



Off Campus Soph Selection Guidelines 2023-2024

Overview

Western University, Student Experience and the Division of Housing & Ancillary Services support equitable, and transparent selection practices for all applicants affiliated with the Orientation program.

The primary goal of Soph selections is to attract a diverse cohort of student applicants in order to facilitate the best possible Orientation Program and transition for incoming students.

Eligibility

All Orientation Leaders must be dutifully enrolled as an undergraduate student at Western University for the 2023-2024 fall and winter academic terms.

- **HBA1:** Students entering HBA1 in September 2023 are eligible to be an Off Campus or a Residence Soph.
- **Internships/Exchanges:** All Orientation Leaders participating in an exchange program and/or an internship during the 2023-2024 academic year will not be eligible to participate in the Orientation Program

All Orientation Leaders must achieve a minimum 65% average in their course marks from the fall and winter academic terms ending in April 2023. Summer and intersession courses do not count towards the calculation of this average.

All Orientation Leaders must be in “good standing” with the University and Housing & Ancillary Services and have no record of any existing or active behaviour management sanctions (Residence Contract and Code of Student Conduct), which restrict their eligibility to participate in the Orientation Program.

New Soph Written Application

Soph applications are due on **Sunday, February 12th at 11:59pm.**

The intake of all Soph applications will be through Qualtrics. Applications can be found [here](#).

The application package for New and Returning Soph positions consists of 4 pieces:

1. Building Preferences & Demographic Questions
2. Written Application – *Demonstration of Competencies*
3. Resume
4. Two Work or Volunteer References

For a comprehensive position description please visit [here](#).

Demonstration of Competencies

Applicants will be assessed on the competencies relevant to the position. As part of the written application process, applicants are required to cite personal experiences that demonstrate the position competencies. In addition, applicants must reflect on the role of a Soph and what one thing they would like to accomplish in their term, indicating clear steps. Competencies comprise knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours that are required to be successful in the position.

The competencies they will be assessed on include:

1. **Leadership & Self-Efficacy:** Ability to understand personal needs and limitations to demonstrate strong leadership skills to develop shared vision, identifying personal leadership philosophy and leading students and staff to excellence.
2. **Teamwork & Collaboration:** Work independently and collaboratively in a team environment.
3. **Critical Thinking & Problem Solving:** Provide solutions by using imaginative approaches where constructive thinking, innovation, resourcefulness are required to address difficult situations, community needs and make appropriate referrals
4. **Communication & Interpersonal Relations:** Convey ideas to effectively engage students, and peers, while helping their understanding and maintaining lasting relationships.

Application Review

When all the applications are received, the Selections Committee will promptly circulate digital copies to the Student Experience Team and Off Campus Leadership teams. The Student Experience Team and Off Campus Leadership teams will mark each application (anonymously) with a competency-based evaluation.

Interview Preparation

Interview Process

Sophs who progress to the next stage of the selection process will be chosen to partake in a group interview and subsequent job-fit assessment. Paired leadership teams will interview with a professional staff from either Housing or Student Experience. Leadership teams will get a list of interviewees to review prior to these interviews and will be given the opportunity to declare any conflicts of interest or extraneous information about applicants.

Conflicts of Interest

The panel must make every effort to ensure not only that its decisions are fair and objective, but also that they are seen to be so. Apparent or perceived conflicts of interest can be as damaging as actual conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest may be deemed to exist or perceived as such when panel members:

- are a relative, or close friend, or have a personal relationship with the applicant;
- are in a business relationship with the applicant;
- have had long-standing personal differences with the applicant;
- are closely affiliated with the applicant (e.g. shared living arrangements, on a team or club);
- have frequent and regular interactions with the applicant in the course of their duties; and
- feel for any reason unable to provide an unbiased review of the applicant.

It is the role of every panel member to disclose any conflict of interest or any circumstance that might reasonably give rise to the perception of conflict of interest to the OREP Designate.

Declaring Conflicts of Interest

Panel members are required to declare actual or perceived conflicts of interest during the pre-interview meeting to the Student Experience Designate. The Student Experience Designate will provide the panel with advice on the implications of the declared conflict of interest and give recommendations on how to address it.

The "closeness" of a relationship will ultimately determine the type of accommodation required. The goal is ultimately to mitigate situations in which a panel member has a private or personal interest sufficient to appear to impair their decision making. Even the perception that a panel members' ability to make a fair judgment is in question warrants consideration.

Following the pre-interview meeting, if a potential conflict of interest is identified:

1. The Student Experience Designate will be asked to submit, in writing, a statement explaining the nature of any conflicts of interest to the Coordinator, Student Experience and Engagement via pabdie@uwo.ca.

