

Job title: Care Head Soph

Faculty/unit: Student Experience

Department: Student Engagement

Employee group: Student

Start date: November 12, 2026

End date: May 1, 2028

Hours per week: An average of 5 hours per week during the academic year, increasing to 10-15 hours per week during recruitment season (late November to early February) and over the summer (May-August). Time commitments are higher during Leadership Team Training and Soph Training (approximately 35 hours per week), as well as during Orientation Week (may exceed 35 hours per week.)

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 Student Engagement team within Student Experience develops and delivers programs and initiatives that support students in building connection, developing a sense of belonging, and successfully navigating their university experience. Through large-scale transition programs, student leadership opportunities, community-building initiatives, and campus partnerships, the team works to create meaningful and inclusive experiences that help students learn, belong, and thrive at Western.

A significant area of the team's work is Western's Orientation Program, a complex, campus-wide initiative that welcomes and supports thousands of incoming students each year and engages a large network of student leaders, staff, faculty, and campus partners. The team provides leadership and coordination for major components of Orientation, including Orientation Week programming, Faculty Day, Soph Training, student leader development and

support, and other transition-focused initiatives. The Orientation Coordination will work closely on these initiatives and in collaboration with a diverse range of campus partners.

Role Overview

The Care Head Soph provides leadership to the Care Soph Team, whose primary function is to build community across campus and contribute to the creation of a welcoming, connected, and caring environment for incoming students, Sophs, campus and community partners, and staff. Through relationship-building, community-focused programming, collaboration with other Orientation teams, and meaningful engagement opportunities, the Care Soph Team will help foster a culture in which members of the Orientation community feel a sense of belonging, connection, and care.

The Care Head Soph, along with the Care Programming Assistants, is responsible for recruiting, selecting, training, and supporting the Care Soph Team and providing ongoing leadership throughout the Orientation cycle. They are accountable for the planning and execution of Care Programming during Orientation Week, including Care Hubs, Soph Team Care Challenges, and other initiatives designed to strengthen community and connection across campus. The Care Head Soph will also work alongside the Community Engagement Coordinator in the planning and delivery of Orientation Serves and other community-engaged initiatives.

Working closely with the Central Orientation Team, Care Programming Assistants, Care Soph Team, Orientation Staff, and campus and community partners, the Care Head Soph will contribute to the continued development of the Care Soph program. This includes helping guide the program through change, engaging in strategic consultation, supporting team development, and modelling the values and behaviours expected of the Care Soph Team.

The nature of the role of a Soph may include situations where students or fellow Sophs disclose challenges or exhibit behaviours related to thoughts of suicide, gender-based and sexual violence, domestic violence, mental health concerns, or self-harm. Sophs are responsible for listening, responding within the scope of their role, and connecting students with appropriate resources and supports. Sophs do not provide counselling. Head Sophs and Programming Assistants are required to complete mandatory training in these high-risk areas to understand the scope of their role, develop appropriate responses, and connect students to a defined network of support.

Duties & Responsibilities

Team Leadership & Development

- In collaboration with Student Experience and the Care Programming Assistants, recruit, select, train, and provide ongoing leadership and support to members of the Care Soph Team in accordance with established application, selection, and program policies and procedures.
- Build and maintain a welcoming, inclusive, connected, and caring team environment that models the culture the Care Soph Team is responsible for fostering across the broader Orientation community.
- Provide meaningful learning experiences and leadership development opportunities for Care Sophs through regular team meetings, training, mentorship, team-building, and other development opportunities.
- Lead regular Care Soph Team meetings in collaboration with the Care Programming Assistants and maintain consistent communication with team members throughout the Orientation cycle.
- Develop a shared vision for the Care Soph Team alongside the Care Programming Assistants, including the establishment of team goals, portfolios, Soph partnerships, team-building initiatives, and other structures that support the successful functioning of the team.
- Support Care Sophs in meeting the expectations of their roles through ongoing mentorship, coaching, feedback, and individual conversations throughout their term.
- Model the values and behaviours expected of the Care Soph Team and represent Student Experience, Western University, and the London community as a positive and engaged community member.

