



**Job Title:** English Conversation Program Assistant

**Position Classification:** Project Assistant

**Job Description:**

**DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES**

In collaboration with the UBC Learning Exchange staff the student will:

- Assist the Learning Exchange's English Conversation Program by welcoming and supporting learners, volunteer facilitators and UBC students with enthusiasm and respect, working with them to develop their interests, capacity and leadership
- Assist in supporting UBC students to lead English Conversation-based activities
- Assist in the development and running of a seniors project at the Learning Exchange
- Assist the English Conversation team to assess, place, register and orient new learners in the program
- Support volunteer facilitators by organizing and providing necessary supplies and materials, offering encouragement and advice, and other tasks
- Occasionally lead conversation sessions
- In partnership with learners and volunteer facilitators, update and develop lesson plans and curricula
- Collaborate with and support UBC students on placement in projects, activities and workshops
- Occasionally assist in planning, publicizing and coordinating special events
- Assist in record-keeping and participant-tracking that supports program evaluation and reporting to funders or the rest of the University
- Assist staff team to keep Learning Exchange public space neat and tidy throughout the day, including keeping washroom presentable
- Perform administrative duties such as preparing and tidying rooms, photocopying, assisting in maintaining and stocking supplies, and answering phone inquiries.
- Assist in any other related activities as required; for example, possibly leading a special project based on the Work Learn student's own interests.
- Regular works hours for the position are usually during Monday through Friday, 9:00-5:00pm, with occasional evening or weekend hours as required

**SUPERVISION**

- The student will be directly supervised by the Coordinator, Peer-Led English Conversation Program, and will also receive task supervision from other members of the staff team
- Student will attend program staff meetings when they occur during the student's work-hours and will have regular one-on-one meetings with supervisor to discuss tasks, performance, learning objectives, challenges and successes

**COMPLEXITY OF TASKS**

Tasks require significant interpersonal skills, and the ability to empower others and work with marginalized people. Assertiveness, sensitivity and self-awareness are helpful assets and will also be developed, along with skills in community capacity building and working with educationally/socially/economically marginalized people. Knowledge of languages other than English, of issues in language learning and in immigration would be an asset and will also be learned. Competence with MS Excel used as a database would be helpful – training can be offered.

**GOALS OF UNIT**

The English Conversation Program is a core program for the Learning Exchange, offering not only free, accessible and



effective English practice for low-income Canadian citizens and newcomers, but also the opportunity for marginalized residents of the neighbourhood to build confidence and personal capacity by volunteering and taking on leadership roles. The program is key to supporting the wider goal of sharing and exchanging Downtown Eastside community and University resources in ways that are sensitive, and that contribute to and sustain successful collaborations going forward. The Work Learn student's role is directly related not only to unit goals but to UBC's community engagement commitment.

**Qualifications:**

**SKILLS/KNOWLEDGE**

- Skilled at working effectively with a diverse range of people, particularly seniors and people from marginalized communities including newcomers, refugees and Canadian citizens with English as a second language.
- Able to support students who are new to community placements
- Positive, friendly and professional with the public, both in-person and on the telephone
- Familiar with common software programs
- Good communication skills, particularly when working with English language learners
- Some experience of supporting learning (e.g. facilitating groups, tutoring 1:1) preferred
- Able to follow through on directions
- Able to problem-solve in collaboration with others
- Available to work flexible hours occasionally

**EDUCATION LEVEL**

- Open to all year levels, undergraduate or graduate

**FIT**

- Aware of, or excited to learn, the principles of community capacity building
- Aware of, or excited to learn about, resources and issues in the Downtown Eastside and similar communities
- Confident in, or excited to build capacity in, leading peer-support of other students in community-based learning
- Interested in issues around seniors' well-being and engagement.

**Student Learning Components:**

**ORIENTATION & TRAINING**

- Orientation to the learning and community development mandate of the unit and hands-on training to delivering this mandate via the daily front-line activities
- Training on assertiveness, health and safety, personal security, mental health awareness, general building and office procedures, and informal computer tutoring practices.

**FEEDBACK & SUPPORT**

There will be ongoing feedback; the student will usually be working alongside at least one other member of the staff team. Feedback will take the form of "in the moment" discussion, longer debriefs as appropriate and also formal, scheduled meetings.

**MENTORSHIP**

As discussed above, the student will have regular one-on-one meetings with supervisor to discuss tasks, performance, learning objectives, challenges and successes.



#### REFLECTION

- The student will participate in regular team sessions which debrief the challenges of dealing with patron behaviors and mental illness, and which also share opportunities presented by patrons and notable successes.
- The student will be included in the team culture of mutual support, open communication and shared problem solving.
- The student will be given the lead on specific projects and tasks as appropriate, and their achievements and effort will be acknowledged on an ongoing basis, as with other team members.

#### RELATION TO CLASSROOM LEARNING

For students in education, health sciences and social sciences:

- Experience and learn first-hand the psychological, social, health and economic issues involved in marginalization of communities along with approaches and models aimed at sustainable and effective methods of tackling them
- Learn and practice basics of project management, plan or coordinate events or projects
- Develop practical program implementation and evaluation skills

#### PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WORKPLACE SKILLS AND GRADUATE COMPETENCIES

- Further develop interpersonal skills by working with Downtown Eastside residents and colleagues, by maintaining a harmonious and learning-oriented environment in various unit program areas.
- Develop supervision and support skills by supporting volunteers (both community members and students)
- Learn and practice facilitation of meetings
- Develop problem-solving and decision-making skills
- Develop facilitation and coordination skills by helping out in all Learning Exchange activities, particularly the English Conversation Program, with the goal of empowering and connecting people
- Develop professional writing skills
- Develop administration skills including compiling, evaluating and/or organizing data
- Be involved in additional training and/or professional development activities

#### NETWORKING

- Opportunity to network, communicate and collaborate with DTES organizations such as local non-profits, community centres, neighbourhood houses etc. and also refugee and newcomer resources such as S.O.S, ISS etc.