

The Role of Advisory Committees of Council (ACOCs)

Call for Applications: Graduate Research Assistant February 2024

The Community Engaged Scholarship Institute (CESI) is hiring a graduate student to join our team as Research Assistant. CESI is a research and teaching support unit in the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences working in collaboration with community organizations to address community research needs. Our work enables university-community collaborations that positively impact our partners and the wider community.

About the Project

In Ontario, Advisory Committees of Council (ACOCs) are a well-established component of municipal governance. These committees can provide a venue for ongoing interaction between constituents, Council members, and municipal staff. They address a wide range of topics, including accessibility, transit, heritage, the arts, and more. They might also offer significant policy advice in crucial areas of municipal responsibility.

Despite their widespread use, little research has explored how ACOCs function. Existing ACOCs differ significantly in terms of their structure, scope, and representativeness, and there are few resources available to assist Ontario's 444 municipalities in developing and operationalizing new and existing ACOCs.

In 2023, in collaboration with the City of Guelph's Clerk's office, our research team used a collaborative approach to develop a framework that Guelph, and potentially other municipalities, can use to guide their creation and use of ACOCs. We combined data gathering approaches (surveys, interviews, and participatory research) and undertook a collaborative analysis process to create a framework for directing the future design, function, resource needs, etc. of ACOCs. The research was guided by community engaged scholarship principles such as addressing the needs of the community, promoting reciprocity, and advancing justice.

About the Role

We are seeking a highly motivated and detail-oriented Graduate Research Assistant to join our team. The successful candidate will work closely with our interdisciplinary team to support this ongoing research project. At this stage of the project, our main goals include supporting the Clerk's Office as they implement the Framework, and undertaking additional literature reviewing and analysis to prepare academic papers to disseminate research results.

General Outline of Duties

- Gather, compile, and annotate literature related to the project and its objectives on various topics related to public policy, municipal policy and governance, diversity and inclusion, civic/public engagement, citizenship, deliberative democracy, etc.
- Conduct interviews with research participants and stakeholders.
- Conduct both qualitative and quantitative data analysis, including coding, content analysis, thematic analysis, data cleaning, descriptive statistics, regression analysis etc.
- Prepare knowledge mobilization materials such as scholarly publications, project reports, and presentations that create value and impact for all partners.
- Complete other tasks associated with the project as requested by the supervisor.

About the Role

This position reports to Dr. Winnie Chan, the postdoctoral scholar on the project team. The role will also involve regular meetings and communications with project team members, City of Guelph staff and other involved stakeholders and parties.

- Applicants must currently be enrolled as a MA or PhD student at the University of Guelph
- This position will require some in-person work in Guelph, and some work can be completed remotely.
- **This role requires strong English writing skills, applicants must be able to exhibit excellent English writing abilities.**
- Time commitment: 10 hrs per week
- Contract date: March 11 - June 7, 2024
- Rate: \$28.00/hour
- It is recognized that the hours per week will be flexible to accommodate the mutual needs of the project, supervisor and research assistant, but not to go beyond the maximum number per week permitted under the time commitment
- We invite and encourage applications from all qualified individuals, including from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in employment, and/or those with experience relevant to the project



Required Qualifications

- MA or PhD student in a relevant field, such as political science, public policy, or sociology, experience with preparing relevant academic publications an asset
- Experience with gathering, compiling, and annotating literature and synthesizing complex information an asset
- Research experience with local governance and/or community engaged research an asset
- Experience with conducting interviews
- Experience with qualitative and quantitative data analysis
- Strong organizational skills and attention to detail
- Outstanding written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office (e.g., Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, and Outlook) and other virtual communication platforms
- Knowledge of research methodology and data analysis techniques

Application Instructions

Please submit:

1. a cover letter (max 1 page);
2. a resume with a summary of academic writing and research experience;
3. a writing sample.

in **one PDF file** to Dr. Winnie Chan at waiyinc@uoguelph.ca. The file name should be "FIRST NAME _ SURNAME _ ACOC GRA".

Deadline for submission: Friday 16th February 2024, at 11:59 pm.

Interviews of shortlisted applicants will be held remotely.