

Position Title: Charity 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 mandate of the Student Experience portfolio is to encourage student engagement, support student success, and to enhance overall student life at Western. Student Experience encompasses various departments across three pillars: Wellness & Wellbeing, Sport & Recreation, and Leadership & Learning. Careers & Experience is part of the Leadership & Learning pillar of Student Experience. The Student Experience portfolio operates together to create an environment where students can thrive and succeed. Student Experience also collaborates closely with the University Students' Council, Society of Graduate Students, and other departments across campus.

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 Charity specific Orientation Week programs and initiatives:
 - Care Hubs Shifts
 - Charity Soph Team Facilitated Programming
 - Orientation Servs
 - Nightly Walk-Homes of Students to the Shuttles or to their Residences

As a Charity Soph, your role is to assist the Charity Head Soph, Charity Programming Assistants, and Community Engagement Coordinator in planning Orientation Care Hubs, Orientation Serves, and community-building initiatives for all Soph teams during the summer. Additionally, you will be responsible for executing these activities throughout Orientation Week.

Your primary objective as a Charity Soph is to connect incoming students and other Sophs with the Western & London community. This involves creating a safe and welcoming environment for everyone involved. One way Charity Sophs will achieve this is by organizing Care Hubs, which provide a secure haven for incoming students and fellow Sophs to fulfill their various needs, including wayfinding, nourishment, and emotional support. These hubs are staffed by a team of staff and faculty, mental health experts and trained Charity Sophs who work together to foster a welcoming and safe orientation experience.

As a Charity Soph, you will also make a meaningful impact through Orientation Serves. This event allows students to give back to the community by volunteering for an afternoon. By participating in Orientation Serves, students can make a difference in the lives of others, while also getting to know their peers and building relationships.

Your role as a Charity Soph is critical to the success of Orientation Week and the well-being of incoming students. By prioritizing community-building and inclusivity, you can help create a positive and memorable experience for all.

NEW During the Fall and Winter academic term, you will be responsible for the promotion of Co-Curricular Community Engaged Learning (CEL) initiatives offered through Careers and Experience. These initiatives include:

- Volunteer Fairs
- Local Impact Experiences
- Western Serves Network events and registration
- Western Co-Curricular Record engagement
- Charity Soph and local community partner collaborations

Promotional support for the aforementioned initiatives include and are not limited to the following:

- Sharing events/initiatives with fellow Western students via faculty and residence liaison partnerships or personal networks
- Event support/participation as available
- Tabling in the UCC Atrium to enhance student awareness of initiatives
- Social media lifts of CEL program content

With the continued growth and development of co-curricular Community Engaged Learning at Western University, the 2025-2026 Charity Soph Team will be integral to the long-term vision of the program. This includes, but is not limited to, consulting on program re-structuring, name changes, and role expansions to reflect campus and community needs throughout the academic term.

Communication:

- Monitor email, Teams, and All-Soph OWL page throughout the year.
- Maintain consistent communication with the Charity Head Soph, Charity Programming Assistants, and Community Engagement Student Co-ordinator throughout the year.
- Maintain consistent communication with your OC, Residence, and Faculty Soph Liaison groups throughout the year.
- Support digital forums for connection within the Charity Soph team (i.e., official social media groups, OWL forums, mass emails, etc.)

- Join the Western Serves Network Listserv to receive updates on local volunteering opportunities

Training:

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

Qualifications

- Charity 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.
- Charity Sophs must be dutifully enrolled as an undergraduate student registered at Western University for the 2025/26 academic year.
- Charity 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.
 - 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.
- Charity 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.
- Charity Sophs should value differences in gender, culture, sexual identity, religious beliefs, spirituality, among others, and demonstrate a willingness to create fair and accessible environments.
- Charity Sophs should have effective group facilitation and team building skills.
- Charity 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

- Charity Sophs report directly to the Experiential Learning Coordinator, Co-Curricular Programs and the Charity Leadership Team.
- Additionally, Charity Sophs are expected to take direction from other senior collaborators in the Orientation Program.