UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

Job Title:	Student Awards & Financial Aid Systems Solutions Architect
Department:	Office of the Registrar
Reports To:	Director, Systems, Technology & Analytics
Jobs Reporting:	None
Salary Grade:	USG 12
Effective Date:	August 2018

Primary Purpose

The Student Awards and Financial Aid (SAFA) Systems Solutions Architect is specialist role in systems and in solutions design related to local and enterprise systems (SIS) supporting the student awards and financial aid functions for the campus. The incumbent must have an in-depth knowledge of SAFA processes and systems, as well as related government regulations, in order to provide leadership in the evolution of those processes and systems. The incumbent will apply this knowledge, in collaboration with technical solutions architects in IST and functional leads (particularly Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs—GSPA, Student Finance, Advancement), to design technology solutions to meet diverse stakeholder needs (applicants, students, faculty, and staff).

The SAFA Solutions Architect provides functional leadership for solution designs and implementation that continuously improve the stakeholder experience and improve efficiency of operations. The SAFA Solutions Architect provides expert guidance for student awards and student financial aid data analysis, reporting, and systems process development. This individual is a strategic thinker with a blend of functional knowledge, technical expertise, relationship management, and business analysis skills. This person evaluates business requirements and collaboratively designs systems solutions to improve SAFA processes.

Key Accountabilities

SAFA Systems Leadership and Expertise
- Provide collaborative leadership in leveraging Campus Solutions and other RO-managed technologies in order to optimize the applicant and student experience; contribute to strategic vision for the SIS
- Contribute to the continuous review of emerging SIS functionality to ensure the University is leveraging the maximum possible value and providing stakeholders with quick and easy access to relevant processes and information in the most effective and efficient manner
- Provide consultation and advice on emerging legislation, issues, and developments to stakeholders using the SIS
- Contribute to campus prioritization of tasks as advisory to the Director of Student Awards and Financial Aid, the Systems Director, and IST, and as a member of the SIS cross-functional advisory group
- Research functional tools available and leverage technology capabilities to meet the needs of stakeholders engaged with SAFA processes; proactively learn and evangelize functional tools that will aid in staff efficiency and applicant and student experience
- Mentor and train systems team members within RO and IST and other partner departments related to SAFA processes

- Provide advice regarding required and desired project resources, testing scenarios, implementation, and technical training; make recommendations to the Director about resource needs
- Build and maintain effective working relationships with stakeholders within the RO and across campus, often acting as a liaison between functional and technical requirements
- Represent the university's interests, and influence where possible, the Ministry's plans with respect to changes in student financial aid procedures by actively participating on appropriate sector working groups
- Member of HEUG, current with delivery of new functionality and responsible for representing the University's SAFA-related needs to HEUG and garnering support across other Canadian institutions for needed change, as well as conveying information back to Registrar's systems team

Developing Solution Designs

- Elicit, document and maintain SAFA process documents to aid in solution design
- Verify, clarify user needs, user stories, as needed for large systems projects, understanding legislative policy and requirements as well as staff user requirements and needs
- Develop solution design options in collaboration with IST and other stakeholder groups that address defined SAFA process requirements from the Ministry and various campus stakeholders (particularly GSPA); make recommendations regarding optimal approaches that meet mandated deadlines (may utilize Campus Solutions, or other technologies)
- Collaborate with the Director and business managers to identify potential members of sprint teams, including SMEs and end user testers
- Build and maintain a robust, replicable test environment in conjunction with the Senior Business Systems Solutions Architect and IST
- Ability to think strategically and cross-system / cross-functional units
- Broad understanding of various campus units engaged with SAFA processes (GSPA, Student Finance, Advancement), and relationships with RO and RO-managed SAFA data
- Consult and advise on the impact of business requirements on systems
- Maintain a broad knowledge of future and current projects and developments within the systems group and client group, and a deeper knowledge of content related to SAFA

Student Awards and Financial Aid Specialized Support

- Senior advisor and support role related to complex issues in applicant and student financial aid processing
- Responsible for maintaining and troubleshooting data transfers to and from the Ministry/OSAP, the National Student Loans Service Centre, Federal and Provincial government electronic funds transfer systems, and the document management system; through audits ensure security and compliance with government and university regulations and policy
- Develop reports and processes to support the review/audit of Student Academic Progress (SAP), Continuation of Interest Free Status (CIFS) eligibility, Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) application audits and confirmation of enrollment and payment processes, and other provincial and international student support programs, ensuring compliance to government requirements relating to financial aid eligibility
- Responsible for development of financial aid budget categories, formulas, and need-based methodologies, based on university and government requirements, equity, and systems design, to support determination of student eligibility for automated need-based bursaries for both undergraduate and graduate students
- Responsible for financial aid system setup and configuration in support of both GSPA and SAFA requirements
- Responsible for system development, analysis, and reporting to support the university's mandated Student Access Guarantee (SAG), ensuring compliance with the Ministry's SAG policy

