RENISON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

AFFILIATED WITH THE **UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO**

Job Title:	Academic Advisor and Program Coordinator
Grade:	14
Division/Department:	Renison School of Social Sciences & Humanities (RSSSH)
Reports to *(title)*:	Director, RSSSH
Date of completion:	November 2026

General Accountability:

Reporting to the Director of the Renison School of Social Sciences and Humanities (RSSSH), the Academic Advisor and Program Assistant responds to academic inquiries from students registered or interested in the Social Development Studies (SDS) major and minor programs and the SDS-Bachelor of Social Work Double degree. The position provides administrative support to the program for curriculum, online course development, teaching scheduling processes, and program-related communications and events.

This role reports to the Director of the Renison School of Social Sciences and Humanities (RSSSH). The position has no direct reports. The incumbent is expected to work collaboratively with the other academic advisors and administrative staff within RSSSH.

Key Accountabilities:

Academic Advising

- Maintains in-depth and current knowledge of:
  - Arts' undergraduate curriculum and academic requirements;
  - Arts' admissions regulations and practices, including transfer credit regulations;
  - Social Development Studies and Faculty of Arts curriculum and academic requirements;
  - University policies and Faculty regulations of particular relevance to student issues; and
  - the sources of support and help that are available to students, both within and outside the University.
- Support the academic transition of students into the Social Development Studies major and minor and the SDS-Bachelor or Social Work Double Degree.
  - Students enter the programs through different pathways each term (e.g. direct from high school, after a year in Honours Arts exploring potential majors, after transferring from college or another university, or as a mature student with no prior post-secondary education).
- Clarify complex department and university policies, procedures and expectations
- Engage with students in crisis as a "first point-of-contact" in the university support system.
  - This may include high-level management of non-academic issues such as personal, medical, financial, accessibility, or relationship concerns.

- Advocate for and connect students to appropriate resources for academic and non-academic concerns (e.g., SEAH, counselling services, AccessAbility, Student Financial Services, Centre for Career Action, Student Success Office, etc.).
- Actively reach out to students at risk of attrition (i.e. poor academic standing) in a timely manner and provide guidance and resources. Assist them with preparation of petition forms when necessary.
- Approve academic forms, including changes to degree (Plan Modifications), confirmation of graduation eligibility (Graduation Recommendations), international exchange eligibility and course equivalencies, taking courses at other Canadian universities (Letters of Permission), etc.
- Represent the department and serve as a resource during internal and external recruitment events (e.g. Orientation, Arts 101 Day, Open Houses, Ontario University Fair, etc.)
- Collaborate with other internal teams (as needed) to run student success and social engagement events (e.g. course selection drop-ins, visiting presentations from main campus services, etc.)
- Empower students to make decisions that best fit their interests, abilities and circumstances
- Maintain confidential student communication tracking and academic files

Annual Teaching Schedule and Assignments

- Collaborate with the RSSSH Director to determine what courses will be offered and when on both an annual and term-by-term basis
- Track the pattern of course offerings by term over consecutive years
- Confirm the number of course offerings, and track the number of sessional contracts required
- Ensure course offerings are balanced across terms to satisfy degree and plan requirements
- Set and monitor course reserves in consultation with Director, other advisors, and Renison's Registrarial Services
- Consult with the RSSSH Director to identify appropriate instructors for course content and modality
- Confirm availability and constraints for teaching courses with identified instructors
- Provide confirmation to the Administrative Coordinator of finalized instructor assignment each term to facilitate the creation of contracts
- Provide ongoing updates of teaching assignments to the Registrar's Office Scheduling Representative
- Consistently update the department's internal databank for this process, which is used to inform the Director's decisions and the department's overall academic functioning
- Track instructor teaching interests across department disciplines and keep internal files updated
- Accurately track past, current and planned online course developments and redevelopments, and the associated teaching assignments

Curriculum Processes

- Assist the Director in planning and implementing changes to degree requirements and course descriptions in RSSSH according to the Undergraduate Affairs Group (UGAG) process and timeline
- Prepare departmental submissions for approval by UGAG and Senate Undergraduate Council
- Liaise with Renison's Dean's office and the Arts Undergraduate Office to submit materials through the various necessary channels

- Communicate and consult with other academic units to solicit feedback about proposed changes (as needed)
- Ensure curriculum information is correctly displayed and updated in the academic calendar
- Track submission stage and effective dates for each item in process

Program Administration Support

- Facilitate enrolment and administrative processes related to departmental consent courses (e.g., SDS 496R Applied Apprenticeship, SDS 495R Research Apprenticeship, Walls To Bridges)
- Liaise with marketing and recruitment, and provide feedback on marketing and recruitment materials and strategies
- Update, maintain, and improve the department website
- Facilitate non-student department events (e.g. instructor and staff workshops, faculty interviews, etc.)
- Create and update documents and processes that support strategic enrolment planning and facilitate advising (e.g. track courses offered online across the Faculty of Arts to support the high number of online students in the program, track student co-op requirements, maintain ongoing departmental statistics tracking, etc.)
- Create educational documents to support commonly asked questions by students (e.g. "How To" documents on procedures, summary sheets about campus services, etc.)
- Maintain ongoing administrative documents for potential strategic initiatives (e.g. program statistics, critical paths detailing core procedures, etc.)

Qualifications:

- Undergraduate degree or an equivalent combination of education and relevant experience is required
- 2 years of administration experience, preferably in an academic environment, is required
- 2 years of advising-related field experience (e.g. counseling, teaching, community-service, non-profit, etc.) is preferred

Skills:

- Knowledge of University of Waterloo and Renison University College services, policies and procedures
- Knowledge of Arts Faculty undergraduate curriculum and academic requirements
- Excellent interpersonal skills and customer service skills, with the ability to be sensitive to student concerns
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Professional, tactful and diplomatic, with ability to maintain strict confidentiality
- Highly detail oriented, with an aptitude for accuracy
- Effective organizational skills, with the ability to multi-task efficiently and work with multiple priorities and deadlines
- Advanced knowledge of Microsoft Office Suite, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook; proficient with a variety of Windows software
- Ability to take initiative, work independently with minimal supervision and exercise good judgment and decision-making

- Ability to work effectively as part of a team

Working conditions:

Physical Effort: Work activities involve alternating positions of light physical activities. Majority of time is spent in a comfortable position with frequent opportunities to move about at will.

Physical Effort: Works in an environment with occasional exposure to mild unpleasant conditions. There may be a remote possibility of risk of accident or health hazards.

Sensory Attention: Work activities involve need to concentrate on a variety of sensory inputs for intermediate durations at a time, requiring close attention several times daily. If sensory activities are interrupted, time is required to backtrack to resume activities. The need for detailed or precise work is moderate.

Mental Stress: Work activities are performed in an environment with occasional exposure to one or more mental pressures. The mental stress would not be noticeably disruptive to the work, nor would the unpleasant reaction be too strong or persistent