

Update

Ministry

Advanced Education

Describe: Basic Job Details

Position

Position ID

Position Name (200 character maximum)

Application Support Specialist

Current Class

Administrative Support 5

Job Focus

Supervisory Level

Agency (ministry) code

Cost Centre

Program Code: (enter if required)

Employee

Employee Name (or Vacant)

Organizational Structure

Division, Branch/Unit

PPSA/Student Financial Services

Current organizational chart attached?

Supervisor's Position ID

Supervisor's Position Name (30 characters)

Supervisor's Current Class

Design: Identify Job Duties and Value

Changes Since Last Reviewed

Date yyyy-mm-dd

Responsibilities Added:

Responsibilities Removed:

Job Purpose and Organizational Context

Why the job exists:

The Application Support Specialist performs quality assurance by monitoring applications, identifying non-compliant activity from institutions and clients, trends, detect identity theft, tracking information, retaining supporting documents, and providing related reports to the Supervisor/Manager for review. With introduction of Social Insurance Number (SIN) Validation, the specialist is responsible for ensuring students personal information is validated with the Government of Canada in order for the clients application to continue processing. The role now provides coaching and clarification to internal and external stakeholders as needed. This may relate to Alberta Student Aid Policies, navigating relevant technical applications or investigating and resolving client login issues or duplicate files. This position is also responsible for determining programs that are not eligible for funding based on polices (e.g. continuing education programs, faculty of extension programs). The Application Support Specialist is also responsible for maintaining their own electronic filing. This requires digitization; creating electronic records with provable authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability to ensure source documents can be used in POPA or litigation.

The Application Support Specialist is responsible to ensure applications for student funding are complete and compliant with established operational and program policies and procedures prior to their assessment for funding decisions. The Application Support Specialist ensures that all personal information, institution, and program data is accurate, comprehensive, and current. This includes reviewing and verifying data; inputting data into relevant systems (Student Finance System [SFS], Program and Provider Registry System [PAPRS], Stakeholder Registry System [SHR], and Scholarship Internal Web); quality assurance. The Specialist investigates and resolves issues where data relating to personal and institution information is missing or incorrect. Quality Assurance work involves monitoring changes to institutions and applications, identifying trends, tracking information, retaining supporting documents, and providing related reports to the Supervisor for review.

The Application Support Specialist maintains data related to public and private educational institutions / providers in multiple databases and systems (e.g., educational programs; specialization or program majors; study period start and end dates; and curriculum costs (tuition, mandatory fees and books/supplies). This includes working with educational institutions/providers to assure accuracy of their information maintained and updated in SFS and PAPRS. Accurate, comprehensive, and timely access to data is essential to process educational funding assistance for full-time post-secondary students, part-time post-secondary students, and Alberta Scholarship Program applicants. In some situations, the Specialist obtains and updates session dates and costs in PAPRS (e.g., if educational institutions do not have access, for out of province pilot institutions).

Coaching and clarification are provided to internal and external stakeholders, as needed, on operational program policy requirements to support the integrity, accuracy, and completeness of applications prior to their assessment. This position is also responsible for determining programs that are not eligible for funding based on polices. (e.g., continuing education programs, faculty of extension programs).

The position operates within the operational and legislative driven program policies, processes, and time lines; adhering to their changes, and maintains compliance to POPA.

Responsibilities

Job outcomes (4-6 core results), and for each outcome, 4-6 corresponding activities:

Applications for student funding are complete and comply with existing policy requirements to support the funding eligibility and determination processes.

- Review all application sections, both paper and electronic, and specifically addresses any gaps or inconsistencies (e.g., complex, sensitive, and unique issues pertaining to the student/client personal information; program information from educational institutions).
- Verify and adjust as needed required documentation regarding personal information (e.g., client name, social insurance number, date of birth, Alberta Student Number (ASN)) in relevant systems to ensure the identity of the client is not compromised and that the client is able to cash loans and grant funds issued

from the department.

- Verify electronic declarations submitted by the applicant for accuracy and completed signatures to lift automated `system freeze' prior to further funding being released.
- Request/research information to complete gaps or verify documents so the application can be processed in a timely manner (e.g., communicating with students, or with the in- province, out-of-province, or out-of-country education institutions by mail, e-mail or researching the information on the Internet (school websites).
- Identify and investigate potential duplicate files and applications and share these updates with other government departments (Service Alberta and Government of Canada)
- Input application data (personal information, tuition, fees etc.) into relevant systems.
- Participate in working groups to shape the content and layout of electronic applications.
- Responsible for unit's electronic filing. This requires digitization; creating electronic records with provable authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability to ensure source documents can be used in POPA or litigation.

Student funding application data and information is accurate and consistent within and across systems.