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- Approves design and output of cost codes according to the tuition fee structure and government frameworks
- Accountable for the accurate set up/configuration of all financial aid related tables in the SIS for both undergrad and grad students; requiring a sound knowledge of all SIS modules which can impact accuracy of financial aid setup
- Responsible for the supporting resolution of complex issues related to production activities
- Responsible for complex data reporting and advising regarding data requests; ensures adherence to Policy 46 (Information Management) and obtains approval of appropriate data steward(s) as needed
- Contribute to security infrastructure design for Quest access for applicants, students, staff, and faculty engaged in student financial aid and scholarships processes
- Contributes to maintenance of data dictionary, in collaboration with IST, to support campus-wide analysis and reporting
- Monitor and contribute to the listserves for Ontario Universities Registrar's Association (OURA), PeopleSoft Product Advisory Group, Higher Education User Group (HEUG), and the Ontario Association of Financial Aid Administrators (OASFAA)
- Will be assigned special projects and expected to provide leadership, as well as providing training and mentorship opportunities for Analysts, ensuring continual education and growth

*All employees of the University are expected to follow University and departmental health and safety policy, procedures and work practices at all times. Employees are also responsible for the completion of all health and safety training, as assigned. Employees with staff supervision and/or management responsibilities will ensure that assigned staff abide by the above, and actively identify, assess and correct health and safety hazards, as required.

Required Qualifications

Education
- Post-Secondary degree in Computer Science, Management Information Systems or equivalent combination of education and systems experience in a post-secondary environment
- Certified Business Analyst Professional (CBAP) certification would be an asset
- Project Management training would be an asset

Experience
- 8 – 10 years of progressively responsible related work experience, including client relationship management, system solution design and deep experience with an enterprise student information system
- comprehensive knowledge of the purpose and philosophy of government and university financial aid and scholarship programs, and in-depth knowledge of financial aid systems
- 3 – 5 years of progressive experience prioritizing and leading continuous improvement initiatives, designing and leading the development of increasingly complex systems solutions, preferably in a post-secondary environment
- Significant experience in interpreting requirements, fit/gap analysis, data modeling, and documentation
- Extensive experience working with relational database tools, queries, and relational data, preferably in a multi-system student environment

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities
- Proven ability to understand complex situations, tasks or problems, often with multiple stakeholder groups, analyze them using a systematic approach and negotiate shared priorities and agreed-upon business solutions
- Track record of understanding customer needs and designing solutions to address

- Demonstrated strong analytical skills and an accomplished problem-solver; able to take risks and make decisions in the absence of complete information
- Innovative, with strong continuous improvement and project management skills
- Proven ability to adapt and work effectively within a variety of situations including changes in job demands, changing or competing priorities, changes in software, or multiple stakeholder groups
- Demonstrated ability to maintain strong, collaborative working relationships, to engage and influence senior stakeholders, often from other departments or external to the university
- Must be a steward of change, provide innovative solutions and be adept at educating and mentoring others
- Demonstrated ability to complete tasks on schedule
- Strong understanding of university policy and operations
- Strong understanding of relevant legislative and compliance requirements (e.g., FIPPA, AODA)
- Clear communicator with excellent interpersonal skills, tact, judgement, and diplomacy essential
- Advanced knowledge of an enterprise student information system (Peoplesoft Campus Solutions, document management would be an asset)
- Basic knowledge of data analytics
- Working knowledge of a document management system
- Advanced knowledge of MS Word and Excel
- Proficient with PowerPoint
- A continuous improvement mindset and an exceptional customer service focus are critical for success along with exceptionally strong attention to detail and problem-solving skills.

Nature and Scope
- **Contacts:** The SAFA Solutions Architect will work closely with technical staff in IST, the RO Director Systems, the RO leadership team, members of the RO Systems team, and others in the RO as necessary. Will regularly interact with, support, and influence faculty and staff in other units across campus who are engaged with SAFA processes. Success of the incumbent's work will depend upon positive and productive relationships across campus. External relationships include the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities/Ontario Student Assistance Program, government auditors, Ontario Universities Application Centre, the Ontario Association of Financial Aid Administrators (OASFAA), other institutions using PeopleSoft, PeopleSoft Inc., PeopleSoft Product Advisory Groups, Higher Education User's Group Listserves.
- **Level of Responsibility:** Responsible and accountable for developing solution designs that contribute to continuous improvement of the SIS and enhanced experiences for applicants, students, staff, and/or faculty. Must provide strong leadership and expertise across the campus on SIS technologies and Ministry legislation related to student awards and financial aid. Must be accountable for the positive relationships with stakeholders and is expected to provide effective mentorship within the systems group.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** In consultation with the Director and IST, responsible and accountable for RO systems delivery and evolution related to student awards and financial aid. Will make decisions that could have a significant impact on and consequences for the student systems structure, configuration, and development as it relates to student awards and financial aid processes. In this context, builds consensus on optimal solutions, priorities, and resources required.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands**: Requires high attention to detail and must be able to handle distractions, changing priorities and interruptions while meeting multiple required deadlines.
- **Working Environment:** Minimal exposure to disagreeable conditions typical of a position exposed to stress and pressure associated with tight timelines and result oriented position; intermittent work outside the normal operating hours of the institution and occasional travel.