

Job Description

Business Title:	Graduate Academic Assistant, Climate Justice Research Collaborative (GAA for CJRC)
Classification Title:	Research & Facilitation, Level A
Job Category:	Research and Facilitation
Employment Group:	Management & Professional (AAPS)
Department:	University Sustainability Initiative
Salary:	\$23.52 hourly
Full/Part Time	Part Time (15-20hrs Term 1 and 80-90hrs Term 2)
Desired Start Date:	November 12th, 2019
Job End Date:	April 30th, 2020
Funding Type:	Program for Undergraduate Research Experience (PURE)

Profile

The UBC Climate Hub is a new university-wide initiative that aims to connect and empower university and community stakeholders to take bold climate action for a just future. The Hub advances UBC's commitment to sustainability leadership and innovation by bringing together students, staff, faculty, and community partners to mobilize knowledge, facilitate interdisciplinary teaching and research, and provide programs focused around climate solutions.

The Climate Justice Research Collaborative will create new opportunities for undergraduate students to collaborate on research projects focused on climate change and climate justice. These projects will have the potential to support community-led efforts to adapt to life in a changing climate, and to contribute to the existing understanding of the climate crisis. Addressing this crisis requires collaborative, interdisciplinary action across sectors. Increasing the number of UBC students with the skills, knowledge, and motivation to take that action has never been more important. Incumbents will join an interdisciplinary team of 4 GAAs with diverse academic experience. Ideal candidates will have previous experience with interdisciplinary research, data collection and analysis, and an understanding of climate justice. We strongly encourage graduate students to apply across all faculties and academic disciplines. The Climate Justice Research Collaborative was developed by the Climate Hub with support from the faculties of Arts, Land and Food Systems, Education, Applied Science, Forestry and Sauder School of Business, and funding from the UBC VP Research and Innovation.

Job Summary

The GAA for CJRC is responsible for overseeing the undergraduate research projects and working with project stakeholders (community members/organizations, the UBC Climate Hub and supervising Faculty). GAAs will work together to develop initial seminar-style workshops to kick-off the project. These workshops will introduce key concepts such as climate justice and just transitions (discussed further below), and will help students to understand the basic requirements of any good research project, such as the need to identify clear research questions and methodologies. The 3 GAAs will work together to create workshops and assist in project monitoring and supervision for their groups. Mentors will then provide one-to-one guidance and support to undergraduate students throughout the project.

Organizational Status

The GAA reports to UBC Climate Hub staff at the UBC Sustainability Initiative. The work of the GAA is also monitored by the supervising faculty member. The incumbent is expected to perform work independently and with guidance from the UBC Climate Hub and faculty supervisors.

About the Climate Justice Research Collaborative (CJRC)

The CJRC will create interdisciplinary collaborations between groups of undergraduate students. These groups will then conduct research into a climate-focused topic co-identified with a community partner. Partners may be drawn from the Climate Hub's existing network of allies, which include not for profit groups such as the Environmental Law Centre at the University of Victoria and the David Suzuki Foundation. Interested students will also be supported to identify partners and research topics from their own communities, whether from the Global North or the Global South. Research teams and partnerships will be developed during Term 1 of the Winter Semester and the research will be completed over the course of Term 2. Undergraduate students will be offered the opportunity to gain course credit for their work by registering in a course of directed studies under the supervision of one of the project's faculty sponsors during Term 2. Project coordination and support will be provided by graduate student mentors, who will be hired by the Climate Hub.

The CRJC will overcome organizational limitations by limiting the time commitment required from faculty members to a minimal commitment of one meeting at the project launch, one mid-semester to review of progress, and oversight of the assessment of students' work at the end of term. Despite minimal faculty involvement, the project's additional support layer of graduate student mentors will guarantee that each student will receive the dedicated one-on-one support needed to allow them to excel.

Our project design process has been centred on principles of social justice, equity, and inclusion. The Climate Hub team is made up of Canadian and international students from diverse backgrounds who each bring a different perspective to the issue of climate change. Each of us is committed to recognizing that the burdens and responsibilities of climate change have not been shared equally. We will ensure that this is taken into account throughout the course of this project and community partnerships will be developed with this in mind.

Worked Performed: Research and Action

Term 1 2019: Preparation

- Research best practices and strategies for generating/supporting undergraduate research projects with the assistance of the UBC Climate Hub
- Co-develops seminar style workshops with other GRAs for undergraduate students on research strategies (how to select research topics, methodologies, etc) and on the topics of climate justice, just transition and other topics that may be relevant to the research topics
- Meet with undergraduate students, supervising staff, UBC Climate Hub and community organizations to discuss the research project and next steps for Term 2.
- Helps with co-creating monitoring and evaluation metrics along with the UBC Climate Hub.

Term 2: Project Implementation

- Support undergraduate students in finalizing the research questions along with the community organizations.

- Supervise the undergraduate research projects (conducting research, gathering data, communicating with partners as needed, connecting students with on/off-campus resources, etc).
- Manages and maintains relationships with key partners and stakeholders; represents the Climate Hub in relevant meetings with stakeholders
- Meet regularly as a group and with undergraduate mentees to ensure projects proceed smoothly.
- Attend the midterm check-in along with the UBC Climate Hub, students, faculty supervisors and community organizations to ensure the research project is running smoothly based on the monitoring and evaluation metrics designed in Term 1
- Assist faculty supervisors in the grading of assignments and final submissions for undergraduate students
- Advise the UBC Climate Hub as needed based off of project project goals and outcomes.

Qualifications

- Current graduate student at UBC
- Experience with interdisciplinary research and a nuanced understanding of climate justice
- Ability to work independently and accurately
- Experience with community based research
- Ability to apply sound research techniques, methodology and logical critical analysis.
- Strong organization and interpersonal skills
- Experience with data collection and analysis
- Experience with supervising students an asset

Supervision Received

This position offers considerable latitude. Work is reviewed against achievement of tasks and performance objectives identified by the UBC Climate Hub Projects Administrator and the UBC Climate Hub Coordinator.

Supervision Given

The GAAs oversees the work of undergraduate students in the CJRC project.

Consequence of Error/Judgment

The work of the GAAs will be monitored by the UBC Climate Hub and supervising faculty. The GAA is expected to exercise initiative and good judgment in establishing priorities and overseeing the research-related tasks. Errors in judgment or communications could result in reputational damage to the UBC Climate Hub, UBC, and possibly other community partners, academic institutions and researchers, with possible consequential financial implications. New or unusual problems should be discussed with UBC Climate Hub staff and faculty supervisors.