



Northwest Territories

## Job Description

### **IDENTIFICATION**

<i><b>Position Number</b></i>	<i><b>Position Title</b></i>	
71-NEW	Senior Advisor	
<i><b>Department</b></i>	<i><b>Division/Region</b></i>	<i><b>Location</b></i>
Education, Culture and Employment	Directorate	Yellowknife

### **PURPOSE OF THE POSITION**

Reporting to the Deputy Minister the Senior Advisor is accountable for providing strategic analysis and advice on major policy, program, and operational issues affecting the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE). The Senior Advisor is directly responsible for providing senior policy support services as well as providing co-ordination, facilitation and analysis services to the Deputy Minister.

### **SCOPE**

The Senior Advisor position is located in Yellowknife and reports to the Deputy Minister. The position contributes to the development of new approaches to government strategies, policies and program development related to the Department's mandate.

The incumbent functions at the senior level in the department and must possess a wide mix of managerial, communications, analytical, public relations and diplomatic skills as well a sound knowledge of current and evolving GNWT policies, programs, issues and developments. The incumbent coordinates a number of interdepartmental/interagency subcommittees and interacts with other government departments, agencies, community organizations and industry representatives.

ECE's policy, program and legislative responsibilities are broad and cover a broad range of individuals across the lifespan, boards, agencies, non-government organizations and the public at large. Programs and services include language, culture and heritage; early childhood development; kindergarten to grade 12 education; adult and postsecondary education and training; career development; income security; labour; immigration; and libraries. Various governance and administrative arrangements are in place to deliver ECE's programs and services. The Senior Advisor is required by the Deputy Minister to be in

regular and extensive contact and consultation with other GNWT department, provincial territorial and federal government representatives, representatives of boards, agencies and non-government organizations.

The major challenge for the Senior Advisor is to provide strategic advice to the Deputy Minister on key ECE issues. The Senior Advisor also develops positions and approaches that reflect a high level of political, economic and social sensitivity and responsiveness.

The position serves as the key point of contact for the Minister's office. The incumbent must be able to handle the added responsibility of dealing with requests for information and direction on various issues that the Minister's office needs assistance with.

The incumbent is responsible for reviewing submissions, policy papers, issue summaries, reports and correspondence and identifying and assessing political implications or priorities, determining areas of inconsistency or contradiction in policy positions and proposing solutions for the Deputy Minister and the department's Executive Committee.

The Senior Advisor is responsible for monitoring political developments and assessing the priority and relevance of critical policy and program documents, papers, submissions, news releases, information and other material flowing in and out of the Deputy Minister's office, for ensuring that such documents and materials are in compliance with policy decisions and that they are accurate from a territorial policy perspective, and for ensuring that the Deputy Minister and the Minister receive timely and relevant material and information required on regular, ad hoc or urgent basis.

The Senior Advisor also works with the Executive Committee to provide advice, guidance and interpretations to department divisions on the intent and purpose of actions, decisions and requests made by the Deputy Minister and the Minister, on priorities, procedures and guidelines for the development and processing of formal documents and Cabinet/Financial Management Board submissions and on the development of material requested by the Deputy Minister.

The incumbent serves as the focal point of access to or contact with the Deputy Minister, and as such, determines the acceptability, relevance and priority of information or agenda topics for meetings or discussions with the Deputy Minister. This requires the Senior Advisor to exercise the utmost tact, diplomacy, discretion and judgment when dealing with urgent, confidential and important issues.

The Senior Advisor's scope for personal initiative and freedom of action is considerable and is determined through the establishment and maintenance of confidence and trust with the Deputy Minister, other members of ECE's Executive Committee and the Minister's office. The Senior Advisor assesses a variety of competing problems and issues, determines which require action and establishes the relative priorities and deadlines for the development of appropriate responses. Inaccurate or untimely decisions and responses could have adverse or negative effects on the Deputy Minister or the Minister and could result in public embarrassment or a lack of credibility.

The Senior Advisor is a member of ECE's Executive Committee. This requires the incumbent to input directly into the development of strategic directions for ECE and to respond to major policy and program issues, positions, and directions, and to communicate information on decisions taken or actions required and to follow up and report on the status of such actions. The Senior Advisor must keep current with priorities, decisions and positions taken by the Executive Committee on a broad range of issues and anticipate any trends, directions or issues that may affect the policy, program or management activities of the department and advise the Deputy Minister and Executive Committee.