- Liaise with staff in out-of-province institutions to ensure data used in the assessment of need for students by ensuring data is current and accurate and yearly updates and changes are received and updated within SFS and PAPRS as required.
- Liaise with in-province education institutions to verify accuracy of program information (e.g, specializations, dates, year of studies, and program costs).
- Liaise with external stakeholders (e.g., Education, Client Services Help Desk, Workforce Development Help Desk) and cross-reference data to ensure accurate ASNs are being used to prevent duplicate ASNs.
- Identify non-compliant activity from institutions and clients by tracking data, including correspondence and documents received for quality assurance.
- Verify Alberta Government Issued Photo Identification (Alberta drivers licence or ID card) in Registries Online Access Delivery System (ROADS) and proceed with quality assurance.

Support and consultation are provided to branch staff and external stakeholders to facilitate accurate and complete applications and related data.

- Ability to apply relevant Student Aid and Application Support unit policies, processes, guidelines, and procedures.
- Understand requirements for various other units to assist determining the best determine course of action for application reviews or other correspondence received.
- Knowledge of post-secondary program structures to decipher and translate the information the Educational Institution provides to align with Student Aid databases and systems.
- Understand the relationship between institution / provider and program information (e.g., program costs, session dates) and impact to funding eligibility decisions.
- Investigate, resolve, and respond to time sensitive inquiries made to ASU inbox regarding client login issues and resolve issues so clients can proceed with applications.
- Provide consultative support and assistance to Student Services end-users to resolve issues and clarify system outputs.
- Maintain contact with educational institutions to ensure study periods are entered into PAPRS in a timely manner.
- Review and resolve queries received from various departments and/or educational institutions, some of which can be time-sensitive.
- Compile student documents for mailing (Notice of Assessment, Consent and Declaration etc.).
- Identify, investigate, forward or action incoming electronic or paper correspondence for various units.

The ASU team is supported in achieving its operational goals and priorities.

- Track data and note trends to shape reports and potential changes to operational or program policy and/or process.
- Identify and or participate in development of new or revised process and procedures or data systems.
- Raise awareness to issues of significance (e.g., possible non-compliance activity) to the Supervisor and assist in the resolution.

- Collaborate and share information across the team and with other units to support efficient and client-focused student funding program administration.
- Engage in ongoing quality assurance practices to contribute to funding program integrity.

Problem Solving

Typical problems solved:

Some gaps or inconsistencies in application information can require research of multiple sites and sources or direct communication with educational institutions, students, or other branch units. Problem solving must be balanced with timely resolution so as not to unnecessarily delay applications moving forward to assessments. For example, ASN issues are time sensitive and must be actioned promptly so that the student may submit an on-line application in a timely manner.

- The Specialist must ensure the most current policy is being applied. Given the integration between the systems, and the number of programs and stakeholders impacted by the systems, this position is relied on to not only resolve problems but also to anticipate the effects of changes to data on other areas and on students submitting applications for funding assistance.
- Liaising with other branch staff to provide expertise, and suggestions to enhance system or processes, and update policies, guidelines, etc.

Types of guidance available for problem solving:

Options for problem-solving are determined in accordance with legislation, policies, procedures, and guidelines. Past precedent is also applied to determine a path forward. Research using multiple sites, data systems and communication with clients, educational institutions or other branch units also inform problem-solving. Any decisions made outside established policies, without clear precedents, or with the potential to be politically sensitive or contentious are reviewed with the Supervisor.

This position must understand the diverse and complex data managed within the Application Support Unit (e.g. Public and Private educational institutions and providers, educational programs, specialization or program majors, study session start and end dates, curriculum costs, including tuition, book and supply costs and mandatory fees) and have a comprehensive understanding of the various educational assistance funding programs administered on behalf of the federal and provincial government.

Direct or indirect impacts of decisions:

Externally, the work of this position impacts:

- Timeliness of assessments and allocations of student loans by ensuring that applications are complete prior to assessment.
- Responses to queries to external stakeholders.
- Guidance to representatives from educational institutions to enhance integrity of program information in relevant systems; this information is used to determine the levels of financial assistance students are eligible to receive.
- Mitigation of potential for fraud or duplication of funding (e.g., when client/students use more than one SIN, it enables them to create more than one automated system Master Record resulting in the possibility of multiple funding being issued for the same study period. These can be entered in error or fraudulently).

Internally, the work of this position impacts:

- Data integrity that underpins assessment of applications - ensuring that tombstone data, institution sessions and costs data used to determine educational funding assistance eligibility and awards for students are complete and accurate and correctly represented in appropriate databases and systems (E.g., PAPRS, SFS, SHR, ROADS)
- Effective team processes through knowledge sharing with peers.
- New or revised program procedures through identification of common queries and issues that are raised by students or identified through the application process.
- Participate in ad hoc unit projects

Key Relationships

Major stakeholders and purpose of interactions:

Internal

- Supervisor - Provide information, updates, or respond to issues; raise awareness to risks and

opportunities related to client service delivery; participate in unit projects.

- Other Unit staff - provide information and guidance on application support topics; share information and collaborate; provide cover off as needed; inquire and research application issues.
- Other branches in the division, department or other departments - inquire regarding specific topics related to application information or program data.
- IT system providers - inquire regarding specific topics (e.g., ASNs or log-in issues); participate in system updates).

External

- Students, funding coordinators in educational institutions and contracted providers - provide advice and consult; communicate to obtain and clarify information; provide program information and advice / guidance on requirements and processes; policy clarification provide assistance with PAPRS.
- Representatives of post-secondary institutions in other provinces, territories, or countries to resolve questions and determine information relating to entry of data in PAPRS for out-of-province schools determination of program dates, costs, and fee information.

Required Education, Experience and Technical Competencies

Education Level	Focus/Major	2nd Major/Minor if applicable	Designation
Diploma (2 year)			

If other, specify:

Job-specific experience, technical competencies, certification and/or training:

Education and Experience

- Post-secondary diploma or equivalency of education and experience.
- Knowledge of and ability to apply relevant policy and process standards and guidelines to a variety of situations including POPA requirements.
- Understanding of the multiple funding and/or grant programs administered on behalf of the federal and provincial governments.
- Detail oriented with keen attention to detail.
- Ability to use system programs, such as SFS, PAPRS, Learner Registry (SHR), ROADS, Scholarship System
- Ability to use software tools used to carry out responsibilities (i.e. Microsoft Office, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook).
- Analytical, critical thinking, and research skills to investigate missing, inconsistent or duplicate information.
- Verbal and written (e.g., email and Information Request Letters) communication skills when dealing with stakeholders/clients to query and/or solicit information in a professional manner and within POPA.
- Organizational and time management skills, including ability to function effectively in an environment with multiple priorities and deadlines.
- Readily adaptable to changes.
- Commitment to confidentiality, tact and diplomacy.
- Ability to use sound judgement to initiate action.
- Ability to work independently as well as contribute within a team environment to achieve goals and objectives within specified time-frames.
- Ability to proactively identify concerns and issues and develop and present viable solutions and recommendations.

Behavioral Competencies

Pick 4-5 representative behavioral competencies and their level.

Competency	Level					Level Definition	Examples of how this level best represents the job
	A	B	C	D	E		
Systems Thinking	●	○	○	○	○	Observes and understands larger impact of role: • Sees impact of work on organization; anticipates	Understands how work contributes to the achievement of department goals and

		<p>change in own area based on activities in other areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers how own work impacts others and vice versa • Ask questions to understand broader goals • Aware of how organization adds value for clients and stakeholders 	<p>impacts the work of others; works with others to align activities; participation in the New Year Working Group and App Design Working Group.</p>
Creative Problem Solving	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	<p>Is open to new ideas and breaks problems down to identify solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaks down problems into small parts • Constructively questions and challenges the norm • Open to other's perspectives and aware of own • Contributes ideas for improving processes, and adapts existing practice to address problems 	<p>Breaks down problems into manageable components to identify what needs to be done; contributes ideas and approaches to improve procedures; adapts existing processes to address new situations; shares learnings with others.</p>
Agility	<input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	<p>Works in a changing environment and takes initiative to change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes opportunities to improve work processes • Anticipates and adjusts behaviour to change • Remains optimistic, calm and composed in stressful situations • Seeks advice and support to change appropriately • Works creatively within guidelines 	<p>Sees the need and readily steps in to help others on the team; anticipates change and adapts behaviour accordingly; is nimble and open to changes; takes advantage of opportunities to improve processes such as processing application on-line.</p>
Develop Networks	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	<p>Maintains collegial internal relationships and understands external network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks to understand perspectives and needs of others • Follows through, has integrity and respect for others • Helps and follows through • Keeps key stakeholders 	<p>Builds relationships by following through on commitments, demonstrating integrity and respect for others; informs key stakeholders of relevant information in a timely manner; seeks and applies the perspectives and needs of colleagues, and stakeholders. Ability to proactively identify</p>

		informed; is professional and respectful	concerns and issues and develop and present viable solutions and recommendations.
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Benchmarks

List 1-2 potential comparable Government of Alberta: [Benchmark](#)

Assign

The signatures below indicate that all parties have read and agree that the job description accurately reflects the work assigned and required in the organization.

Employee Name	Date yyyy-mm-dd	Employee Signature
Supervisor / Manager Name	Date yyyy-mm-dd	Supervisor / Manager Signature
Director / Executive Director Name	Date yyyy-mm-dd	Director / Executive Director Signature
ADM Name	Date yyyy-mm-dd	ADM Signature