

**Position: Student Research Assistant - Intergenerational Connections & Futures for Afghan Scholars**

Number of Openings

1

Faculty/VP

Faculty of Arts

UBC Department

Office of Regional and International Community Engagement - Human Rights Collective

Hours Per Week

10

Preferred Degrees/Disciplines

Applied Science/Engineering, Computer Science/IT, Science/Environment/Agriculture, Health Sciences, Library, Archival & Information Studies, Arts/Social Sciences, Business Administration/Commerce/Management, Education/Teaching, Human Kinetics/Kinesiology, Law/Legal Studies

Additional Documents (**preferred**)

Cover Letter

Anticipated Start Date

September 26, 2022

ID

TBD

Supervisor

Dr. Jenny Peterson and Tamara Baldwin

Title of Research Project

Intergenerational Connections & Futures for Afghan Scholars

Outline of Research Project

This project is part of a recently announced national two-year IDRC funded initiative entitled 'Placement, Preservation and Perseverance: Afghan At-Risk Scholars, Activists and Students' which was launched in the spring of 2022. This wider project seeks to respond to the ongoing crisis in Afghanistan, which continues to have a significant impact on the higher-education sector in the country, by facilitating a range of programs and research projects that support Afghan knowledge communities and civil society actors in the diaspora.

UBC acts as the main hub and facilitator for one of the three main program areas of this project, namely the 'Intergenerational Connections and Futures' arm of the national project. With Afghan scholars and students increasingly forced to flee to countries such as Canada, teaching and mentorship between and across generations is severely disrupted—severing relationships of academic kinship and intergenerational knowledge transfer. Research into such disruptions and research-informed policy solutions to and through Action Research, will be the main undertaking of the UBC research team. More specifically, this 'International Connections and Futures' research cluster will investigate the temporal and geographical implications of Afghanistan's now disrupted knowledge communities. This arm of the project will also connect Afghan Students with Afghan Scholars & Activists (ASAs), in order to facilitate an intergenerational exchange of ideas and support scholarly networks that will allow for future research collaborations led by Afghan scholars and students. Led by student-researchers, this program area will contribute to deliverables that will inform research, policy and practice regarding how to best respond to the impact on the higher education sector and knowledge production in Afghanistan.

#### Student Researcher Contributions:

Student researchers will play a central role in the more detailed development of this program area and related research. While general research and project aims have been set, the specific deliverables and research questions for the Intergenerational Connections and Futures program are in the early stages, leaving space to continue to ensure Afghan leadership of the project. With great importance being placed on the importance of Afghan voices setting the research agenda, the students hired for this position will be pivotal in both the setting of the research questions and methodologies, as well as the eventual delivery of these. Using principles of Action Research, and informed by an understanding of the needs of particular scholars (for example women and ethnic minorities), UBC student researchers will be supported by ORICE and a faculty advisor in developing a strategy for both researching and building intergenerational scholarly connections. The more specific goals and day-to-day mechanics of this work will be determined by the student researchers themselves with lived experience of displacement and will be guided by their sense of what they determine to be the key issues related to (re)establishing scholarly, knowledge based communities in the diaspora.

Work will also focus on the type of connections required to facilitate further research collaborations on future visions for Afghanistan. UBC student researchers will meet with Afghan researchers who are part of the other two programmatic areas of the national project ('Placement as Process' and 'Knowledge Preservation') to discuss and plan future

scholarly collaborations, creating opportunities for more sustained student researcher involvement in the long term.

#### Skills/Attributes Gained

Communication (e.g. oral and written), Project Coordination (e.g. planning/multi-tasking), Teamwork (e.g. interpersonal skills), Adaptability (e.g. openness to change), Organization (e.g. time management), Initiative and Motivation (e.g. ownership of work), Analysis and Problem Solving (e.g. critical thinking), Research Skills (e.g. data collection/analysis), Organization (e.g. time management), Research Skills (e.g. data collection/analysis)

#### Student Learning and Responsibilities

##### Student Responsibilities:

- Assist in the continued development of key research aims and questions for the Intergenerational Connections and Futures (ICF) arm of the national project in consultation with national research teams
- Using principles of Action Research, identify national and local /community partners that might support, help develop or implement research plan
- Work with above stakeholders to refine research questions and processes
- Liaise with the researchers (as needed) from the other two arms of the national project.
- Take the lead on one of the key research aims/questions with the goal of producing a research report or article for publication.

#### Supervision and Level of Support

UBCs student research assistants will primarily be supervised by one of the PIs on the national project, Dr. Jenny Peterson (UBC Political Science), alongside Tamara Baldwin (UBC Office for Regional and International Community Engagement). Weekly supervision meetings will be held throughout the project period. Moreover, student researchers on this project will be part of a wider research and engagement team housed at ORICE's 'Human Rights Collective'. Through the Collective, student researchers will be provided with a sense of community, supports for their own wellbeing as well as research and communication supports from other student research-staff working on a range of related projects. Training on Action Research, community engagement other necessary skills will be provided as needed.

Student researchers will also be supported by the national team (based primarily at Carleton University). They will be included in monthly meetings as needed, where they will be able to engage with researchers on other arms of the project. Importantly, these monthly meetings are attended by several Afghan scholars and activists working at

Canadian universities on the other two arms of the IDRC project. This will ensure that UBC student researchers are likewise receiving regular supervision and support from senior Afghan scholars with expertise in related areas.

#### Qualifications

As per national IDRC project expectations, these posts are reserved for students from Afghanistan (applicants who now hold domestic student status or who have attained PR or citizenship elsewhere are welcome to apply). Applicants are invited to discuss their eligibility with the faculty advisor before applying, at [jenny.peterson@ubc.ca](mailto:jenny.peterson@ubc.ca)

#### Further Qualifications:

- Strong verbal and written communication skills
- Experience in or a willingness to develop qualitative research skills
- Familiarity with or a willingness to develop skills related to Action Research
- Ability to work well with a team
- Intellectual curiosity and creativity in scholarly approach
- Self-motivated with a strong capacity for independent work
- Understanding of political, economic and social history of Afghanistan and its contemporary implications
- Commitment to ethical community engagement
- Commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.