



## Work Learn | Winter 2024



Jocelyn Chan, Year 1, Doctor of Medicine (MD) Undergraduate Program, Work Learn, Knowledge Translation and Social Media Coordinator, ICORD

I'm currently a UBC medical student in the Class of 2028 and this summer I celebrated 5 years of my Work Learn position at ICORD! This is my third degree at UBC and throughout all of my studies, I've been working in various Work Learn jobs, so I'm a huge proponent of this program and the opportunities that it brings.

I completed my BSc in Integrated Sciences, combining Pharmacology and Physiology, from 2017-2021. The summer before starting my first year, I was super keen to find work and it was my first time applying for UBC's Work Learn program, so I decided to cast a wide net and apply for any position that caught my interest. I ended up being hired as a Varsity Game Day Promotions Staff for UBC Thunderbirds events. The person who tosses T-shirts at sports games, leads fan chants, and waves the large Thunderbirds flag around after our school wins? Yes, that was me! To date, that's been one of the most unique jobs I've had and something totally different than what I was studying at the time.

After I completed my first year, I decided to apply for the Summer Work Learn cycle but with a focus on laboratory and science-related jobs. I was hired for my first paid lab assistant position as a Yeast Experimental Evolution Research Assistant in Dr. Sarah Otto's lab at UBC's Biodiversity Research Centre. It was wonderful to work with a team specialized in evolutionary biology while also learning essential microbiology and sterile techniques that are routinely used across many basic science labs.

The summer before my third year of undergrad, I began my current role as a Knowledge Translation and Social Media Coordinator at the International Collaboration on Repair Discoveries (ICORD), a spinal cord injury research center. I thought this would be the perfect position to combine both my scientific and creative inclinations, and disability advocacy has always been something I've been passionate about. On top of that, it was a great opportunity for me to train on bridging scientific knowledge to general audiences. I continued this job while completing my MSc in Experimental Medicine. Now that I'm in medical school, I'm still happily balancing my ICORD projects with my studies.



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

UBC Career Centre

I was initially drawn to this position because it was a unique opportunity to work on my ability to convey scientific findings to the broader community, also known as knowledge translation. I really think being able to communicate ideas simply and effectively to the people the research directly impacts is an invaluable skill for any science-related field—whether in academic research, industry, or healthcare. In school, we're taught all these foundational science concepts and techniques, but there's often less emphasis on how to translate evidence-based information into something meaningful and accessible to the public.

Communication skills are something we continually work on, but I do believe my ability to explain scientific and medical concepts to a general audience has improved tremendously since joining ICORD. This is in part due to all the writing I've done in this role, but also thanks to the chance to continually meet and interact with many different types of people including researchers, clinicians, people living with a spinal cord injury and the general public. The ability to explain niche subject matter has come in handy for presentations, whether that's for school or at scientific conferences, and now it's also very helpful when interacting with patients during clinic visits.

As a Knowledge Translation and Social Media Coordinator, I have several different roles. I am the web administrator for [icord.org](http://icord.org), our website which has 10K+ monthly views. My job includes things such as fixing tech issues, maintaining web security, and creating or updating our various website sections. More importantly, I also get to do fun knowledge translation work! This includes creating and managing content for our 3 social media platforms, supervising volunteers who write lay summaries of research on our [SCInfo blog](#), and interviewing scientists to write articles for our community newsletter.

I help write our quarterly community newsletter, The ICORDian, which is read by a community of people interested in spinal cord injury (SCI) including researchers, people living with SCI, caretakers, family and friends of people with a SCI and more. The goal of our newsletter is to share ICORD research findings in an accessible way for everyone, including those without a science background, along with news and resources from our partner disability advocacy organizations. To date, I've contributed to 21 issues and written over 60 stories, which is crazy to think about! If spinal cord injury and disability research is something that interests you, I invite you to [take a look at and subscribe to our free newsletter](#).