



2023 Workshop Series

Workshop

Building a Research Administration Career

Drew Gyorke

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Research Administration Careers

What I'd like to present:

- Quick overview of areas within research administration
- Features of working in a Research Services Office more generally
- Key competencies, what to expect
- Thoughts about career growth actions
- My career path

Research Administration Careers

What is research administration?

- Wide range of focus areas and career trajectories at U of T
 - Research Development
 - Research administration (pre- and post-)
 - Inventions and commercialization
 - Compliance including Ethics, Finance and Audit, EHS
 - EDI
 - Research Security, Data Management
 - IT Systems (for example RIS, MR-suite, Information Analysis etc.)

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Features of research administration:

- Ultimately, research administration is service to the faculty members and those who support the faculty member, and also to the institution.
- Great deal of interaction: collegiality and collaboration are key at all levels. Solo operators will struggle.
- Constant management of multi-faceted and/or competing demands: time management, staying calm under pressure, responsiveness and courtesy
- Be mindful of remit
- Keep a balance between rush and taking the time required on an issue or a request (where you can)

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Key competencies:

- Strong communication skills: you will interact with stakeholders from different sectors.
- Awareness of research and its goals overall, and how it fits into the trajectory of academic careers.
- Be familiar with policies aimed to protect academic freedom, such as publication, intellectual property.

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Key competencies:

- Accuracy, accuracy, accuracy. It is essential to interpret and seek clarification where there is uncertainty (no matter how experienced you are!)
- Diplomacy particularly with negotiation, managing sensitive issues, and listening.
- Get comfortable with presenting (courses if you need them)
- As you evolve your career: greater awareness of the responsibilities, and inter-dependencies of others in research administration and university administration.

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Thoughts about pursuing a research administration career:

- Assess your experience and explore opportunities: transferability of skills.
- Talk to people: information interviews are invaluable.
- Learn, network, and get involved!
 - CARA: volunteer with committees, the board, national and regional conferences (be a presenter or better yet, a co-presenter)
 - Reach out to peers at other institutions, broaden your perspective
 - Volunteer at U of T programs: Rose Patten program
 - Consultations with Funders
- Enrich more than just your career : take advantage of resources available to you as a member of the U of T community

My career path

- Research administration was not intentional
- Varied work background between non-profit, private sector, and working for two MPPs (constituency offices).
- 2002, Senior Grants Advisor, Social Sciences and Humanities, McMaster University.
- 2004, Research Partnerships and Grants Office, SSH, RSO
- 2006-08 International Research Development, SSH, RSO
- 2008 to now: Director, AFF, RSO
- Served on the CARA Board (3 times)
- Mentor in the Rose Patten Leadership Program

My career path

Other helpful factors:

- Education
- Volunteerism in the community
- Supervisory experience
- Volunteerism in the workplace

Question & Answer