

Support Job Position Description

Section I: Position information

Effective date	2026-05-12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Update only	<input type="checkbox"/> Classification review
Position title	Senior Academic Advisor		
Position number	999485		
Classification level	R1		
Position affiliation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AUPE <input type="checkbox"/> Excluded		
Location	Virtual-Alberta		
Department	Learner Support Services		
Reports to	Coordinator, Counselling Services		

Position summary

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

Providing information, academic advising, and related assistance to current program students accessing Athabasca University courses, programs, and services. Advising focus includes certificate, diploma, and undergraduate degree programs.

Duties and responsibilities

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

ACADEMIC ADVISING (70%)

Assisting students and prospective students with academic program planning and in the selection of appropriate courses based on the student's specific needs as indicated by such matters as: interests, programs they have already selected, employment, home and other commitments, and financial situation.

Interpreting institutional student profiles, analyzing the information provided and advising students on course selection based on the information in the student profile and individual program plan, and input received from the student.

Identifying and referring (internally and externally) for opportunities for career, educational and personal counseling, students who need assistance with such matters as: development and clarification of goals, identification of occupational and educational interests, development of a relevant educational plan, selection of appropriate program of study, personal concerns that may affect their studies, skills assessment, credit for prior learning, financial aid assistance, exam services, required accommodations, professional staff, and other student support services as needed.

Screening student files and recognizing the need/benefit for substitutions, exceptions, exemptions and waivers, then processing these in the student information system and student relationship management applications. Screening student files and recognizing the need/benefit for

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Developing and delivering presentations to external agencies or organizations (NACADA, Student Services Conference, etc.) in addition to those provided internally for potential students, other departments/tutors, etc.

Assisting students and prospective students with the interpretation of institutional requirements, policies, procedures, and regulations.

Participating in the development of print-based and online self-help and advising resources for students and potential students.

Representing Athabasca University at events or displays (i.e., Educational Panels) as requested by the coordinator or designate.

INFORMATION SERVICES (20%)

Providing extensive and comprehensive information about programs, courses, requirements, policies, appeals, procedures, and services individually and in groups.

Providing internal referral services to other departments of the University and student referrals to other educational institutions, professional associations, regulatory bodies, or information centers as needed.

OTHER (10%)

Training new staff.

All staff are expected and required to provide backup to other positions regularly.

Serving on internal and external committees as required.

Other job-related duties as assigned by the coordinator or designate.

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

Proficiency in Banner, SRM, Telax, DegreeWorks, O365 applications, Alfresco, Grades, (Outlook, Bookings, Teams).

Knowledge of Alfresco, Grades, Catch My Data and other systems as implemented.

Extensive evaluations and advising on course selection and program planning. This requires the incumbent to be familiar with complex procedures and wide-ranging specialized standards. For example, continuous development of new programs, collaborative arrangements with other institutions, and new regulations for specific programs (i.e., post diploma, etc.).

The incumbent must demonstrate an ability to source, review, and verify information that relates to the student's record or program of study while adhering to FOIP regulations.

Uphold the expectations that a positive reputation of the university is maintained and enhanced. Creating and maintaining a positive, professional image for advising staff and services both internally and externally. Given the ongoing and direct contact with students, tutors, faculty, and staff, a great deal of tact and diplomacy is required.

Accuracy must be ensured when gathering and disseminating information regarding programs of study or student records. Errors could directly impact public relations between the University and its students and stakeholders and impact student's graduation potential.

Participation is required in proposing, developing, and enhancing services to all students (i.e., FAQ's, annual program plan revisions, website updates, webinars, etc.).

The performance of diverse tasks and a high degree of co-operation is required for those working virtually.

The ability to adapt to a higher volume of work during certain periods of the year creates added pressure to keep a steady flow of processing and maintaining service to our students. A tolerance of disruption and an ability to manage time and priorities are required due to changing procedures to meet new needs, pressure of increasing registrations, and the unpredictability of student-generated concerns.

Work problems

Incorporating analytical, interpretive, evaluative and/or constructive thinking in complex situations.

Exhibiting the knowledge required to deal with uncertainty, variable conditions, circumstances with changing procedures, challenging situations, and emerging developments.

Initiative is required in accessing information and providing input or submitting proposals for student service-related issues.

Ensure resolution or referral of student difficulties as they relate to their AU program. Acts as liaison between student and AU departments.

Able to recognize and set own priorities. Organize workload to ensure efficient and timely processing of daily tasks. Responsible for accuracy and completeness of work.

Given the near-virtual environment, the incumbent is required to set up and install their AU system, adapt to changing technology, and proactively resolve challenges prior to contacting IT support.

(DegreeWorks, Banner, SRM)

Develop a functional understanding of Athabasca University policies, procedures, and programs.

Authority

Performs duties with practices and procedures covered by precedent or policy; receives general supervisory review upon completion (opportunity for considerable independent judgment under general supervision).

Exercises independent judgment in the assessment of student needs and the necessity to contact AU departments, other institutions, regulatory bodies, and external agencies.

Represents the University by conveying information and/or decisions regarding policies and procedures to students by telephone, email, virtual/online appointments, and mail. Errors are not readily identifiable and can negatively impact public relations between the university and its contacts.

Research, preparation, and authorization of program plans and related correspondence to students.

Responsible for accuracy and integrity of data entry in various student records systems such as Banner, SRM, and DegreeWorks.

Responsible for organization of personal workload and completeness of work.

Supervisory skills needed.

Contacts and communications

Extensive contact by telephone, email, instant messaging, and virtual meetings with students, staff, and faculty. Maintaining a positive and professional communications approach will enhance relations with prospective learners, current students, alumni, and the wider University community.

Developing initiatives to network with associations and organizations to promote advising services and Athabasca University courses and programs (e.g., Students in Secure Environments, partnerships, collaborations).

The incumbent is required to uphold the utmost degree of confidentiality and to conform to the regulations and guidelines as outlined in Athabasca University policies regarding the collection, dissemination, and confidentiality of information regarding Athabasca University students.

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.

- Undergraduate degree in related area. *
- Minimum of 3 years academic advising experience. *
- One or more years' experience in a post-secondary education setting, preferably within a virtual environment.
- Commitment to establishing positive working relationships within the immediate team and across student services and academic units.
- Strong time management, prioritization, multi-tasking, technical, organizational, communication, and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to think clearly, logically, and search for solutions to potential issues.
- Familiarity and competency with necessary job technology.
- Demonstrated ability to work as a member of a team of highly motivated and experienced individuals.
- Ability to adapt to a fast-paced, constantly evolving, near-virtual environment.
- Honesty, integrity, and commitment to maintaining high professional standards
- The ability to be patient, understanding and helpful given a high degree of contact with students and other representatives is necessary. Working with a team of service providers and assisting students are the critical components of this position.
- Demonstrated use of written and oral communication skills is essential (e.g., listening, problem solving, conflict resolution and investigative skills).
- Flexibility in working hours and scheduled tasks may be required.

*An equivalent combination of education and experience may be considered.

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.
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