

Graduate Internship Opportunity

SUMMER 2026

Project Title

Building Capacity for Sustainable Trades & Construction Operations: Developing an Industry Toolkit and Educational Curriculum

Organization

Synergy Foundation

About the Opportunity – Sustainability Scholars Program Info

These 250-hour internships are offered in partnership with community organizations and provide UVic graduate students from any discipline with opportunities to gain applied sustainability research experience. Scholars work under the guidance of a partner mentor and contribute to projects with real community impact.

The 2026 pay rate is approximately \$34.72/hour. To apply, visit the [Sustainability Scholars Program website](#) and review the application guide to confirm eligibility and required materials. Applications close at 11:59 pm PT on Sunday, February 1, 2026. Questions? Contact Laurel Currie: sustainability-scholars@uvic.ca.

Project Background

Synergy Foundation, through its BC Green Business program, identified a significant gap in sustainability support for the trades and construction industry. While considerable attention has been placed on building design, material selection, and energy efficiency, there has been limited focus on the day-to-day operations of trades businesses themselves. This project seeks to address the “how” of building, not just the “what”, by embedding sustainability into the practices, procurement, and operations of trades professionals across British Columbia.

In 2025, Synergy Foundation launched the BC Green Business Trades Checklist, the first certification program of its kind in the province to assess and verify the operational sustainability of trades and construction businesses. The program provides recognition for existing initiatives while guiding participants toward further improvements in waste reduction, energy efficiency, water conservation, and sustainable sourcing. Building on this foundation, the next phase of work focuses on developing practical tools and training resources to support sustainable, low-carbon, and circular operations in the trades and construction sector.

Project Description + Objectives

The primary goal of this project is to develop practical, industry-relevant tools that enhance the capacity of trades professionals to reduce the environmental impact of their operations.

Through the creation of a Green Trades Toolkit and the development of a curriculum for a Green Trades Microcredential, this project will provide actionable guidance, resources, and recognition for sustainable practices in the trades and construction sector.

The Sustainability Scholar will play a central role in:

- Researching, developing, and designing practical tools that support sustainable operations in the trades and construction sector
- The collection and analysis of relevant case studies and best practices
- Supporting the development of the training program curriculum, ensuring it is sector-relevant and informed by current policy, business examples, and sustainability benchmarks.

Project Scope

Key Activities:

- Research best practices, case studies, and industry resources related to low-carbon, circular, and green construction operations.
- Research existing policies and standards to identify alignment opportunities and regulatory considerations for trades operations.
- Develop the Green Trades Toolkit, including practical guidance, low-carbon material lists, local suppliers, tools, and local resources tailored to trades businesses.
- Support the creation of the Green Trades Microcredential, ensuring its curriculum and content is relevant and reflects current industry needs and sustainability practices. This portion of the work will utilize existing materials offered by Synergy Foundation and tie in specific examples, case studies, considerations and policies for the trades and construction industry.
- Engage with stakeholders, including trades businesses and industry associations, to validate toolkit content and training program relevance.
- Document findings, analysis, and recommendations for toolkit and training program improvements.

Research Questions:

- What operational practices in trades businesses most effectively reduce environmental impacts, including emissions, waste, and water use?
- How can circular economy principles be applied in day-to-day trades operations?
- Which case studies, policies, or business models provide actionable insights for BC trades businesses seeking to improve sustainability

Deliverables

1. **Green Trades Toolkit:** A practical, industry-relevant guide for trades businesses that includes best practices for low-carbon and circular operations, guidance on operational efficiencies, C&D waste diversion strategies, water-saving measures, and local resources for sustainable materials and suppliers.

- 2. Green Trades Training Program Curriculum:** Support the research, development, and content creation for a Green Trades training program aimed at project managers, tradespeople, general contractors, and business owners. By the end of the term, the curriculum will be developed and ready for implementation into the program, providing future participants with knowledge and actionable skills to implement sustainable practices in their operations.

Time Commitment + Timeline

- The project will be conducted from May 1 to August 15, 2026, and is expected to require 250 hours of work within this period.
- May 1st – Project kickoff, research, and compile findings
- June 1st – Start applying findings to the existing micro-credential materials and start developing the green trades toolkit
- July – Ongoing development, feedback, and refinement of resources
- August 1 - Aug 15th – Submit the finalized deliverables

Required / Preferred Skills and Experience

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in sustainability
- Community engagement experience
- Ability to work independently
- Deadline oriented
- Experience in construction environments considered an asset
- Familiarity with benchmarking methods and tools
- Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys
- Design and layout skills are an asset

Additional Project Information

Experience or familiarity with the construction or trades sector is a strong asset, as it will help the individual contextualize sustainability practices and ensure the toolkit and microcredential curriculum are practical and relevant for industry professionals. Synergy Foundation holds weekly team meetings, which the Scholar will be invited to attend and actively contribute to. In addition, the Scholar will participate in monthly program-specific meetings to provide input on ongoing initiatives. Mentorship will be provided by Synergy Foundation's Senior Program Manager, who will offer guidance on project deliverables, regular constructive feedback, and best practices for project development and delivery. Our organization values regular communication, collaborative support, and adaptive goal-setting to ensure the Scholar gains meaningful professional experience and contributes effectively to the project.