

Position Title: Off-Campus (OC) Soph

Constituency: Student Experience

Category: Student Volunteer

Start date: March 1, 2025

End date: May 1, 2026

Hours per week: average of 3-4 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 department of Transition, Leadership & Enrichment, located within Student Experience, facilitates successful transitions for undergraduate and graduate students, supports retention efforts, and offers programs & resources to inform academic planning, leadership and personal development and connects students to their unique talents. We prioritize the enhancement of leadership skills and foster a culture of growth and empowerment among our students.

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.

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

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 Off-Campus specific Orientation Week programs and initiatives:
 - Home-Based Programming
 - OC-Based Day
 - Neighborhood Programming
 - Late Night Programming
 - OC Chill Room
 - OC Bag Check
 - Nightly Walk-Homes of Students to the Shuttles or to their Residences
- Enhance the Western community by fostering a sense of togetherness and belonging.
- Participate in year-long Off-Campus Orientation initiatives, including, but not limited to, monthly team meetings, weekly OCRC Soph-ice Hours, first-year events and committee responsibilities.
Please note: The monthly team meetings will begin in the second semester of the 2025 academic year and will continue throughout the summer months and the 2025-2026 academic school year.
- Support Off-Campus first-year engagement by encouraging their involvement on Campus and within the Off-Campus community.

- Understand and utilize resources available for the support and assistance of students in need.
- Facilitate a welcoming and safe space within the Off-Campus Resource Centre and ensure all attendees are adhering to the rules.

Communication:

- Monitor email, Teams, and All-Soph OWL page throughout the year.
- Maintain consistent communication with the OC Head Soph, OC Programming Assistants, and Academic Orientation Coordinator throughout the year.
- Maintain consistent communication with your OC and Faculty Soph Partners throughout the year.
- 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 Student Experience or Central Orientation.

Qualifications

- OC 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.
- OC Sophs must be dutifully enrolled as an undergraduate student registered at Western University for the 2025/26 academic year.
- OC 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
 - 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.
 - Students participating in an exchange program or an internship during the fall and winter 2025 semester will not be eligible to participate in the Orientation Program.

- 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.
- OC 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.
- OC Sophs should value differences in gender, culture, sexual identity, religious beliefs, spirituality, among others, and demonstrate a willingness to create fair and accessible environments.
- OC Sophs should have effective group facilitation and team building skills.
- OC 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

- Off-Campus Sophs will report directly to their leadership team, the Academic Orientation Coordinator, and the Coordinator, Student Experience & Engagement.
- Additionally, Off-Campus Sophs are expected to take direction from other Leadership Teams as well as senior collaborators in the Orientation Program.