

Postdoctoral Fellow Position in Participatory Research in Disability Justice

We are seeking a highly motivated Postdoctoral Fellow to join the Social Justice Working Group of the Smartwear Revolution project at the University of Alberta, Canada.

This research position is part of a project on developing Smartwear, or smart garments that improve trunk support and arm and leg movement among older adults, People with Lived Experience (PLEX) with neuromuscular disabilities, and healthcare workers who are prone to sustaining injuries in their work. All research activities will be carried out in collaboration with the Social Justice Working Group Lead, Dr. Adalberto Loyola-Sanchez and Research Coordinator, Dr. Michelle Lavoie, as well as other members of the broader research team.

The Postdoctoral Fellow will: 1) lead SJWG prioritized research areas; 2) contribute to integrating SJWG research and findings with the other Smartwear Revolution Working Groups (the Technology and Textiles Working Group and the Arts and Design Working Group); 3) support SJWG milestone achievement in adherence to timelines; 4) mentor trainees including PhD, MSc and summer students on the project, assisting them with methodologies and writing; 5) ensure research protocols are effectively implemented; 6) contribute to and oversee data collection, analysis and management; 7) contribute to SJWG presentations, publications, reports; and 8) support grant writing and funding acquisition.

The candidate selected for this role will be working in an interdisciplinary environment with social scientists, engineers, artists and fashion designers, trainees, community members and community organizations.

The Project:

“Co-designing a Smartwear Revolution” is a large, six-year research project led by researchers at the University of Alberta and funded by the Government of Canada’s New Frontiers in Research Fund. The project involves the co-design of smart clothing that will look like regular clothing, but will have technology embedded in the fabric that can easily support posture, balance, arm movements, and walking. This project aims to create accessible, affordable, functional and stylish “Smartwear” to support movement, prevent workplace injuries, and improve quality of life for people with neuro-muscular and skeletal weakness, older adults (65+), and health care professionals, including nurses. Through advanced engineering, textile science, and fashion, we are creating Smartwear to be comfortable and stylish clothing that prevents injury, aids in daily movement, and improves wearers’ participation and quality of life, allowing them to age in place, engage in caregiving, take part in the tasks of daily life, or perform work with greater ease and safety.

We will create clothing with technology built into the fabric that can change the shape and stiffness of the clothing to provide physical support and mobility support as needed. Integrated at the fibre level throughout the clothing through a distributed network of sensors, our Smartwear will provide numerous advantages: 1) it can be worn like ordinary clothing; 2) it will prioritize beauty and all-day comfort; and 3) it can support the trunk, arms, and/or legs.

Smartwear aims to fill an important gap in wearable assistive technologies that will have a meaningful impact on people’s lives. We are committed to using social justice-based design approaches and creating technology with the active participation of persons with lived experience (PLEX): the people with lived experience are the intended users of our Smartwear who will drive its needs-based design and use. Throughout our design process, the feedback from PLEX will continually inform the development of Smartwear to support their general, specific and complex intersecting needs.

The Position:

- Location: University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada
- Start Date: Mid to late October (Applications reviewed on a rolling basis until a candidate is selected for the role)
- Term: 1 year, potentially renewable depending on grant funds available
- Funding: \$54,796.05 annual salary including benefits
- *Note: Postdoctoral Fellows must be appointed within 5 years of the completion of their PhD.*

The Qualifications:

- Ph.D. involving a subject in counselling or clinical psychology, education, educational policy, public health, social sciences, rehabilitation medicine, or a closely aligned discipline.
- Experience with conducting research studies, project management, drafting ethics applications and procedures, and facilitating participant recruitment and engagement.
- Experience working in academic research settings, interdisciplinary research teams, familiarity with social justice principles, and critical disability studies.
- Strong background in qualitative and/or mixed methods research, qualitative methods and methodologies, survey design and construction, transcription, data analytic methods, and academic writing.
- Experience with working with People with Lived Experience (PLEX) on disability and/or living in equity-denied communities.
- Experience following and collaborating on Standard Operating Procedures on accessibility, recruitment, and other processes in the project.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite, Google Suite, Qualtrics, statistical software (i.e., SPSS, Stata, SAS, R), qualitative data management software (e.g., Atlas.ti, NVivo, Dedoose, QDA), and project management software.

How to Apply

If you are interested, please review the Smartwear Revolution Research Project and the work of the Social Justice Working group please submit the following to Dr. Michelle Lavoie at sjwg@ualberta.ca.

- CV highlighting relevant experience, training, and research expertise
- Name and contact information of 3 academic references.
- Cover letter and statement of interest explaining research interests and fit for the position.
- Two or more publications showcasing expertise in relevant areas.

Candidates will be contacted if there is interest in their application. Recruitment decisions will follow an interview process.