

CLASSIFICATION JOB INFORMATION

SAP Job ID:	90000549
Position/Classification Title:	Director Program
Pay Grade:	EC 13
Add-On Eligibility:	False
Standardized:	No
Inactive	No
Date Last Evaluated:	5/19/2021

JOB INFORMATION

Job/Working Title:	Director Program
Department:	Advanced Education
Division/Section:	Higher Education/Student Assistance/Halifax
Reports To (Position Title):	
Exclusion Status:	Excluded

OVERALL PURPOSE

The Director must effectively manage the operations, call center, assessing, financial aid counseling and strategic initiatives sections of the Student Assistance Office as well as the federal and provincial grant program, the Student Assistance Management System, and the integration of all new initiatives both federal and provincial to administer a needs-based funding program to assist in overcoming financial barriers for those who would otherwise not be able to participate in post-secondary education. The Director also works with the Service Provider (Resolve) on issues related to exceptional loan documents, implementation of new grants, and new internal processes that the Office administers. The Division assesses over 23,000+ applications from students requiring financial assistance to support their post-secondary education. Each processing year, the section approves approximately \$180M in loan and grant assistance.

Key responsibilities include the development of policies and programs that consider risk management, social, economic and labor market needs, government objectives and budgetary impacts; representing the Province's interests in federal/provincial/territorial negotiations, including determining ways to maximize Federal Government funding for the benefit of NS students; and innovations in the areas of technology and communications to ensure efficient and effective delivery of approximately \$180M in financial aid to approximately 20,000+ students annually.

The Director designs and develops financial assistance programs for students and student loan borrowers; is the provincial agent for the negotiates and administers program changes with the Canada Student Loan Program; and leads the development of terms and conditions for the awarding and delivery of other funding agencies. The Director also negotiates awards and manages multi-million dollar contracts for administering government-funded student loans. The Director is accountable to make recommendation to the Executive Director on the overall planning, policy development, and program delivery for the Division.

The Director has responsibility and is accountable to ensure that all funding programs, including loans and grants are reviewed and updated to meet the needs of an emerging and changing post-secondary sector. The cost of student assistance programs requires fundamental accountability and audit practices to ensure program value and integrity of public funds.

The Director is responsible to put forward new initiatives based on current trends, yet reflective of the financial responsibility afforded the position.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Conducts research into emerging trends in programming for post-secondary students, current policy directions and best practices in other provinces, in response to government-wide direction, budgetary consideration and program requirements. Analyzes and recommends new programs that will improve the experience of the student as well as support policy to make a post-secondary education more affordable.

Participates in Federal/Provincial coordinating committees responsible for the delivery of programming aspects of the Canada Student Loan Program. This includes managing computer systems changes that assess the federal and provincial loan criteria to ensure that students receive the appropriate amount of funding based on program policy. The Director provides advice and guidance to the Manager to ensure the quality assurance of all changes and decisions made.

Develops and implements plans for harmonization of federal and provincial loan programs.

Directs effective operational services to manage large volumes of student applications, assessments for a range of federal and provincial programs to ensure fair transparent decisions and appropriate accountability controls.

Drafts policy, prepares briefing material and briefs the Executive Director, Senior Management and the Minister.

Must also develop the implementation procedures and communication tools and strategies for every new program policy initiatives for students, post-secondary institutions and the general public. Advises the Executive Director of issues and provides guidance on new initiatives that relate to grants, federal jurisdictional improvements, and improvements across the country that could be implemented by the province.

Is accountable for the efficient and effective delivery of two federal loan programs (Canada Student Loan Program & Part-time CSLP), federal grant programs (Canada Student Grants, for Students with Dependents, for Students with Disabilities, for High-Need Part-Time Students), and the Nova Scotia Student Loan and the Nova Scotia Student Grant program. Receives and assesses approximately 23,000+ applications annually and approximately 20,000+ students assisted.

Directs the delivery of services to meet the Departments service goals and conducts audits, evaluations, and assessments to ensure continuous improvements and process efficiencies are in place. Directs programs and services to meet best practice standards.

Because the Province administers the federal student loan and grant programs on behalf of the Government of Canada and uses the same eligibility criteria for administering both the federal and provincial, the Director is required to participate in working groups, consultations and planning sessions.

The Director must bring to the federal negotiation table issues that support the ongoing administration of the Canada Student Loan Program however ensure that there are no conflicts that would disadvantage the student when developing new programs.