Since the Deputy Minister's office is focus for numerous requests for information and calls for action from

members of the public, Members of the Legislative Assembly, the media, lobbyists, advocates and public interest groups, the Senior Advisor is required to deal with, evaluate and assess the sensitivity, urgency, relevance and priority of such requests, and to report them to and/or consult with senior departmental officials in the development of appropriate responses.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The major responsibilities include:

1. Providing strategic analysis and advice to the DM on major policy, program and operational issues affecting ECE by:
  - gathering critical information in order to provide expert advice and consultative services on all issues related departmental programs
  - conducting research in support of policy, planning and management initiatives
  - evaluating decision papers, policy proposals, planning, and management initiatives
  - providing the DM and Divisions with another perspective on the strategy, and/or content of departmental information
  - providing strategic advice to the DM on major current, new and emerging ECE policy, program, operations, and divestiture issues and develop critical positions and approaches
  - analyzing and situating issues being addressed in the Directorate and discussing feedback with the DM, the Executive Committee, and Minister's Office; assessing what more could be needed or would contribute to the advancement of the issue
  - liaising and consulting with Executive Committee members, Ministerial staff, senior officials from other departments at territorial, provincial and federal levels, Aboriginal organizations, private industry, and various stakeholders, to obtain information, to seek advice and to initiate action on a wide range of subjects on behalf of the DM.
2. Managing the daily operations of the Directorate office by:
  - foreseeing upcoming issues and taking action to support the DM's needs and assist the incumbent in meeting commitments to the Minister and/or colleagues
  - managing tasks and projects to improve services; participating on project teams, working groups and interdepartmental committees as a representative of the Directorate
  - providing leadership and facilitating the development and maintenance of a co-operative working environment within the Directorate, with the Minister's Office and with Divisions
  - planning and directing the smooth operation and administration of the DM's office, and manage approved human and financial resources
  - directing the review of all correspondence, material and issues referred to the DM's office, assess and determine their relative priority, sensitivity and urgency, and expedite those matters of urgent concern to the DM and/or the Minister
3. Managing information requirements by:
  - determining the extent and purpose of information requirements
  - making others (DM's staff, Executive Committee and department staff) aware of information requirements
  - initiating action to obtain information within very precise time frames
  - providing direction on format, content and style to divisions within ECE and establishing time frames for receipt of such information
  - responding to requests for information from the DM, following up on departmental action required, implementing action as necessary or when urgent issues require a response, and contributing to the co-ordination and facilitation of the work flow in the Directorate

4. Providing the support necessary to co-ordinate briefing and submissions materials by:
  - directing the review, analysis, co-ordination and acceptability of briefing material, notes, background material, speeches, Ministerial correspondence, submissions, and other information submitted from all areas of the department for the approval of the DM
  - providing feedback and opinions of the DM to ECE staff on briefing material, correspondence, etc. which they have prepared and recommending approaches and strategies.
5. Establish and maintain effective communication links between the Minister and his/her staff, the ADM, Divisional Directors and ensure that executive directions, decisions and action requests as well as the flow of advice, information and interpretations are conveyed with clarity, timeliness and preciseness.
6. Assumes project leadership, where appropriate and assigned by the Deputy Minister, over departmental-wide and/or intergovernmental initiatives including but not limited to:
  - i. development of departmental Succession Plans
  - ii. Input into departmental and government-wide strategic planning exercises

## **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

- Must be knowledgeable about the national, provincial/territorial and domestic political environments and other governments' positions and policies and be capable of assessing possible implications for the NWT and the Department.
- Must be able to apply this knowledge in a rapidly changing and challenging environment.
- Must be creative, focused on offering solutions and work well in a team environment.
- Must have an ability to analyze, evaluate and interpret a wide range of information including legislation, policies, provincial/territorial/federal and departmental initiatives. Cabinet and FMB direction, financial data, legislative proposals and strategic plans and apply it within the unique socio-political environment of the NWT.
- Must have knowledge of project management and an ability to manage large and small projects from pre-planning to implementation and evaluation.
- Must have superior verbal and written communication skills.
- Must possess an ability to build and maintain a good working relationship with colleagues throughout the GNWT, and with partners of other governments and organizations.
- Must possess knowledge of issues related to Aboriginal Self-Government and Land Claims in the NWT.
- Must have the ability to effectively represent the Department and its position accurately and professionally.
- Must have knowledge of negotiating and be a strong communicator with diplomatic skills in order to calmly and assertively express and defend the views of the Department.

- Must have strong strategic-thinking skills and judgment, as well as a demonstrated ability to research, analyze and synthesize multiple concepts and priorities.
- Must have strong computer skills including the ability to work with a wide range of computer applications including word processing, spreadsheet and presentation software.
- Must be able to work to deadlines and respond effectively to frequently changing deadlines.
- Must be able to work in highly stressful situations.
- Must be self-directed, display initiative and be creative. The incumbent is expected to work both as a team member and independently with minimal supervision.

These knowledge, skills and abilities are generally obtained through completion of a Master's level degree (Business Administration, Public Administration, Political Science) with five year's experience or a bachelor degree and ten years of progressive experience preferably in the fields of government, planning and/or analysis.

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

### **Physical Demands**

Normal office environment

### **Environmental Conditions**

Normal office environment

### **Sensory Demands**

Periods of intense concentration required when listening as well as for proof-reading documents.

### **Mental Demands**

High levels of stress may be experienced while dealing with competing priorities, urgent or emergency situations and where a high degree of confidentiality is required.