

Research Assistant Opportunity
Casual Position
Quality in Canada's Built Environment: Regenerative Communities

Position start date: Immediate

Overview: Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada until 2027, this research partnership brings together – for the first time – 14 universities, 70 researchers and 68 public and private organizations at the municipal, provincial and national levels. The partnership is meant to stimulate a vital dialog demonstrating how those active in considering and creating the built environment across Canada can contribute to a redefinition of quality that moves us to heightened equity, more social value and greater sustainability at a critical moment for our societies and for our planet. The partnership addresses the diversity of public environments impacting the everyday life of millions of Canadians in urban spaces, buildings and landscapes. The program has three aims:

1. Analyzing the current limitations of environmental norms and sustainability models to bring us closer to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. Co-designing new paths to equity, diversity and inclusion in the built environment.
3. Define new definitions and application frameworks to improve the social value of the built environment through roadmaps to quality.

Athabasca University's research theme is "Regenerative Communities". The initiative, led by Athabasca University, "Strategic Framework: Rural Housing Affordability & Food Sovereignty," emphasizes quality through decommodification in the built environment. The roadmap is grounded in guiding values such as ecological restoration, cultural richness, social justice, equitable economics, community empowerment, and transparency. It identifies systemic inhibitors like top-down regulatory frameworks, geographic isolation, limited financial accessibility, and de-skilling that impede rural development. The roadmap provides various strategies to combat these challenges, including advocating for responsive rural policy reform, advancing local needs-focused environmental initiatives, scaling proven rural economic models, and implementing dynamic quality monitoring. The roadmap visualizes the progression from foundational stages like community roundtables and research development to implementing policy frameworks, pilot deployments, and ongoing monitoring. The final stages focus on feedback and knowledge dissemination.

Specific activities include, but are not limited to:

1. Data collection and analysis
2. Workshops and design charrettes
3. Community engagement
4. Surveys and interviews
5. Book, articles and grants writing

The successful candidate will gain valuable knowledge in the broad areas of architecture and the built environment with a focus on regenerative design. He/she will acquire hands-on learning and research skills through qualitative interviewing, data collection, analysis, design and writing. They will also gain experience communicating with diverse audiences, including other academics and professionals within the scope of the study. All skills acquired will be professionally transferable.

The successful candidates will work with and directly report to Dr. Henry Tsang, Chair of the RAIC Centre for Architecture at Athabasca University.

Qualifications:

The duration of this position is for a minimum 6-month period, with possibility of extension until the end of the research grant. The number of weekly hours will vary but equivalent to approximately 7-14 hours per week (with a maximum of 17.5hrs/wk). Rate of pay commensurate with experience and collective agreement provisions. The successful candidates will be nearing the completion of an undergraduate degree or undertaking a graduate degree, majoring in architecture or a related discipline. The successful candidate will have research interests and/or experience related to the theme of quality in the built environment.

Sought skills include: architectural design, graphic design and writing skills. Past experience in research, including data collection, analysis, archiving, and dissemination, is an asset. Exceptions to this credentialing can be made in cases where the applicant's educational, work, and lived background provide an exceptional combination of experience and knowledge. This is a remote position, for candidates based within Canada. Travel within Canada is anticipated.

How to apply:

Qualified individuals are encouraged to submit their application by email to Dr. Henry Tsang at htsang@athabascau.ca. Applications should include (as a single PDF file) a brief cover letter that summarizes your skills, interests and experience, with a current curriculum vitae.



Evaluation of applications will begin immediately and will continue until a suitable candidate is found. All applicants are thanked for their interest in this position; however, only candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.

Athabasca University and the researchers are committed and seek to support equity in employment and research opportunities. We strongly encourage applications from Indigenous people, people of colour, people with disabilities, 2SLGBTQ+ people, women, and other historically marginalized groups. Applicants are welcome, but not required, to self-identify in their letter of application.

For more information on this Research Assistant Opportunity, please contact Dr. Henry Tsang at the coordinates below. Applications will be accepted until the suitable candidates are found.

Dr. Henry Tsang,
Chair & Associate Professor,
RAIC Centre for Architecture, Athabasca University
E-mail: htsang@athabascau.ca