2. The Associate Director, Residence Engagement, in consultation with the OREP Designate, will fairly assess all declared conflicts of interest and impose accommodations, if necessary.
3. A decision will be made as to whether the panel member can continue with their involvement in the selection process with that individual, or if a proxy evaluator needs to score that applicant's interview.

In cases where a conflict of interest exists between a panel member and an applicant, the following accommodations may be applied:

- Insist the panel member does not take notes or evaluate the applicant;
- Exclude the panel member from participating in deliberations;
- Replace the panel member with a suitable proxy;

Extraneous Information about an Applicant

Extraneous information could be any information about an applicant that might introduce a bias.

Extraneous information can bring forward the risk of unfair inferences, which might alter panel members' impression of an applicant.

Extraneous information can only be used in the evaluation of an applicant if the information relates to the applicant's ability to perform the position responsibilities and/or positively represent the University.

Declaring Extraneous Information

Panel members are required to declare any extraneous information about an applicant during the pre-interview meeting for consideration by other members of the selection panel, including the OREP Designate. Potentially incriminating information should not be shared about an applicant during the pre-screen meeting without the OREP Designates permission. Extraneous information of this nature should be disclosed to the OREP Designate privately, prior to the pre-screen meeting.

Panel members should not disclose information about an applicant, or present them in ways which might create prejudice. Panel members must be careful not to generalize from a sample of behaviours observed in a singular context, which might not necessarily be related to the position requirements.

Following the pre-interviewing meeting, the panel member who shared the extraneous information will be asked to submit, in writing, a statement to the Coordinator, Student Experience and Engagement via pabdie@uwo.ca explaining:

- How they obtained this information;
- The perceived implications if the applicant were to be selected for the position; and
- The context surrounding a specific incident, several incidents, or concerning patterns of behaviour.

The Associate Director, Residence Engagement, in consultation with the Student Experience Designate, will fairly assess all extraneous information about an applicant and make a decision as to whether the applicant can remain in the process.

Unless there are clear grounds to remove an applicant from the applicant pool based on extraneous information, the applicant should remain and be evaluated based on the predetermined selection criteria.

Panel Member Roles & Responsibilities

Student Experience Designate

The role of the Student Experience Designate (member of the Student Experience Team, Residence Life Management Team, or Orientation Staff member) is to facilitate the interview and oversee deliberations to ensure a fair selection is made. The Student Experience Designate is responsible for fostering consensus-dialogue amongst panel members while ensuring all remarks about an applicant are:

- Relevant to the position requirements and expectations;
- Substantiated with concrete examples; and
- Not rooted in personal bias or assumptive in nature.

Incoming Leadership Team

The role of the Incoming Head Soph and Programming Assistant is to educate panel members about their experiences in the role, the challenges of the position, and the culture of the Soph Team.

Length of Interview

- 30 minutes

Interview Process

Each applicant advancing to the interview stage will participate in a behaviour-based interview, designed for candidates to draw on previous leadership experience and relate this to the soph position.

Returning soph applicants will be asked to reflect on previous experience and apply that experience to the role a returner would play on the team.

Draft Process

New Soph applicants' individual scores throughout the selection process will be ranked, with a 60% weight given to the interview, and 40% weight given to the application.

Returning Soph applicants' individual scores throughout the selection process will be ranked, with a 50% weight given to the interview, 15% weight given to the application, and 25% weight given to their Leadership Team reference.

A score cut-off will be determined across the entire applicant pool to determine the highest-ranking applicants, who will be placed in their top preference teams.

Please note: The Incoming Head Soph and Programming Assistants are not a part of the draft process as they are not considered voting decision-makers because of their perceived conflicts of interest with all or most of the applicants.

References

Applicants are asked to provide two supervisory references when applying for the position. Candidates' references will be reviewed, and flagged should there be concerning behaviour.

Returning applicants will also receive an assessment from their Head Soph based on their performance in their current role.

Final Steps

Once the teams are selected, candidates will be notified of their outcome in the process via email.

Once candidates have signed their contracts and Equity Census (Qualtrics), Head Sophs will be provided with their team lists to call and make introductions of their Leadership Team and set up their first team meeting.

The Residence Orientation Coordinator will supply general feedback to unsuccessful applicants about their interview performance only if requested during that 30-day period following offers, in collaboration with the Leadership teams.

Retention of Records

A file of documents for each position shall be retained for a period of 1 year by the Associate Director, Residence Engagement, on behalf of the interview panel. Following the Soph Draft, the OREP Designate on the panel will collect:

- interview panel notes; and
- any other information used to aid in the selection process.

Confidential Information

Information contained in applications, shared during interviews, and discussed during deliberations is strictly confidential and shall not be disclosed to anyone not on the panel.