

# Opportunity for students interested in Social Policy Development, Research, and Evaluation

An exciting research program called SPECTRUM offers unique opportunities for students

## **What is SPECTRUM?**

The acronym expands to: Social Policy Evaluation Collaborative Team Research at Universities in Manitoba. SPECTRUM is a partnership of researchers, students, community service providers, non-profit organizations and government staff from across Manitoba, Canada.

These groups are working together to seek ways to improve social services programs and policies in Manitoba and beyond.

## **Why is SPECTRUM needed?**

Users of social services are often the most systemically marginalised members of society. Often the way programs are set up or delivered makes it difficult, if not impossible, for people to access services, despite being eligible, because of a lack of coordination between departments and agencies. With political and public pressure to spend taxpayer funds wisely, there is a need for rigorous research to make sure that the programs are actually accessible to all Manitobans.

## **Who is in this partnership?**

SPECTRUM partners include:

- researchers and students from the fields of education, social work, law, psychology, sociology, economics, social epidemiology, and political studies at the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg
- government staff from departments of Families, Education and Training, Justice, and Health
- leaders of community service organisations – United Way Winnipeg, Abilities Manitoba, Boys and Girls Clubs of Winnipeg, Canadian Community Economic Development Network, Public Interest Law Centre, Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth, Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, Winnipeg Police Service, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba, Manitoba Metis Federation, Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Neeginan Centre,

## **How does the partnership work?**

A group of researchers, government staff and leaders of community organisations came together with an idea to work together, and collaborated on the development of an application for a Partnership Development Grant to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. This application was funded for 3 years (to 2023).

The funding supports the development of the partnership, which means the building of working relationships between the partners named in the grant, as well as growth to bring in new partners who can contribute to the goals of SPECTRUM.

Student researchers work on projects that evaluate programs and policies delivered by government partners and community organisations, and the reasons why some programs and policies are not reaching all the people who need them.

Students and the partnership members work together through workshops, meetings, one-on-one discussions, emails etc., to develop the project ideas and to complete the projects.

## Student Opportunities

- Are you looking to do a Master's degree in areas that may connect with SPECTRUM topics?
- Are you a Master's student looking for a Thesis topic?
- Are you a Graduate student or senior Undergraduate student looking to broaden your exposure to working in social policy development initiatives, including the use of data?
- Are you involved with a non-profit or community group, and potentially interested in furthering your formal education?

We have opportunities for students to:

- Work with data on social service use: programming statistical analyses (in SAS, R, etc) to inform research questions
- Analyse social policy options and work with partners to develop recommendations
- Evaluate the development of this SPECTRUM partnership
- Evaluate social policies or programs
- Develop knowledge translation plans and communicate findings to diverse partners

For more information, please contact: [Amy.Freier@umanitoba.ca](mailto:Amy.Freier@umanitoba.ca)

Inquiries preferred by: **January 8, 2021**