The Centre for Sustainable Food Systems at UBC Farm  
Position Title: Practicum Field Mentor

POSITION IDENTIFICATION

Position Classification: Miscellaneous Farm Worker  
Position Title: Practicum Field Mentor  
Faculty: Land and Food Systems  
Department: The Centre for Sustainable Food Systems at UBC Farm  
Position Number: 30757

POSITION FUNCTION

The Centre for Sustainable Food Systems (CSFS) at UBC Farm is a 24-hectare teaching, research and community farm located on the University of British Columbia's Vancouver campus. Embodying UBC’s aspiration to be a “living laboratory”, the CSFS at UBC Farm provides experiential learning opportunities for students, community members and the general public and strives to explore and exemplify how land, food and community are brought together to create healthy and sustainable food systems. More information about the CSFS at UBC Farm can be found at www.ubcfarm.ubc.ca.

The Practicum Field Mentor works in collaboration with the Practicum Coordinator and UBC Farm Staff to provide day-to-day field instruction and supervision to the UBC Farm Practicum in Sustainable Agriculture (UBC Farm Practicum Program) students as well as assisting with annual and/or perennial crop production. The goal of the UBC Farm Practicum Program is to inspire and cultivate new farmers and food sustainability leaders who will transform their communities and their food systems through initiatives and enterprises that are economically, socially, and ecologically healthy and viable. For more information about the UBC Farm Practicum Program, please visit http://ubcfarm.ubc.ca/community/practicum-in-sustainable-agriculture/.

We are seeking an energetic and inspired person to work with the UBC Farm team to support the growth of our Practicum students and participate in the success of UBC Farm’s production and sales program.

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Reports to the Field Manager and Practicum Coordinator. Provides seasonal field supervision to 10-16 adult community learners via the Practicum Program. Works closely, in a collaborative environment, with other UBC Farm staff.
WORK PERFORMED

Practicum Field Mentorship Responsibilities – 35%:

- Works with the UBC Farm field staff and the Practicum Coordinator to plan, prioritize, and facilitate day-to-day field tasks in the context of crop production and marketing systems on a working campus farm. Field tasks include: cultivation, soil management, plant propagation, seeding, weed management, pest management, irrigation, harvest, and post-harvest processing.
- Works with the Practicum Coordinator to guide student plot experience (shared and individual plots). This includes being available to answer questions during plot time, ensuring that plots are being properly managed, ensuring that students are receiving sufficient guidance and support, as well as integrating the educational curriculum into the student plot experience.
- Assists the Practicum Coordinator with administrative tasks related to the management of the Practicum Program as required.

Field Operations Assistant Responsibilities – 65%:

- Field production leadership and oversight of one or more fields, including seeding, transplanting, irrigating, managing pests, weeding, harvesting, etc.
- General farm tasks – compost management, livestock assistance, basic construction, cleaning, etc.
- Field research assistance – weighing, measuring, and recording crop production and yield data.
- Post-harvest tasks – washing, sorting, packaging and preparing produce for sale.
- Sales assistance – occasional assistance stocking produce and interacting with customers at our public markets.
- Volunteer assistance – working with volunteers, providing clear instructions, and passing on knowledge.

EXERCISING JUDGMENT/IMPACT OF DECISIONS

The Practicum Field Mentor is a representative of the CSFS at UBC Farm and the Faculty of Land and Food Systems. This individual’s approach and delivery of information in dealing with the general public and a variety of site users present at the UBC Farm reflect on these units. Therefore, ensuring a high regard for professionalism, safety, and adherence to UBC policies is of considerable importance.

When dealing with powered equipment, including tractors and field implements in a variety of field conditions and weather, the Practicum Field Mentor will need to critically assess each operation before proceeding in order to ensure the safety of all individuals involved. When using high-powered equipment, poor judgment of the operating conditions and context can result in operator injury or death.

Day-to-day decisions regarding crop planting, care, and harvest have a considerable impact on crop quality and timing, which in turn impacts the financial viability and teaching quality of the farm.
SUPERVISION RECEIVED

Reports to and works under the general direction of the Field Manager and Practicum Coordinator. Must show a significant degree of autonomy and be able to make day-to-day decisions independently, but will review major decisions with and defer high-impact decisions to the Field Manager and Practicum Coordinator. Evaluation of the performance of major job responsibilities will include reviews of quality and effectiveness in achieving program objectives and financial viability, as well as adherence to the UBC Farm’s mission and vision.

SUPERVISION GIVEN

Provides seasonal field supervision to 10-16 adult community learners via the Practicum Program. This individual is responsible for prioritizing and delegating tasks to the Practicum students that are appropriate to their skill level, and is responsible for reviewing their work and providing feedback and guidance as needed. The individual may occasionally oversee volunteers, and during these times, will be responsible for reviewing their work and providing any necessary feedback and/or guidance.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Work takes place outdoors in the field areas at the UBC Farm. The Practicum Field Mentor is required to work in all weather conditions. Work in extreme weather conditions may be required. Shared indoor office space is provided at the UBC Farm, though the Practicum Field Mentor will be required communicate with other UBC Farm staff to avoid space conflicts. Hours and work location are flexible as long as all scheduled instruction and meeting times are met. When special events or circumstances require, work will be performed after normal business hours. Because of the seasonal nature of the UBC Farm work, a heavier workload is the norm from April through November.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

Education and Experience:

- 2 years of post-secondary education plus two growing seasons of agricultural work experience.
- Training and work experience in diversified, organic vegetable and/or fruit production preferred.
- Demonstrated leadership experience; able to comfortably provide hands-on group and individual instruction to students and community members of diverse ages and backgrounds.
- Experience working within a large public-sector organization (i.e. a university or government organization) is an asset.

Skills:

- A broad base of technical skills in the areas of horticultural production, soil and landscape management, farm equipment use and maintenance, computer use, and/or animal care in a mixed farm setting.
• Demonstrated supervisory, communication (verbal/written), facilitation, and interpersonal skills; able to work both independently and within a high-energy team environment; able to resolve interpersonal conflicts professionally; good collaboration and group leadership skills.
• Demonstrated ability to model the knowledge, skills, and work habits required to successfully operate a viable farm enterprise.
• Strong organizational skills; able to identify and prioritize tasks with minimal supervision, work independently, and take initiative.
• Must be physically fit, able to lift approximately 50lbs, and have a flexible schedule.
• Familiarity with the UBC Farm site, and the UBC Farm vision, mission and operations is an asset.
• Valid Class 5 driver’s license.
• Demonstrated ability to work quickly, efficiently and calmly in high-stress settings for long hours in any weather and bring tasks to completion on time.

POSITION DETAILS

Start and End Dates: Early March 2018 (exact start date is negotiable) to November 30th, 2018, with the possibility of part-time hours through the winter.

Hours Worked: Full time (35 hours/week, Tuesdays through Saturdays) March through October. Part-time hours in November.

Starting Wage Range: $16.61 - $17.62 per hour (commensurate with experience)

HOW TO APPLY

• Email, as a single PDF document, a cover letter and a resume clearly detailing your experience and qualifications for this position to Natalie Yuen at natalie.yuen@ubc.ca
• Ensure your email subject line clearly refers to the Practicum Field Mentor position.
• Ensure your name and the position title are included in the PDF file name.
• Applications must be received no later than 11:59 PM on Monday, February 19th, 2018.
• Only applicants selected for interviews will be contacted. Please no phone calls or emails.

UBC hires on the basis of merit and is committed to employment equity. All qualified individuals are encouraged to apply. The CSFS at UBC Farm will give priority to individuals who have demonstrated commitment through volunteer service or other engagement.