

Position Title: Residence Head Soph

Constituency: Housing

Category: Student Volunteer

Start date: November 13, 2025

End date: May 1, 2027

Hours per week: 10-15 hours per week with the exception of Leadership Team Training, Soph Training (approximately 35 hours per week) and OWeek (may exceed 35 hours per week)

*This position is a live-off role, supporting students who live in residence through leading the Soph team

A summer honorarium will be provided for additional training responsibilities. The value of honorarium is currently under budgetary review but will be communicated once solidified.

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 Division of Housing and Ancillary Services strives to provide its residents and student staff with a work environment where academic success and personal growth are promoted. The Residence Life and Education Team provides a myriad of academic, social and leadership programs that help students transition to university life, build connections with others, and develop life skills outside the classroom. We take pride in the Western student experience and encourage student engagement within the residence and campus community.

Scope of Position

A Residence Head Soph is an upper-year student leader who plays a pivotal role in fostering a positive academic and social transition for incoming students living in residence. Building upon the foundational responsibilities of a Soph, the Head Soph provides mentorship and leadership to their Soph team, ensuring a supportive and inclusive environment throughout Orientation Week and the academic year.

In addition to supporting first-year students, the Residence Head Soph is responsible for the development and coordination of their Soph team. This includes facilitating regular team meetings, organizing leadership development opportunities, and promoting team cohesion. The Head Soph acts as a role model and advocate, observing team dynamics, identifying needs, and connecting individuals with appropriate resources and supports.

Residence Head Soph Position Description



The Residence Head Soph serves as a liaison between multiple campus stakeholders, including Orientation, Student Experience, University Students' Council, Housing Administration, and the Residence Life Management Team. Through this collaborative role, the Head Soph ensures alignment between residence programming and broader university initiatives, contributing to a safe, inclusive, and engaging campus experience.

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.

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- **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.

Head Soph Responsibilities

Supervision and Team Management

- 1.1 In collaboration with the Residence Life Management Team, assist with the selection process and oversee members of their residence Soph team in accordance with application guidelines and selection policies and procedures.

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 planning, execution and the facilitation of the following Residence specific Orientation Week programs and initiatives:
 - Home-Based Programming
 - Residence Based Day
 - Neighborhood Programming
 - Late Night Programming
 - Residence Sweeps
 - Nightly Walk-Homes of Students to the Shuttles or to their Residences
- Enhance the Western community by fostering an inclusive sense of community and promoting belonging.
- Participate in year-long Residence Orientation initiatives, which include:
 - Facilitating Monthly in-person soph team meetings.
 - Facilitating monthly one on ones with Programming Assistants and Sophs
 - Attend Stoph team meetings hosted by Residence Life Coordinator(s)
 - Act as an Event Monitor for one building-wide event (i.e. Semi Formal)

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- Complete all expectations listed in the Residence Soph Field Guide (Residence Curriculum).

Please note: The monthly team meetings will begin in the second semester of the 2026 academic year and will continue throughout the summer months and the 2026-2027 academic school year.

- Support Residence first-year engagement by encouraging their involvement on campus and within residence.
- Understand and utilize resources available for the support and assistance of students in need.
- Facilitate a welcoming and safe space within the Residences and ensure all attendees are adhering to the rules.
- Construct a shared vision for the Soph team alongside Programming Assistants, including but not limited to, the assignment of portfolios, floor placements, and team building initiatives
- Liaise with the Residence Orientation Coordinator, Programming Coordinator(s), and members of the Residence Life Management Team to develop high-impact programming during Orientation Week.
- Develop and submit detailed program proposals and budget proposals for all orientation-related initiatives and respond to feedback appropriately.
- Collaborate with the Residence Life and Education Team to lead the budget planning process and oversee financial coordination for orientation-related initiatives.
- Organize and design Soph team uniforms and new student merchandise in accordance with Residence Life Management Team guidelines.
- Ensure that Residence policies are upheld and respond to policy violations and emergencies as they arise by reporting to the Residence Staff.
- Work cooperatively with other Housing Staff including Residence Life Coordinators, Residence Life Staff, Front Desk Staff, Guest Registration, Facilities Management, Leader-On-Call, Campus Safety and Emergency Services, etc.
- Plan and facilitate a minimum of two (2) Soph team initiatives in Residence each academic semester
- Follow all written and verbal protocols established by the Division of Housing and Ancillary Services and the Orientation program.
- Act promptly and responsibly when managing residence incidents, including emergencies, using sound judgment and established procedures.
 - Adhere to expectations outlined in the Leadership Team 411 Guide and the Reference Guide for emergency response.
- Meeting Attendance:
 - Biweekly Residence Head Soph team meetings

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- o Biweekly leadership team meetings and 1-on-1s with the Programming Coordinator
- o Monthly Residence Staff meetings
- o Monthly building cabinet meetings with residence leadership
- o Biweekly Residents' Council meetings (as a non-voting member)
- o Monthly Head Soph Round Tables with Orientation Administration

Communication

A Residence Head Soph is expected to maintain consistent and effective communication throughout their term with key stakeholders involved in residence life and Orientation. This includes:

- Soph Team & Residence Staff: Regularly communicate with their Soph team, Residence Life Coordinator(s), Residence Education Advisors, Residence Dons, and other residence staff to support team initiatives and student needs.
- Orientation & Programming: Liaise with the Residence Orientation Coordinator, Programming Coordinator, and Housing's Orientation Designate to ensure alignment on programming, training, and team development.
- Cross-Campus Collaboration: Collaborate with other Head Sophs across faculties, residences, affiliates, and off-campus communities to coordinate orientation-related projects and initiatives.

Through these communication channels, the Residence Head Soph ensures that Soph team efforts are well-integrated with residence programming and broader university goals, while also advocating for their team and fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment.

Training

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

Residence Move-In

Support residence domestic move-ins: September 5-7, 2026

- 1.2 Coordinate move-in day Soph team schedule in collaboration with Move-in Day Coordinator and Residence Life Coordinator(s)

Education and Qualification Requirements

- Residence Head Sophs must be in London for mandatory, in-person, Soph Training for the complete duration of Friday, August 21, 2026 to Saturday, September 12, 2026 for LST training, N Week training, Residence move-ins, and Orientation Week 2026.
- Residence Head Sophs must be dutifully enrolled as an undergraduate student registered at Western University for the 2026/27 academic year.
- Residence Head Soph eligibility requirements include:

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- All Orientation Leaders must attain a 65% academic average in their course marks in the school year ending in April 2026. 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 as a full-time, Main Campus, undergraduate student for the complete 2026-27 fall and winter academic terms.
- Students participating in an exchange program or an internship during the fall and/or winter 2026-2027 semesters 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, Residence Contract, or Orientation Behaviour Management Policy.
- Students intending to apply for HBA1 will not be eligible to participate as an LST in the Orientation Program.
- Residence Heads 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.
- Residence Head Sophs should value differences in gender, culture, sexual identity, religious beliefs, spirituality, among others, and demonstrate a willingness to create fair and accessible environments.
- Residence Head Sophs should have effective group facilitation and team building skills.
- Residence Head 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

- Residence Head Sophs report directly to their neighborhood Programming Coordinator and indirectly to the Residence Orientation Coordinator.
- Housing's Orientation Constituency Admin and Residence Life Coordinator(s) acts as an indirect supervisor.
- Additionally, Residence Head Sophs are expected to take direction from other members of the Residence Life Management Team, as well as senior collaborators in the Orientation Program.