UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA
CUPE LOCAL 951 POSITION DESCRIPTION

**JOB:** Secretary/PB7  
**DEPARTMENT:** Mechanical Engineering  
**SUPERVISOR:** Administrative Officer

**TITLE:** Graduate Secretary  
**POSITION NO:** 997513  
**LAST UPDATED:** July 2019

**SUMMARY:**
This position serves the Department of Mechanical Engineering as Graduate Secretary and provides administrative support to the Graduate Program Director and to the department’s graduate and professional programs. The Graduate Secretary serves as first point of contact/resource person for faculty, staff, and current and prospective graduate students. Acting as a liaison with a variety of departments across campus, and working closely with Graduate Studies and Graduate Admissions and Records, the Graduate Secretary supports the administration related to graduate students and their programs.

Specific responsibilities include but are not limited to: processing and distributing graduate applications; admitting graduate students; advising graduate students and prospective students with interpretation of relevant departmental, program and university regulations; setting up and maintaining graduate files, lists, reports, and spreadsheets; processing graduate awards and nominations; preparing statistical information on various aspects of graduate programs in the department; tracking and scheduling of candidacy and oral exams; monitoring graduate students’ progress; and processing graduate support payments and graduate student teaching appointments.

In addition, this position provides coverage during extended absences and back-up support to the Reception/Undergraduate Secretary and Assistant to the Chair.

**MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES:** (In order of importance to a maximum of 8)

1. **Responsibility: Graduate Student Support and Administration (50%)**

   **Duties:**
   - Provides ongoing support and advice to over 150 students on individual program requirements, from the application process through to their defense and convocation.
   - Provides information and resources to current and prospective students regarding program requirements, University, Departmental and Faculty policies and procedures.
   - Maintains an extensive student list using Excel.
   - Maintains student files electronically and hardcopy.
   - Maintains student applications and track their progress when being accepted to the program, following-up with the student, supervisor, and Graduate Admissions and Records as required.
   - Processes a large volume of admissions/rejections of applications using Banner and FAST.
   - Maintains student supervisory committees using Banner and via correspondence with GARO (Graduate Admissions and Records Office).
   - Receives and processes all graduate student paperwork (pro forma proposals, graduate course change forms, program/candidacy extensions, etc.) before forwarding on to the appropriate department on campus.
• Verifies program completion and oversees completion paperwork (Letter of Recommendation, Request for Oral Examination etc.)
• Responds to a high volume of graduate student inquiries regarding registration issues and timetable information. Assist with registration processes.
• Processes graduate student funding including graduate support, fellowships, specific awards and other payments.
• Monitor registration status of graduate students each term to ensure alignment with academic programs and to ensure eligibility for awards, Teaching Assistant positions, and funding.
• Assist with examination scheduling for candidacy exams and defenses, maintain and prepare records, and advise students on deadlines.

2. Responsibility: General Program Support (35%)

Duties:
• Understand, interpret and explain complex university, faculty and program regulations and policies to students and supervisors.
• Support the flow of information among supervisors, the Graduate Studies Committee, the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Graduate Admissions and Records.
• Keep accurate and up to date records of current graduate students' individual program information (registration, program changes, actions taken on grades or other academic issues, leave requests, course changes, transfer credit, other appeals or letters, supervisory committees) and financial information (support payments, awards, TA appointment forms).
• Keep records of graduated/withdrawn students, and closed or rejected applications as required by Records Management Guidelines.
• Verify Convocation lists.
• Work closely with the Graduate Program Director to co-ordinate and process Teaching Assistants appointments.
• Work closely with the Manager of Laboratories to co-ordinate graduate course scheduling.
• Maintain a task list and procedures manual that reflects current department policies.

3. Responsibility: Support to Graduate Advisor & Graduate Studies Committee (10%)

Duties:
• Draft, edit, or prepare memos and correspondence for the Graduate Program Director to graduate students and the graduate program (ie: awards, appeals, admission letters, grade-below B memos/workflow decisions, etc.). Submit and track or record such correspondence and any follow-up actions.
• Maintain spreadsheets for the Graduate Studies Committee on award decisions and applications; determine eligibility as required.
• Prepare and edit graduate and calendar changes under the direction of the Graduate Advisor and Curriculum Committee Chair.
• Provide administrative support to the Graduate Studies Committee (circulates necessary documents for meetings as needed in coordination with academic deadlines)
• Track and provide a variety of statistical data for the Graduate Advisor and Chair’s Secretary as needed.
• Manage the Graduate Awards Budget under the direction of the Graduate Advisor. Tracks expenditures using excel. Identifies students eligibility for awards and provides supporting information regarding student eligibility to Advisor as needed.
• Prepare grad support payment forms for faculty and forwards to payroll for processing

4. Responsibility: General Administrative Assistance and cover for other office staff (5%)

Duties:
• Cover undergraduate secretary/receptionist position during absences.
- Provide back-up assistance to Assistant to the Chair during extended absences.
- Coordinate with Assistant to the Chair and Undergraduate Secretary on mailing lists and contact lists for graduate students.
- Assist with the maintenance and processing of the department library and keys.
- Work closely with the Graduate Program Director and Program Analyst to maintain Masters and PhD graduate content on the departmental website.
- Prepare letters required by immigration for international graduate students relating to their registration and term of study as needed.
- Work as a team with other administrative staff as needed during busy periods.
- Assist the Administrative Officer and the Department Chair on administrative tasks and projects as needed.

**REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:**
Must have the ability to work independently and as a team member in a professional and conscientious manner; have a demonstrated ability to effectively manage large volumes of work and meet tight deadlines in a work environment that experiences frequent interruptions and will have demonstrated organizational and analytical/problem-solving skills. Must possess the ability to communicate effectively and tactfully both verbally and in writing with all levels of university administration, faculty, students, staff and the public using excellent interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills; adept at exercising initiative, good judgment and diplomacy regarding sensitive and confidential matters.

Strong administrative skills, including a high proficiency using MS Office programs, Adobe and Outlook.

**Skills:**
- Excellent time management and organizational skills
- Exceptional attention to detail
- Ability to handle complex, detailed work accurately in a busy environment with constant interruptions
- Strong analytical and problem solving skills
- Proficient with word processing in a PC environment
- Effective oral and written communication skills, including the ability to use discretion and maintain confidentiality.
- Ability to accurately interpret and clearly explain complex policies and procedures
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships in a multi-cultural environment.
- Tact and diplomacy

**Specialized Knowledge/Education:**
- Computer: Excel, Word, Outlook, Adobe, GrApple
- Good working knowledge of the University’s graduate studies policies and procedures
- Experience working with Graduate Admissions and Records, Faculty of Graduate Studies, FAST, Banner, and SharePoint an asset

**Experience:**
At least three years of relevant office experience preferably in a post-secondary academic environment or a comparably large and complex environment and/or an equivalent combination of experience and education.

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