidently, empathetically, and knowledgeably. The incumbent must have excellent problem-solving skills to handle a wide variety of both routine and unfamiliar situations.

The incumbent must be able to gather and analyse information from various sources; create and deliver presentations and reports; develop and maintain effective communication within FST and between FST, other AU units and external partners.

Must work in a fast-paced environment under changing conditions with very high demand for services so must have excellent communication, time management, and interpersonal skills.

The incumbent must be respectful, tactful, and able to maintain a high level of confidentiality as they will handle sensitive information relating to student investigations.

Supervision

Supervision of casuals, term staff, and external contractual subject matter experts. Indirectly supervises project team members and is responsible for the output of the team's performance.

Impact of service or product

Responsible for the resolution of student program related issues and concerns and for managing processes and coordinating decisions with respect to the academic programming within the Faculty, WIL, student mentorship programs, and student integrity investigations.

Responsible for the coordination of FST projects that has a significant impact on FST operations and the quality of student programing and initiatives.

Participates in strategic planning initiatives and the development/implementation of new services and programs that directly impact the student experience through all stages of the student lifecycle.

Adherence and planning to deadlines and timelines are critical to this position.

Independence of action

The incumbent should be able to provide solutions and bring swift resolution to problems in complex situations on a daily basis. Major new initiatives and proposals require review from the Senior Associate Dean, Student Experience, Faculty of Science and Technology before proceeding. Must be able to prioritize all work assigned by the Senior Associate Dean, Program Directors, and independent duties. Balancing and accommodating changing priorities of all key stakeholders is necessary.

Complexity

This position operates in a fast-paced environment with multiple projects and initiatives typically occurring simultaneously, along with daily requirements and deadlines. Both adaptability and flexibility are required.

The position provides counsel and advice to FST leadership positions and the broader university community, as well as guidance to program students. The incumbent must have extensive knowledge in policy, procedure, and program details and is required to evaluate and recommend changes and enhancements to these documents. The incumbent is considered the subject matter expert for the overall program details and processes they are assigned to.

The incumbent must be able to effectively research, gather, and analyze information from a variety of sources, to develop and prepare reports, presentations, and correspondence.

Planning

Responsible for assessing program effectiveness in terms of student engagement and developing and implementing strategy to increase engagement levels. The ability to plan and prioritize work is integral to this position. The incumbent is responsible for ensuring accurate project planning and execution.

The incumbent must be able to investigate, analyze, mediate, and resolve complex issues and concerns delegated by the Dean, Associate Deans and Program Directors in the decision making for various University initiatives and programs.

Signatures for section I

Incumbent signature		Date Select a date.
Supervisor signature		Date Select a date.

Section II: Qualifications

Qualifications

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

An undergraduate degree, preferably in education and/or administration, and at three years' progressive administration experience required.

Experience with post-secondary and/or adult education is preferred.

Experience with program coordination, student engagement, and project coordination in a fast past environment with competing priorities/deadlines is required.

A combination of education and experience deemed acceptable to the Athabasca University will be considered.

Knowledge of the Alberta post-secondary system and distance education is desirable. Above average communication skills, both written and oral is required, as well as strong negotiation and dispute resolution skills are required.

Experience in supervision of staff who have various skills and levels of responsibility is necessary.

Signatures for sections I and II

Department Head signature		Date Select a date.
Executive Officer signature		Date Select a date.
Human Resources review		Date Select a date.