

Position Title: Faculty Soph

Constituency: USC

Category: Student Volunteer

Start date: March 1, 2025

End date: May 1, 2026

Hours per week: average of 1-2 hours per week throughout the academic year and summer with the exception of Soph Training (NWeek) (approximately 35 hours per week) and Orientation Week (may exceed 35 hours).

About Orientation

The Orientation program is designed to holistically support the transition of incoming students as they embark on their undergraduate journeys at Western University. Beginning with Orientation Week, the Orientation program aims to foster connections and build a sense of belonging on campus, and in the greater London community. In collaboration with Western staff, faculty members, and over 900 Sophs, the Orientation program works to facilitate a smooth academic and social transition into, and throughout, our incoming students' first year at Western. Through these efforts, incoming students will become acquainted with all aspects of campus life, including learning, development, enrichment and support resources on campus.

About Us

The University Students' Council (USC) is a student-led organization that first and foremost exists to advocate for and represent undergraduate students at Western University. Since 1965, we have grown beyond an advocacy organization, becoming one of the largest student governments in Canada and one of the largest not-for-profits in London, Ontario Canada. Each day, we work to support, improve and enhance your student experience, because we believe that students have the power to change the world.

Scope of Position

A Soph is an upper-year, student mentor who supports the social and academic transition of incoming students – this, throughout Orientation Week and the entirety of the academic year. In addition to their community building role, a Soph works to connect students to relevant supports, resources, and opportunities. As a representative of their constituency and the larger Western community, a Soph acts as a positive role model and contributes to the creation of a safe and inclusive environment on campus for Western students and staff.

It is important to acknowledge that the nature of the role of a Soph may include situations where students or Sophs disclose challenges, experience vicarious trauma, or exhibit high-risk behaviours such as thoughts of suicide, gender-based and sexual-violence, domestic violence,

mental health concerns and self-harm. Sophs are responsible for listening and providing resources to students; they do not provide counselling. Sophs will be required to complete mandatory training in these high-risk areas to be able to provide an appropriate response and support to those in need.

Soph Competencies

Competencies are a combination of demonstrable knowledge and skills that are necessary to successfully perform in a role.

Soph competencies include the following:

Collaboration and Teamwork:

The ability to work effectively with others toward a shared goal, fostering a supportive and inclusive environment. This involves active listening, sharing responsibilities, valuing diverse perspectives, and promoting mutual respect to achieve group objectives.

- **Conflict Resolution and Mediation:** Navigating and resolving disagreements with fairness and empathy, facilitating productive dialogue, and fostering a positive and respectful environment.

Leadership Development:

The capacity to inspire, guide, and support others in reaching their goals, while continuously reflecting on and improving one's leadership skills. This includes:

- **Time Management:** Demonstrating the ability to prioritize tasks effectively, meet deadlines, and support mentees in developing their organizational skills.
- **Communication and Professionalism:** Maintaining clear, respectful, and professional communication with mentees, colleagues, and supervisors, while setting a positive example in behavior and interactions.

Critical Thinking:

The ability to evaluate information, consider multiple perspectives, and make informed decisions in complex situations. This includes:

- **Problem Solving:** Identifying challenges, generating solutions, and implementing effective strategies.
- **Accountability:** Taking responsibility for actions, decisions, and their outcomes while holding oneself to high standards of performance and integrity.

- **Confidentiality and Ethical Judgement:** Maintaining discretion in handling sensitive information and making decisions guided by ethical principles and professional standards.

Flexibility and Adaptability:

The capacity to remain open to change, adjust to new situations, and navigate uncertainty with resilience and creativity. This includes being responsive to the evolving needs of mentees and adapting strategies to achieve positive outcomes.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Decolonization, and Accessibility:

A commitment to creating inclusive, equitable, and accessible environments where all individuals feel valued and respected. This involves understanding systemic barriers, advocating for underrepresented communities, and applying anti-oppressive and decolonial practices in mentorship. It also includes actively promoting accessibility and fostering a culture of belonging for individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Soph Responsibilities

Orientation Week and Yearlong Expectations:

- Support the execution of a safe and welcoming Orientation Week that facilitates a positive transition for all incoming students.
Lead in the support and the facilitation of the following Orientation Week programs and initiatives:
 - USC Programming
 - Faculty Day
 - Faculty Late Night Programming
 - Nightly Walk-Homes of Students to the Shuttles or to their Residences
 - Other Constituency Programming (such as Neighbourhood programming) – unless stationed at USC or faculty programs
- Enhance the Western community by fostering a sense of togetherness and belonging.
 - Check in weekly with your first years
 - Arrange monthly in person visits with your first years
 - Keep in touch with your soph team and participate in faculty soph initiatives throughout the year
- Support first-year engagement by encouraging their involvement on Campus and within the faculty.

- As a faculty soph throughout the year, you are expected to facilitate and attend 3 events per semester for your first-year students. These events will be put on by your soph team to support the academic and social transition of first years in your faculty.
- Understand and utilize resources available for the support and assistance of students in need.
- Should you not be on campus for an extended period of time (for example, going abroad second semester) you must keep in touch and provide support virtually to your first years and your soph team

Communication:

- Monitor email, Teams, and All-Soph OWL page throughout the year.
- Maintain consistent communication with your Faculty Head Soph and Faculty Programming Assistants throughout the year.
- Maintain consistent communication with your Residence and OC Soph Partners throughout the year.
- Maintain consistent communication with your Residence/OC Captain and Committee Heads throughout the year, if applicable.
- Maintain consistent communication with assigned first-year students throughout the year.

Training:

- Attend and/or complete synchronous and asynchronous training sessions during their term as required by Central Orientation.

Qualifications

- Faculty Sophs must be in London for mandatory, in-person, Soph Training during N Week (**Saturday, August 23rd – Friday, August 29th**), Residence move-ins, and Orientation Week 2025.
- Faculty Sophs must be dutifully enrolled as an undergraduate student registered at Western University for the 2025/26 academic year.
- Faculty Soph eligibility requirements include:
 - All Orientation Leaders must attain a 65% academic average in their course marks in the school year ending in April 2025. Summer courses do not count towards the calculation of this average

- o All Orientation Leaders must be enrolled as a full-time, Main Campus, undergraduate student upon submitting their application and must be returning for the 2025-26 fall and winter academic terms.
- o Students participating in an exchange program or an internship during the fall 2025 semester will not be eligible to participate in the Orientation Program. Students on exchange or internship in the winter 2025 or winter 2026 semester are eligible to be faculty sophs.
- o Students must be in good standing with the University and have no record of active sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct or Orientation Behaviour Management Policy.
- Faculty Sophs are required to complete all components of mandatory training before assuming their duties, and throughout the academic year. Those who are not able to complete component(s) of training may not be eligible to assume their role.
- Faculty Sophs should value differences in gender, culture, sexual identity, religious beliefs, spirituality, among others, and demonstrate a willingness to create fair and accessible environments.
- Faculty Sophs should have effective group facilitation and team building skills.
- Faculty Sophs must be flexible and able to critically assess problems that may arise. Problem solving skills are very important to overall success in the role.

Supervision

- Faculty Sophs will report directly to their faculty leadership team and when necessary, the Vice President Orientation and Programming.
- Additionally, Faculty Sophs are expected to take direction from other Leadership Teams as well as senior collaborators in the Orientation Program.