Community Building, Orientation Week & Programming

- Lead the Care Soph Team in building community across campus and contributing to a welcoming, connected, and caring environment for incoming students, Sophs, staff, and campus and community partners.
- Support the delivery of an Orientation Week that facilitates a positive transition to Western and fosters belonging, connection, learning, and access to appropriate supports for incoming students.
- Lead the planning and execution of Care Programming during Orientation Week, including Care Hubs, Soph Team Care Challenges, and other initiatives designed to strengthen community, connection, and care across the Orientation program.
- Collaborate with other Orientation teams and programs to support community-building initiatives and contribute to a positive and caring experience for members of the broader Orientation community.
- Liaise with Central Orientation to support the development and delivery of programming within Care Hubs during Orientation Week.

- Contribute to opportunities for the Care Soph Team to engage in community-building and community-engaged initiatives beyond Orientation Week and throughout the academic year.
- Design and order Care Soph Team uniforms and other approved merchandise in accordance with Student Experience guidelines and established budgets.
- Participate fully in Orientation Week as a student leader and support the successful execution of Care Soph programming and broader Orientation initiatives.

Collaboration & Communication

- Establish and maintain positive, collaborative relationships with Central Orientation, Care Programming Assistants, University Students' Council Orientation Staff, Residence and Off-Campus Orientation Staff, Faculty, Residence and Affiliate Head Sophs, Careers & Experience staff, and other campus and community partners.
- Maintain consistent and effective communication with the Care Soph Team, Care Programming Assistants, Community Engagement Coordinator, Experiential Learning Coordinator, Co-Curricular Programs, and other relevant partners throughout the term.
- Collaborate with Faculty, Residence, Affiliate, and other Head Sophs on Orientation initiatives and opportunities to strengthen connection and community across Soph teams.
- Participate in Leadership Team meetings and other meetings required by Student Experience throughout the term.
- Collaborate with Student Experience and campus partners on initiatives that recognize, celebrate, and strengthen the Soph experience.
- Contribute to the continued development and evolution of the Care Soph program through consultation, reflection, feedback, and collaboration with students, staff, and campus and community partners.

Student Support & Safety

- Develop a strong understanding of available campus and community resources and support Care Sophs in appropriately connecting students with resources when needed.
- Support the coordination and operation of Orientation Week Care Hubs as welcoming, accessible spaces where students can connect with Care Sophs, campus resources, and appropriate supports.
- Respond appropriately and use sound judgment, and in accordance with University Policies and Procedures, when navigating incidents, concerns, or emergencies during Orientation Week, escalating situations and engaging professional staff as required.
- Adhere to all written and verbal protocols established by Western University, Student Experience, and the Orientation program, including expectations related to student support, incident response, and emergency procedures.

- Understand and consistently operate within the scope and boundaries of the student leader role, including recognizing when situations require referral or escalation to professional staff.

Training, Policies & Accountability

- Attend and actively participate in all mandatory Head Soph, Care Soph, and Orientation training required by Student Experience throughout the year and leading up to Orientation Week – this is including, but not limited to LST Training, MWeek, and NWeek.
- Adhere to Student Experience and Western University policies, procedures, guidelines, and decisions related to the Care Soph Team and its activities.
- Ensure the Care Soph Team understands and operates in accordance with relevant Orientation expectations, policies, protocols, and role requirements.
- Fulfill the expectations outlined in relevant Orientation resources, including established guidelines and protocols for student support and emergency response.

Education and Qualification Requirements

- The Care Head Soph must be in London for mandatory, in-person, Soph Training for the complete duration of August 21st to September 11th for LST training, N Week training, Residence move-ins, and Orientation Week 2027.
- The Care Head Soph must be dutifully enrolled as an undergraduate student registered at Western University for the 2027/28 academic year.
- The Care Head Soph eligibility requirements include:
 - All Orientation Leaders must attain a 65% academic average in their course marks in the school year ending in April 2027. 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 2027-28 fall and winter academic terms.
 - Students participating in an exchange program or an internship during the fall and/or winter 2027-2028 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.
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- Students intending to apply for HBA1 will not be eligible to participate as an LST in the Orientation Program.
- The Care Head Soph is 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.
- The Care Head Soph should value differences in gender, culture, sexual identity, religious beliefs, spirituality, among others, and demonstrate a willingness to create fair and accessible environments.
- The Care Head Soph should have effective group facilitation and team building skills.
- The Care Head Soph 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

- The Care Head Soph reports to the Director, Student Engagement.
- Additionally, the Care Head Soph is expected to take direction from Community Engagement Coordinator, the senior collaborators in the Orientation Program.