APRU Graduate Academic Assistant (Research) Job Description

**Job Title:** Graduate Research Assistant, Centre for Rural Health Research – Spring, 2015 (APRU)

**Duration:** March – August, inclusive (6 months)

**Wage:** $23.81 / hr

**Hours:** Preferred commitment of 20 hours per week during office hours. A flexible schedule is possible and can be organized with the APRU Research Lead and CRHR Co-Directors.

**Job Description:**

*Position summary*

The student who works for our team will gain an increased awareness and understanding of the challenges for planning and delivering health services in rural British Columbia. The student will assist specifically with various systematic realist reviews, based on the current projects of the Applied Policy Research Unit (APRU), a branch of the Centre for Rural Health Research (CRHR). The student may also assist with the planning and implementation of other research projects as required.

*Description of duties*

- Supporting the design and implementation of a systematic evidence review methodology
- Conducting literature searches and retrieving journal articles
- Critical appraisal of epidemiological studies and health service literature
- Assisting with the completion of manuscripts for submission for publication to academic journals
- Assisting with formatting and citations (Mendeley experience an asset)

The level of complexity for these tasks will vary, however attention to detail and independent troubleshooting will be required.

*Applied Policy Research Unit*

The incumbent will be working with the Applied Policy Research Unit. APRU does secondary, policy-focused research. We provide evidence syntheses of existing research, policy documentation, and government briefs to: a) answer outstanding health service programming questions in a policy-relevant way and in a policy-relevant timeline; and b) reveal where evidence is weak or missing to encourage research in those gap areas. The unit seeks to strengthen the connection between policy-makers and academic researchers in the area of rural health service planning and programming.

APRU is currently working on a very exciting evidence review commissioned by political health service bodies both in BC and internationally. Specifically, the commissioners have requested evidence on the safety of small volume maternity units without local access to surgical support. This review will use data from hundreds of sources from all over the world, and our outputs will be varied - a report, a policy brief, a toolkit, a gap map, and academic papers at the least.
The primary skill set required by the incumbent is high level critical reading, including reading 'against' the article, critical appraisal, applied reading, and critical summary skills.

**Supervision received**
The student will work individually and collaboratively with research team members, and will be under the supervision of the Unit research lead in addition to the Co-Directors of the Centre. Weekly team meetings will be held to offer the student an opportunity to share his/her progress as well as to hear about other projects at CRHR. The student will have the opportunity to learn, be creative and share ideas in a supportive work environment. The Co-Directors will maintain regular contact with the student by email, phone and in person.

**Importance of student role**
The Centre for Rural Health Research is a dynamic research centre made up of academic and community-based researchers, policy makers, administrators, and other key stakeholders working together to develop an evidence-base from which to make decisions regarding the delivery of rural maternity care services in British Columbia. The findings from this project will be critical to understanding the safety of non-surgical maternity and midwifery-led services in rural communities and will inform the planning of future infrastructure for rural birth services.

**Application submission**
All applicants must submit a cover letter, resume and writing sample. Please send these materials to kevin@crhr.ca.

**Qualifications:**

**Education and experience**
The incumbent should be a graduate student. Knowledge of quantitative research methodology and previous experience preparing research syntheses and reports are required. A passion for rural health and/or maternity care is preferred.

**Skills and abilities**
The student must have experience using Microsoft Suite programs (i.e. word, excel, power point, etc.) Experience with SPSS and Mendeley are an asset, but not required. The student must have effective oral and written communication, interpersonal and organization skills; be capable of exercising initiative, tact, discretion and confidentiality; have the ability to work within a team environment, prioritize and to meet deadlines.

**Student Learning Components:**

**Training and orientation**
The student will be provided with an orientation manual which includes an introduction to CRHR and past publications. Returning employees from the team will assist in directing the student to a successful start with the assigned project. A one-on-one meeting with a Co-Director will be set up to discuss the
Although based out of Vancouver, our research is entirely focused on health services for rural/remote BC communities. The student will contribute to new understanding about planning rural health services.

**Mentorship opportunities and professional development**
The student will have the opportunity to learn about health services and research through direct interactions with the Co-Directors and research team members. When opportunities arise, the student will be included in high-level meetings with interdisciplinary professionals and stakeholders. The student will be invited to biweekly research meetings that are held with other teams in the Department of Family Practice to increase networking and the sharing of innovative/inspirational ideas.

**Support and evaluation**
The student will set personal development and project goals with their supervisor and will check in throughout the term to assess their progress. The student can tailor these goals to meet professional and/or graduate level competencies. Regular feedback and opportunities for reflection will be provided by the Co-Director, as well as an exit interview with the student to reflect on the work experience.

**Workplace skills and personal development**
The student will gain valuable experience in systematic review design and analysis. Enhanced research skills will be gained. Competencies such as teamwork, troubleshooting, communication and critical thinking will be developed. The student will develop career-related skills such as carrying out multiple tasks, setting goals to prioritize and balance responsibilities, and learn to accept critical feedback to improve skills.

**Health and Safety Practice in the Workplace**

The workplace of the student will be in the David Strangway Building offices on UBC Vancouver Campus. As part of the incumbent’s orientation, they will be familiarized with the Faculty of Medicine’s Workplace Safety: Policies and Procedures manual and Emergency Preparedness: Policies and Procedures manual. These guidelines address the definition of workplace incidents and the expected reporting mechanisms, as well as emergency procedures for lockdown, fire, earthquake etc.

The incumbent will also be familiarized with the building security mechanisms.

Links to WorksafeBC policies as well as UBC’s Health, Safety and Environment procedures will also be provided.