

ROLE DESCRIPTION

ACADEMIC

REPORTS TO: Designated Supervisor, which could include:
Vice-President, Academic (VPA)
Associate Vice-President, Academic (AVPA)
Director of the Centre/Department

PRINCIPLE ROLES:

An academic is responsible for the delivery, maintenance and development of programs and course or study in his/her area within the Faculty, and for the maintenance and furtherance of his/her role in research and participation in the life of Athabasca University and the community of which it is a part.

An academic's professional activities shall include the following elements: course delivery, program and course development, research, university committee and administrative duties, and community service as detailed in the sections which follow. In any given year, no one academic's activities need encompass the entire list of responsibilities set out below. Rather, an academic's activities for a given contract year will combine whatever subset of these activities is considered appropriate, given the university's unique mandate, the needs of its program and course development priorities, and the criteria for satisfactory performance and promotion as laid down in the Terms and Conditions of Agreement between Athabasca University Governing Council (AUGC) and the Athabasca University Faculty Association (AUFA). These combinations and their appropriateness are to be the subject of annual discussion in an attempt to reach a written agreement between the academic and the designated supervisor, and embody appropriate consultation and discussion with members of the various centres and program directors.

Unless otherwise approved by the VPA, the academic is expected to comply with the University's Office Days and Attendance in the Workplace policy, which became effective September 1, 1996.

DETAILED DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

These are assigned and approved annually on July 1 by the VPA and will be based on the following:

1. Course Delivery

The academic is responsible for all aspects of delivery of his/her courses. In fulfilling this role, he/she may, with the Chair or Director's approval, rely upon tutors, markers, instructors, seminar leaders or support staff. The responsibilities for delivery, however, reside with the academic.

a) Tutoring

The academic normally participates in the tutoring of the equivalent of 2 blocks per year. Adjustments to this workload may be made depending on the type of course delivery and the duties assigned by the VPA. A minimum of 1 block of tutoring (including all assignment and exam marking) or its equivalent will be undertaken by every academic each year.

b) Seminars, workshops, laboratories, etc.

The academic is responsible for conducting these activities. Depending upon an individual's workload and the geographic setting of the activity, these functions may be delegated.

c) Electronic Modes of Delivery

The academic is expected to familiarize him or herself with electronic modes of delivery and, where required, to achieve their implementation.

d) Tutor Hiring and Supervision

In conjunction with Tutorial Services, the academic is responsible for hiring tutors, providing them with course specific orientation, and ensuring that they provide the necessary service to students.

The academic:

- serves as an academic resource person for tutors;
- establishes course specific tutor performance guidelines and uses general AU guidelines to evaluate tutor performance;
- develops and maintains resource base (e.g. bibliographies, laboratory and study materials) for tutors, in cooperation with library staff;
- works with tutors to maintain and improve student motivation and success.

e) Marking

The academic is responsible for the evaluation of student performance, including the setting of all exams and credit exercises. The responsibility for controlling the quality and standard of all course-related marking rests with the academic.

f) Record Keeping

The academic is responsible for providing academic support staff and the Registry with the information required to keep student records accurate and up-to-date. Specified on-line systems such as TRIX will be used for this purpose.

g) Course Maintenance and Revision

1. The academic is responsible for ensuring that courses under his/her coordination are current and academically sound.
2. The academic is responsible for ensuring that exams are changed regularly (where exam banking is not used).

The academic advises Course Materials on the acquisition of supplies of course materials.

The academic:

- advises the Library on revised Supplementary Materials List;
- in conjunction with Institutional Studies, collates data needed for course revision, including tutor feedback and course evaluations;
- initiates proposals for course revisions.

h) Student Recruitment

The academic, in cooperation with colleagues in his or her centre and beyond, and with Public Affairs and Student Services will assist with student recruitment.

The academic:

- suggests strategies for recruitment and participates in their implementation;

- cooperates with Student Services in advising students on the content and appropriateness of courses;
- advises the Registry on the transferability of courses from other institutions to Athabasca University programs.

i) Outreach

Where required, the academic seeks out and develops initiatives in cooperation with communities, agencies and institutions in keeping with the university's mandate of removing barriers that traditionally restrict access to and success in university-level studies.

The academic cooperates with affiliated institutions and agencies in the delivery of Athabasca University courses at these institutions, or to provide assessment of credentials for credit toward AU degrees and certificates.

2. Program Planning and Development

The academic advises on and assists in the assessment of the need for and appropriateness of new and revised programs.

The academic:

- develops, where required, proposals for programs;
- develops and maintains liaisons with external agencies as required for the initiation and maintenance of programs;
- advises the university on the raising of funds to support the development and delivery of programs.

3. Course Planning, Development, and Production

The academic writes, or assists with preparation of, proposals for new or revised courses in approved programs.

The academic:

- serves as course manager or author where appropriate for development of courses;
- identifies external subject matter experts for course authoring as required;
- keeps up-to-date with the various modes of delivery, which are available, and recommends their implementation as appropriate.

4. Research and Academic Development

The academic remains current in and contributes to his/her academic discipline and/or the field of distance education by means of such activities as original research, publication, editorials, referencing work, etc.

5. University Committee and Administrative Work

The academic contributes to the administration work of the university, including its councils and committees.

6. Community Services

The academic contributes expertise to the work of groups and agencies of the wider community and public, which the university serves.