GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT — POSITION OPENING

WorkWISE-SCI Project

Funded by the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Seeking a Graduate Student Research Assistant from Illinois Tech to support the development and testing of an AI-powered, accessible career development platform for early-career professionals with spinal cord injury (SCI). The role combines web/AI development, user-centered design, accessibility testing, and community-engaged research.

WorkWISE-SCI (Workplace Inclusion, Self-Advocacy, and Empowerment for Individuals with Spinal Cord Injury) is a three-year, funded research initiative at Illinois Tech and the University of Wisconsin–Madison. The project brings together rehabilitation psychology and sociotechnical systems research to develop an AI-augmented virtual platform to help early-career professionals with SCI navigate the workplace through self-advocacy training, career assessment, and peer mentorship. Guided by Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR), people with lived experience of SCI are active partners in the research and development process.

Learn more about the project here.

THE ROLE

This is a hands-on, multidisciplinary role that spans technology development, user-centered design, and research.

Time Commitment: Approximately 20 hours/week, with flexibility in scheduling.
Start Date: Fall 2026 (as soon as possible)

Responsibilities include:

- Supporting CBPR sessions, including UX workshops
- Contributing to the design and development of an AI-powered, web-based platform
- Assisting with platform usability testing and accessibility evaluation
- Applying relevant Risk Management frameworks of responsible use
- Supporting data collection, analysis, and manuscript preparation
- Participating in team meetings with the CBPR community & research team
- Other related activities as needed

WHAT YOU WILL GAIN

Research, Design & Development	Scholarship & Professional Growth
• AI-enabled platform development (full stack) • Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) • Human-centered and user-centered design • AI risk modeling using the STRIFE framework	• Interdisciplinary team collaboration • Grant-funded research experience • Mentorship from faculty with industry & academic backgrounds • Experience in academic writing

WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

We welcome applicants from Computer Science, Information Technology, Human-Computer Interaction, Information Systems, or related fields.

The following are valued:

- Experience in web development with AI/ML systems integration
- Familiarity with human-centered or accessible design principles
- Interest in disability, social justice, or community-engaged research
- Strong communication skills and ability to work in a collaborative team
- Comfort working in an iterative, agile development environment

Prior experience with AI platforms, cloud infrastructure, or generative AI tools is a plus. Enthusiasm for meaningful, community-centered work with a "roll up your sleeves" attitude matters more than a perfect technical checklist.

HOW TO APPLY

Please complete this brief interest form. Selected applicants will be contacted with next steps, which may include a request for a résumé/CV and brief interview.

For questions, please reach out to: Nicole Ditchman, Professor of Psychology, nditchma@illinoistech.edu

Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis.