

JOB DESCRIPTION

Dept:

Faculty of Arts

School of Business

Faculty of Science & Horticulture

Chip and Shannon Wilson School of
Design

Working Title: Degree Advisor (542)

Date: November 2017

Job Class: 13

PRIMARY FUNCTION: Degree Advisors in the academic Faculties engage in collaborative practice to enhance the development, progression and retention of KPU students. Through guidance and the use of leading and innovative practices, Degree Advisors empower students to ensure student success. Degree Advisors also play a key role in the development and delivery of programs offered within the Faculty by providing advice and recommendations to the Dean and Faculty Chairs/Coordinators on alignment with student needs/interests and smooth degree completion.

JOB DUTIES AND TASKS:

1. Enhance development, progression, and retention of KPU students:

- a) Independently evaluate complex situations. Advocate, guide and resolve issues related to the student experience at KPU. Assist students with navigating complex university policies and procedures.
- b) Exercise a high level of judgment in the advising of student progression through to degree completion, ensuring that precise information is disbursed. Errors in judgment can result in detrimental student experience, including delayed progression and postponed graduation.
- c) Assess whether prior learning assessment (PLA) is an appropriate option for students with significant life experience and liaise with faculty member and outside institutions regarding evaluation of potential credits. Support and guide students through complex PLA process.
- d) Evaluate and interpret various in-house and standardized tests used as admission requirements for university programs and courses. Incorporate the results of the tests, along with guidance, analysis of academic history and in consultation with the student research into the development of individualized educational plans.
- e) Independently conduct interviews to provide advice, guidance and instruction to students on how to use resources to research educational, career and labour market information related to their goals.
- f) Develop, plan and deliver client focused programs, services and events to advise students and other educational institutions on course planning, program options, admission requirements and other related information.
- g) Independently analyze, evaluate, authorize or deny student requests for variance to university policies, such as course repeats and educational plans.
- h) Based on an analysis of a student's documents, academic history, skills and abilities, determine and advise on student educational needs, program suitability and admissibility.

- i) Assess student needs and identify those who require assistance or counseling in dealing with academic, emotional or financial issues and refer to appropriate resources as required.
- j) Develop initiatives to assist students assess their skills, interests and abilities, examine their goals and to make decisions about their education and co-curricular activities to meet their long-term goals.
- k) Collaborate and coordinate with Instructors and Student Support Services to collectively triage and manage at-risk students referred through the Early Alert program.

2. Drive student success:

- a) Maintain current, in-depth knowledge of pertinent KPU regulations to ensure students are provided with accurate and consistent information whereby they can make appropriate decisions regarding their educational goals.
- b) Manage a large caseload of students, and execute intrusive and proactive outreach to enhance success.
- c) Develop and implement strategies to promote Degree Advising services.
- d) Research and maintain an extensive knowledge of all KPU programs as well as other institutions, in order to effectively provide advice and guidance to students on: admission and declaration processes, program and graduation requirements, tuition, and career options.
- e) Based on an analysis of an individual student's academic history, guide students to appropriate alternative programs that may be more suited to their ability.
- f) Research and attend informational and training sessions on student development, progression, retention, and success.

3. Influence program/course offerings and removal of barriers to student degree progression:

- a) Liaise with Program Chairs/Coordinators, Dean's Office, and individual faculty to provide program/course offerings advice and recommendations, influencing educational planning, prerequisite structure, degree progression, laddering and timetabling decisions.
- b) Participate on Faculty and KPU committees and sub-committees to inform and influence faculty and university planning, policies and processes and ensure the student perspective is at the forefront. Provide guidance and advice regarding proposed educational programming including impact on students and compliance with KPU policies and procedures.
- c) Inform, consult and make recommendations to Student Services staff and other KPU departments regarding new, modified or proposed curriculum, as required.
- d) Identify and communicate errors and inconsistencies between the Calendar and existing systems, policies, practices, procedures and other legal documents.
- e) Review draft and official Calendar copy to evaluate and provide feedback regarding program content.
- f) Provide advocacy for change to KPU policies and procedures based on challenges and needs of students. Utilize tact, discretion and persuasion to address and amend policies and procedures that may negatively impact students.
- g) Research, interpret and explain Kwantlen Polytechnic University policies and procedures to students, faculty and/or staff as needed.
- h) Assess student eligibility and appropriateness for pre-requisite waivers, course substitutions, policy variance requests (e.g. ten year waivers, guided study) and other exceptions to academic policies as needed and make recommends to Chair/Coordinator or Dean's office.
- i) Collaborate and coordinate with central Academic Advisors regarding program changes.
- j) Liaise with Academic and Career Advancement (ACA) to ensure the success and retention of students completing qualifying studies.
- k) Provide regular reports to the Dean's office summarizing activities and emerging issues.
- l) Utilizing critical thinking skills, review and evaluate effectiveness of advising processes and practices; make recommendations to the Dean; and implement changes to enhance student experience and effectiveness of advising services.
- m) Provide assistance and advice to department Chairs/Coordinators regarding degree flow and progression and application of transfer credit to graduation requirements.
- n) Liaise with and build strong relationships with Future Students Office, Office of the Registrar and Student Services departments, including Central Advising, to share information and best practices and collaborate on joint initiatives.

4. Engage in collaborative practice:

- a) Participate in hiring, lead training and mentorship of new Degree Advisors and student workers. Participate in training and orientation of other advisors across faculties and service departments a KPU.
- b) Liaise with various student services and external bodies to provide holistic support and individualized service to targeted student populations including, but not limited to, first-year students, Indigenous students, at-risk student, students with disabilities, and first-generation students.
- c) Substitute as a Degree Advisor or Academic Advisor across various faculties/service departments in times of staff shortages.
- d) Investigate transfer credit issues between KPU and outside institutions, consult with, and provide advice to the appropriate internal and external departments.
- e) Establish, liaise and build rapport with high school and school district representatives, post-secondary institutions, employers, professional groups and other related agencies to support students transitioning to post-secondary.
- f) Connect student's academic goals to graduate school and larger career exploration and planning Advise on and create awareness of options after completing their undergraduate degree.
- g) Respond to enquiries from the general public, mature learners, high schools and prospective and returning students, and provide information, guidance and advice regarding KPU programs, services, policies and procedures. Where appropriate, refer to other KPU resources and departments.
- h) Liaise with external institutions with regard to information, articulation and student advocacy matters.
- i) Represent KPU at University and Community events, including organizing and executing presentations and information sessions. Occasionally lift and move items weighing up to 20 – 40 lbs.

5. Related duties

- a) Gather, maintain, and provide statistics to the Faculty leadership team on various initiatives and practices.
- b) Select, order, organize and store resources and reference materials.
- c) Independently manage a complex schedule of appointments while ensuring that critical and conflicting deadlines are met.
- d) Organize and maintain the physical layout of the Degree Advising space. Ensure coverage across KPU campuses and strategize with Faculty leadership team regarding service delivery (e.g. on-line advising, drop in appointments, weekend/evening appointments and service levels across KPU campuses).
- e) Research, develop and produce Degree Advising resources and as needed/order materials for the Degree Advising centre.
- f) Manage an inventory system for the ongoing renewal of Advising resources.
- g) Evaluate and interpret in-house Banner Reports to determine program and graduation compliance. Provide analysis of inaccuracies in Banner Reports and where appropriate potential solutions to the administrator to improve accuracy.

<i>SUPERVISION RECEIVED:</i>
Reports to the Dean or Business Manager.
<i>SUPERVISION/DIRECTION EXERCISED:</i>
Hires, trains, and supervises student workers and participates in hiring of peer Degree Advisors. Trains and mentors new Degree Advisors, and participates in training of new staff and development of Dean's office staff.
<i>PHYSICAL ASSETS/INFORMATION MANAGEMENT:</i>
Develop and maintain the training manual for new advisors. Access, update, and maintain sensitive and confidential student records for the purpose of advising, evaluating, and processing appeals, educational and developmental plans and assisting the Dean and OREG on student compliance with graduation requirements. Research, develop and produce content for use in institutional publications.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES:

Purchase goods and services within established program funds; compile and provide information for use in preparing department budget. Compile and provide information for use in preparing department budget.

The above statements reflect the general details considered necessary to describe and evaluate the principal functions of the job identified, and shall not be construed as a detailed description of all the work requirements that may be inherent in the job.

Knowledge Skills & Abilities:

1. Successful completion of an undergraduate degree (Masters preferred) in a related area from an accredited university.
2. A minimum of five years employment in a related position, preferably at a post-secondary institution.
3. Demonstrated in-depth knowledge of the curricular nature of Faculty-specific degree programs and their development.
4. Demonstrated in-depth knowledge of educational or career advancements available to Faculty-specific degree graduates including admission requirements to graduate studies and common professional certificate or other post-secondary programs.
5. Demonstrated in-depth knowledge of secondary and post-secondary educational systems.
6. Superior communication skills in English, both spoken and written, exhibiting a high level of tact, professionalism, and diplomacy.
7. Superior inter-personal skills, with the ability to patiently and effectively deal with a diverse range of people in a respectful and professional manner.
8. Demonstrated advocacy roles with diverse populations.
9. Demonstrated ability to establish positive and productive working relationships with internal and external stakeholders at a variety of administrative levels.
10. Proven ability to work cooperatively and constructively in a team environment, particularly in developing strategies for effective processes that require coordination between various departments in an organizational environment.
11. Demonstrated experience in developing and delivering effective training activities and workshops for students related to Faculty-specific degree advising.
12. Demonstrated experience in planning and presenting recruitment and marketing workshops and activities.
13. Demonstrated ability to address confidential matters and materials with tact and discretion.
14. Proven ability to comprehend, communicate and comply with established policies, practices and procedures.
15. Superior accuracy and attention to detail, particularly in editing and interpreting documents.
16. Superior time-management skills in coordinating projects and meeting multiple overlapping deadlines.
17. Demonstrated ability to measure and recommend strategies promoting student success.
18. Proven ability to successfully recognize, analyze and resolve problems; to work independently and establish own priorities; to exercise a high level of initiative and responsibility; and, to adapt quickly to new technologies and ongoing organizational transitions.
19. Ability to work from all KPU campuses with flexibility for day and evening shifts; and, the ability to travel within Canada.
20. Demonstrated competency at an intermediate level in various software including MS Word, MS Excel, and Power Point, internet browsers and email.
21. Experience using student information management systems