The Director manages the budget, human resources and all administrative functions including:

- Responsible for section budget forecasting and salary analysis.
- Participates in the Branch's annual budget planning process.
- Prepares critical issues and responds to budget requests.
- Responsible for the human resource administrative requirements and procedures related to hiring, supervising, and managing staff.
- Administers government policies such as Attendance Management, Code of Conduct, Occupational Health and Safety, Sexual Harassment, Employment Assistance Program, etc.

Ensures the effective management of human and financial resources by setting and evaluating staff performance targets, promoting diversity and a healthy workplace, demonstrating the leadership competencies, respecting corporate human resources practices, promoting teamwork and individual development, maintaining internal communication, monitoring revenues and expenditures, adhering to procurement guidelines, acquiring goods and services in the most cost effective manner, and accurately forecasting budget requirements for the fiscal year.

May perform other related duties as assigned

In addition to the knowledge, skills and abilities outlined in the job description, this job may include other, assignment-specific requirements (ex: French language, drivers license, membership in an employment equity group or security screening, etc.)

SCOPE

Contacts (Typical):	<p>(a) Internal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Minister, Deputy Minister, and Senior Executive Director, Executive Director – provides advice and recommendation for development and implementation of programs and policies.- Federal/provincial/territorial governments and national agencies – supports the Executive Director in representing the Province's interests and collaborates on the development of national program and policy frameworks; assists the Executive Director in initiating proposals for national funding projects under the federal Special Investment Fund; manages Memorandums of Agreement and contract agreements with various provincial and federal agencies.- MLA's, Ombudsman, special interests groups, media, students and parents – oversees the response to complaints and inquiries received regarding funding requests and assessments.- Senior federal staff (e.g. Human Resources Skills Development, Canada
----------------------------	---

	<p>Revenue Agency) – assists the Province in the negotiation of various policy and administrative agreements, such as the administrative fee received from the Canada Student Loan Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public and private post-secondary institutions – directs policy development, addresses issues of common concern, collaborates on the development of strategic priorities, (new programs to address unmet need etc.) and provide advice to senior public/private staff on contentious issues. - Other provincial departments – provide advice on program parameters, works with Department of Community Services on funding programs for social assistance recipients, Crown prosecutors and police – collaborates on fraud investigations and the development of related policies and guidelines. - Committee's – promotes and facilitates discussions and consultations with external stakeholders to identify long-term strategic program needs and priorities. - Office of the Auditor General – participates in annual audit requirements. - Works with public and private institution's financial aid administrators. And student groups on issues related to student assistance, provide briefings on policy changes and exchange ideas and concerns. - Works with internal department officials on communications issues, corporate finance and HR. - Works with Information Technology Services to plan, develop and implement enhancements to the present technology – need assessment system, imaging and workflow system, interactive website and online application, Interactive Voice Response systems – as well as, new technologies. - Works with publishing and document management, private career colleges, and post-secondary disability services on, FOIPOP requests, the administration of grants, and issues of train out when institutions close. - Works with other jurisdictions that have responsibility for student assistance to discuss common policy issues and areas for potential regional and national cooperation. - The Director meets with other stakeholders such as university financial aid administrators, community college administrators, and student groups to brief them on changes to policies and procedures, to exchange ideas and concerns and to consult on ways to improve the program and its delivery.
Innovation:	<p>Many people view student assistance funding as an entitlement, which it is not. The funding provided through government-sponsored student loans and grants is needs based and the eligibility criteria are well defined and stringent. The need assessment criteria and the public concept of need do not agree in many instances. The Director is often called upon by elected officials to override the criteria to assist a constituent. The challenge is to convey to the officials the need for fair and consistent treatment of all applicants. The Director cannot waive criteria and must direct such inquiries to the appeal boards which have been set-up to deal with individual circumstances.</p> <p>Another major challenge is the number and variety of demands placed on the Director. The Director is expected to run an office in which there are continual staffing issues, the reliance on technology is significant, the need for continual testing of systems and programs is imperative, the issues facing students in terms of loan funding available to pay for continually rising costs to fund post-secondary study, to participate in federal/provincial committees and brief Senior Management is increasingly demanding. Unlike other provinces, the Director in Nova Scotia has limited support staff to whom many of these activities could be delegated. Therefore, the challenge is to organize and prioritize the many demands on a daily basis while still providing service to our students.</p> <p>The issue of securing adequate financial and human resources to carry out the Division's mandate is always a challenge. To compensate for lack of human resources, Student Assistance has become a highly computerized environment. This has led to new challenges to keep up with changing technology. Every</p>

