

IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Education, Culture and Employment	Student Case Officer (SCO)	
<u>Position Number(s)</u>	Community(s)	Division/Region(s)
71-4660	Yellowknife	Income Security Programs/Headquarters

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Student Case Officer (SCO) delivers Student Financial Assistance (SFA) to enable Northwest Territories (NWT) residents to obtain the assistance required to participate in postsecondary studies. This position delivers SFA in accordance with NWT legislation, policies, guidelines and established procedures.

SCOPE

Reporting to the SFA Manager, this position is located in Yellowknife and is responsible for the delivery of SFA, which ranges in scope from student grants, loans and scholarships. SFA provides funding to eligible residents to assist with their educational financial needs.

SFA consists of an annual budget of approximately \$14 million and serves an average of 2,200 applicants per year from across the NWT.

The SCO must work with a high degree of autonomy and independence to adjudicate eligibility and establish entitlement using problem-solving techniques, judgment, precedence, legislation, policy, guidelines and procedures.

The SCO works with ECE staff, other GNWT departments and outside agencies, such as Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS), Postsecondary Institutions and Aboriginal Governments, using a case management approach to integrate services, ensure program delivery and make the best use of resources available.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Determine eligibility for program funding and identify other required supports by conducting individual assessments:**
 - Counsel applicants and use assessment processes to determine need and eligibility criteria to ensure applicants qualify for program support.
 - Inform applicants on program benefits, guidelines and appeal processes.
 - Ensure that applicants apply and receive any benefits they may qualify for.
 - Verify all information supplied by applicants during the assessment process.
 - Complete client assessments online using the Case Management Administrative System (CMAS), Loan Manager Plus (LMP) and System for Accountability and Management (SAM) software programs.

- 2. Provide Student Financial Assistance Program benefits and services to eligible NWT residents in accordance with NWT legislation, policies, guidelines and procedures:**
 - Establish client files.
 - Advise students on alternative funding to assist with their educational expenses.
 - Monitor client progress to ensure compliance with regulations and standards.
 - Maintain on-going professional relations and assist clients with participating in postsecondary education.
 - Collect and include all relevant documentation on case file (electronic and paper) in consistent, accurate and timely manner.
 - Manage all operation records from creation or receipt, through processing, distribution, organization, retrieval and disposition.
 - Assist clients with appeals when necessary.
 - Attend appeal hearings and provide verbal reports to the appeal committee and board.
 - Interpret relevant sections and recommend changes to the SFA Regulations, policies, guidelines and procedures.
 - Process client payments using CMAS.
 - Investigate suspected fraud and recover overpayments in CMAS.
 - Prepare briefing notes for students who are considered a credit risk.
 - Provide supporting documentation when requested by Manager and/or Specialist in response to Senior Management or Ministerial requests.

- 3. Develop community capacity in order to provide enhanced programs and services:**
 - Develop working relationships and liaise with other community and regional agencies/Governments who may also work with SFA recipients (e.g., registrars, school counselors, Career Development Officers, Client Services Officers).
 - Maintain a strong working relationship with Financial Reporting and Collections staff within the Department of Finance.
 - Make presentations to schools, organizations, community groups and the general public about the SFA program

- Update and distribute the SFA program information
 - Develop and maintain relationships with provincial education administrators, university and college registrars, industry and business, high school teachers and counselors, adult educators
 - Maintain contact with other funding agencies to avoid duplication of funding and to investigate optional supplementary funding possibilities
 - Develop and maintain a strong working relationship with partner departments and the public by liaising with the Audit and Finance section of the Income Security Division, Financial Reporting and Collections, Department of Finance, school officials and clients to obtain information or to explain regulations and/or policies and procedures
- 4. Perform other duties as assigned to achieve Governmental and Department goals through special projects and initiatives:**
- Act for Manager in his/her absence
 - Assist with duties of Student Case Receptionist and Support as needed.
 - Provide training to support casuals
 - Train new staff and oversee support casuals brought in during peak periods to ensure quality, format correctness and promptness in entering required data

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Through knowledge of the Student Financial Assistance program as well as a working knowledge of other funding sources such as Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement, Income Assistance, Employment Insurance
- Demonstrated skills in case management, assessment, interviewing techniques and program compliance
- Strong financial investigation skills, including writing, empathic listening, conflict resolution, providing feedback, questioning, paraphrasing and interpreting verbal and non-verbal information
- Calculation skills in determining eligibility amounts for funding and/or recoveries
- Computer skills, including familiarity with window-based programs, word processing, spreadsheet, communications software and basic trouble-shooting
- Decision making, problem solving, planning, time management, calculating, record keeping and report writing skills
- Personal management competencies such as self-control, initiative, information seeking, stress and anger management, teamwork and cooperation, relationship building and working in a changing work situation
- Client service orientated including valuing diversity, treating all clients fairly and equally, being flexible and maintaining confidentiality
- General knowledge of alternative sources of funding for postsecondary studies
- Familiarity with postsecondary education institutions and programs
- Counseling skills

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

- A Diploma in social sciences, public administration, business administration and a minimum of 2 years' experience in a related field
- Successful criminal records check is required

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

Most of the incumbent's time will be spent sitting with frequent opportunity to move about. The incumbent also spends a great deal of time operating the computer, which can have an impact on the eyes, arms, wrists and back.

Environmental Conditions

The incumbent works in a generally comfortable work environment. The incumbent may be subject to harassment in or outside the workplace by clients who have applied for assistance.

The incumbent may experience high stress due to the financial assessment nature of the job and requirements to notify students of their eligibility.

The incumbent shall be required to travel to regional centers once or twice per year as well as smaller communities several times a year.

Sensory Demands

The incumbent must be able to concentrate and conduct confidential business while working in an open area. The SCO must be vigilant to detect fraud and program abuse. Officers need to scrutinize all documents for validity, look for verbal and visual signs during client assessments, act and follow-up on tips provided by the community members and consult with colleagues, Manager and HQ program staff.

Mental Demands

The incumbent works in an isolated environment where there are high public expectations; diverse client needs and program responsibilities that require constant attention and action. Pressure to meet deadlines and provide quality service may place mental fatigue on the incumbent.

The SCO will be involved in situations that require dealing with hostile, angry and uncooperative clients or their advocates in a professional manner.

The SCO is expected to enforce regulations, policies, guidelines and procedures to extended family, friends and acquaintances that can be stressful.

Heavy daily workload, enforcement of GNWT legislation, student dissatisfaction, dealing with disputes regularly and working toward resolutions of issues and meeting timelines while making attempts to deal with disputes may be extremely stressful.

Due to the heavy workload, the incumbent will be required to work overtime during peak periods.

There is high stress associated with this job due to the requirement of having to inform some clients they are not eligible for financial assistance as per the rules of the SFA program. Clients routinely question the authority and decisions of the SCO and complain of unfair treatment to the Manager, Director, Assistant Deputy Minister, Deputy Minister, Minister and elected officials of the Legislative Assembly.

The SCO is required to demonstrate understanding and empathy while working with clients of the program.