



**Position Title:** Education Specialist: Higher Education

**Grade:** B

**Reports to:** Director: Education

**Duration of Contract:** Three-year term

**Location:** Burnaby, British Columbia

*Commonwealth of Learning (COL) helps governments and institutions to expand the scale, efficiency and quality of learning by using new approaches, appropriate technologies, and open and distance learning (ODL) methodologies. Headquartered in British Columbia, Canada, COL promotes innovation and works with Member States to facilitate learning for sustainable development. It is financed by voluntary contributions from Commonwealth governments.*

### **Overview of the Position:**

The Education Specialist: Higher Education conceptualizes, manages and implements programme initiatives to increase access to quality higher education leading to employment and entrepreneurship targeting marginalised groups, particularly women. The focus will be on strengthening higher education vis-à-vis Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4). Activities include evidence-based advocacy for the development and implementation of ODL policy at both the national and institutional levels, technical assistance to develop systems and build capacity in dual-mode institutions and new open universities, leadership development, supporting the development of quality assurance models and processes, and promoting the adoption and use of open educational resources.

The Specialist will be a thought leader with a demonstrated ability to deliver results. S/he is expected to forge partnerships with regional and international organisations, collaborate with the private sector, provide advice to ministers, university presidents and other senior government officials, and act as a COL expert in higher education to advance COL's outcomes and impact.

### **Duties and Responsibilities:**

- Conceptualises, manages and implements programme initiatives for higher education through innovative approaches that harness the potential of open, distance and technology-enabled learning to increase access to quality education. This involves adopting innovative approaches to deliver concrete results; formulating an initiative strategic plan and an annual action plan with budgets based on the organisational strategic plan; managing expenditures within defined limits; and actively participating in the monitoring and evaluation of all activities within a Results-based Management (RBM) framework.
- Manages the implementation strategy for assigned activities and project(s). This involves working as a team with the Director: Education and other staff to ensure a coordinated approach within the programme; identifying new ideas; managing consultants; leveraging other sources of support including raising additional funds; and organising logistics.
- Develops and implements a monitoring and evaluation framework for assigned project(s), collects the necessary data and produces reports in accordance with COL's RBM framework and project requirements.
- Provides expert-level guidance and direction to a diverse range of stakeholders on the design and implementation of models/systems and policies in support of learning for sustainable development.
- Contributes to COL's overall mission and corporate life in planning, stakeholder engagement, and internal processes by providing advice in areas of expertise and by representing COL's interests at international fora.
- Regularly disseminates best practices in Higher Education and promotes women's participation.
- Ensures direct report(s) have clear work plans and conduct performance appraisals on staff who work in the area; and
- Performs other duties related to COL's programme or activities, as required.



### Direct Reports:

Programme Assistant (shared)  
Consultants

### Qualifications and Experience:

Qualifications	Experience
<p>Postgraduate qualification in one or more of the following:</p> <p>Education / Social Sciences / Humanities or related discipline.</p> <p><i>Desirable:</i></p> <p>Doctorate degree in any of the above disciplines.</p> <p>Qualification in open and distance learning and/or development.</p>	<p>Ten or more years of relevant professional experience of working in open, distance and technology-mediated learning with specific reference to higher education which demonstrates strong knowledge of trends, policy issues and technical expertise.</p> <p>Five years of experience in international development.</p> <p>Experience of implementing strategic plans.</p> <p>Experience of working in developing countries.</p> <p><i>Desirable:</i></p> <p>Experience of relating learning to sustainable development.</p>

### Skills and Competencies:

- **Innovation & Creativity:** Injects originality into daily work through research, personal knowledge, and networking relationships; Thinks "outside the box"; Brainstorms and encourages new ideas and solutions; Takes appropriate risks.
- **Prudence:** Sets an example by consistently modelling high standards of performance, honesty and integrity especially with appropriate use of funds; Ability to mobilise, prepare and manage financial budgets in an effective, efficient and judicious manner to deliver 'value for money'.
- **Professional Judgment:** Possesses an in-depth understanding of the programme goals; Is sought out by others for advice in an area of specialisation; Has the expertise to be perceived as a thought leader and be a credible interlocutor in the field; Ability to develop realistic, relevant and achievable plans including monitoring and evaluation strategies; Demonstrates a "can-do" and positive approach.
- **Networking:** Ability to develop and maintain a network of contacts in government agencies and institutions on issues related to education; Exercises discretion and diplomacy while representing COL's interests; Capable of identifying and selecting quality partners, as well as to prepare, negotiate and manage agreements consistent with COL's policies.
- **Communication, Supervisory and Team Orientation Skills:** Communicates effectively in a variety of settings including to wider audiences; Displays sensitivity to ethnic and gender issues in verbal and written communications.  
Possesses the capacity and skills to manage human resources (staff, consultants, advisors, etc.).  
Ability to lead teams as well as communicate and work with others, both within and outside COL, by promoting cooperation and collaboration to achieve collective outcomes; Openly shares information, knowledge and expertise with the team and co-workers; Appropriately gives and is open to feedback.
- **Committed to Gender Equality:** Ensures that men/boys and women/girls receive targeted attention, where they are most marginalised; integrates gender considerations into programme planning, implementation, and gender disaggregated data is available as evidence.



**Personal Attributes:**

- Commitment to COL and its ideals, notably to the role of learning as the key to sustainable development and to the capacity of technology to enhance that role.
- Ability to work collaboratively in a multicultural environment, where integrity and respect for diversity are expected.
- Demonstrates professionalism through provision of quality services, responsiveness and compliance with organisational policies and procedures.

**COL Headquarters is located at 4710 Kingsway, Suite 2500, Burnaby BC Canada V5H 4M2**