	<p>year, decisions must be made concerning the enhancement of existing systems and the need to purchase new hardware and software, all at a time of severe fiscal restraint. Again, the issues must be prioritized, and Senior Management convinced of the need to invest in this area.</p> <p>The Director manages many complex issues, such as maintaining a balance between social program and a financial program, regular changes in the Canada Student Loan Program with pressure on Nova Scotia to match new program initiatives implemented by the federal government. Policies developed guide the delivery of student assistance in Nova Scotia post-secondary institutions and affect Nova Scotia students attending institutions both within the province and those studying outside the province.</p>
Decision Making:	<p>The Director has substantial decision-making authority with respect to policy and procedure development, design, implementation, and program integrity within the confines of the federal Canada Student Financial Assistance Act and Regulation, the Student Aid Act and Regulations, Finance Act and Direct Lend Regulations and political and budgetary constraints.</p> <p>The Director has complete administrative responsibility, including staffing and budgeting.</p> <p>The Director provides guidance to the Manager to resolve difficult student loan cases and has the authority to override procedures and certain policies that the Manager would seek guidance on in order to allow for extenuating circumstances.</p> <p>The Director would make recommendation and seek Executive Director approval for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes in policy which may have financial and/or political implications - Expenditures over the established limits - New management systems issues that would impact delivery and cost - All staffing matters that require senior management approval such as creating new positions, disciplinary action, dismissals etc. <p>The Executive Director depends on the Director to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oversee the daily operation of the Division and the administration of the loan and grant programs - Ensure that appropriate audits are conducted to ensure proper loan assessments are made - Ensure appropriate systems testing is conducted to minimize financial risk - Draft letters for the Minister's and Deputy Minister's signatures - Provide briefing notes on Student Assistance issues for meetings and sittings of the Legislature - Respond to clients' concerns in order to avoid complaints to elected officials and the media - Propose new policies to address students' needs and maintain program integrity.
Impact of Results:	<p>To ensure that electronic systems are in place and managed for loan assessment, program delivery and continually updated to ensure that program requirements are met and that students receive the right amount of funding they are entitled to.</p> <p>To provide, in a timely manner, needs-based funding to students who would otherwise be unable to finance the costs of post-secondary education, thus ensuring access to higher education for everyone who has the ability and desire to attend.</p> <p>To develop and implement program and policy initiatives that continue to address the needs of post-secondary students, taking into consideration that rising costs of post-secondary education, to make a post-secondary education affordable to those who otherwise may not be able to attend.</p> <p>To ensure that the program and its policies remain relevant to the changing demographics of post-secondary student population.</p> <p>To continually improve on the service provided to students to ensure their funding is delivered in a reasonable time frame and accurately reflects the assessment criteria so that students have the funds to pay their tuition, fees and living costs when needed.</p>

	To administer the section and its programs within the approved budget.
--	--

People Management:

	# Direct Resources Managed	# Indirect Resources Managed
Additional Information (if required):	<p>This Job Reports to: Executive Director, Student Assistance</p> <p>Job Titles and number of incumbents reporting to this job: Manager of Funding and Program Automation (1) Manager, Client Services (1) Operations Support Specialist (1) Planning & Development Officer 3 (Manager, Strategic Initiatives) (1) Project Manager (1)</p>	

LICENSES/CERTIFICATIONS

Data From Conversion:	<p>The complexity of the environment within which the Director works is exceptional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There has been a tremendous growth in tuition costs which puts increased pressure on the student loan program. - With increasing costs, there has been in turn, an increase in the amount of unmet need students have, putting further pressure on a provincially subsidized program. - The increasing complexity of the appeals heard at both the lower and higher appeal board brings a new dimension to the administration of the program, resulting in developing new policy decisions from the circumstances of students and families. - The complexity in administering a federal and a provincial program both with differing focuses on programs, and grants complicates an already complicated program. - Reaching students and parents to provide information on financing your education and the costs associated is extremely difficult. Most families do not consider this until their children reach grade 12.
------------------------------	---

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Effort

Physical Environment

Sensory Attention

Psychological Pressures

Examples/ Additional Information:	
Data From Conversion:	<p>Examples:</p> <p>A - Physical Effort: Minimal to Moderate Work is conducted in an office environment, with travel on occasion to meet with educational institutions, provincial colleagues and Canada Student Loan officials.</p> <p>B - Physical Environment: Minimal to Moderate Daily use of a computer.</p> <p>C - Sensory Attention: Considerate Daily concentration to interpret policy and complex program material, systems analysis and configuration.</p> <p>D - Mental Pressures: Considerate Regular conflict resolution regarding issues with students where they are not receiving sufficient loan funding, daily complaints and questions from parents, students, MLA's, post-secondary institutions and student groups. Dealing with unmet need and appeals.</p>

--	--