Centre for the Study of Living Standards

170 Laurier Ave W Suite 604, Ottawa, ON K1P 5V5
Tel: 613.233.8891 | **Email:** info@csls.ca

Potential Directed Research Projects

Winter 2026

Background on the Centre for the Study of Living Standards

Founded in 1995, the Centre for the Study of Living Standards (CSLS) is Canada's leading non-profit research organization focused on living standards, economic well-being and productivity.

We contribute to a better understanding of living standards by providing rigorous, evidence-based research, data and insights to inform public policy and support a more prosperous and equitable society.

Our research is motivated by several guiding principles:

- **Productivity growth** is the primary driver of higher long-run living standards.
- **Broadly shared gains** are essential to sustainable economic development.
- **Reliable data and transparent methods** are prerequisites for good policy.

Potential Directed Research Projects

Over the years CSLS has hosted dozens of successful directed research projects. For Winter 2026 session, we propose the following as new potential projects:

1) Measuring the Adoption of Artificial Intelligence across Canada's Economy

Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to significantly improve our economic trajectory. History is clear that most gains from general purpose technologies accrue through mass adoption. Unfortunately, available data suggest Canada lags in AI adoption, ranking 20th out of 35 countries. Broad-based AI adoption is one of Canada's best ways to reverse the productivity decline, raise living standards, and ensure that AI's benefits are widely distributed across society.

This project will curate a variety of data sources to document trends in AI adoption and intensity of use across industries, firm sizes, and regions in Canada.

Student Benefits:
Students will gain hands-on experience with cutting-edge data sources and learn to measure the diffusion of new technologies. They will strengthen applied econometric skills, practice data integration, and gain insights highly relevant to careers in economics, data science, and policy analysis. Experience with AI adoption metrics is highly marketable for both government and private sector careers.

Tasks and Deliverables:

- Briefly review the literature on measuring AI adoption.
- Develop a simple conceptual framework to classify adoption intensity.
- Assemble data from Statistics Canada, private datasets, and open sources.
- Produce descriptive statistics and econometric analysis of adoption trends.
- Write a short policy brief summarizing findings.

Skills Required: Strong background in econometrics, proficiency in statistical software (e.g., R, Python, Excel), interest in technology and productivity research.

2) Developing a Data Dashboard on Canada's Productivity

Canada's weak productivity record is one of the country's most pressing economic challenges. Yet policymakers, researchers, and the public lack a single, reliable dashboard to track productivity drivers. This project will attempt to fill that gap by designing a prototype **Productivity Dashboard** that includes data pipelines to ingest, analyze and automatically update core indicators for Canada, with international comparisons (US, G7, OECD). Results will improve evidence-based decision-making and raise awareness of productivity drivers.

Student Benefits:
Students will learn how to handle large datasets, create reproducible pipelines, and visualize data for policy audiences. They will learn to translate technical results into accessible outputs for policymakers, businesses, and the public—valuable training for both academic and applied career paths. Hands-on experience with dashboarding and open data pipelines is directly transferable to roles as policy analysts, data scientists, and research economist.

Tasks and Deliverables:

- Identify and document a shortlist of productivity indicators.
- Build data pipelines to automate updates from official sources.
- Produce prototype visualizations (charts, tables, interactive dashboards).
- Draft short "explainer" notes on how to interpret key indicators.
- Deliver a concise user guide for the dashboard.

Skills Required: Strong data management skills, experience with visualization tools (R Shiny, Plotly, Power BI or Tableau), and interest in productivity and growth policy**.**

3) Analyzing the Contribution of Full-time Students to the Canadian Unemployment Rate and Comparing Internationally

Full-time students have become an increasingly important driver of youth and national unemployment in Canada, yet the last comprehensive analysis of this issue—*The Contribution of Full-Time Students to the Canadian Unemployment Rate, 1976–2017*—is now seven years out of

date. The original CSLS study documented how full-time students represented a growing share of unemployment and contributed an additional 0.33 percentage points to the national unemployment rate by 2017. Since then, Canada's labour market has experienced major structural changes, including the COVID-19 shock, rising post-secondary participation, growth in work-integrated learning programs, increased gig and platform work among youth, and shifting labour demand. These developments may have significantly altered the relationship between student status and unemployment.

This project will update and extend this previous study using Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey (LFS) data through 2025, and make international comparisons, such as with OECD countries. Students will reproduce and update the tables and charts, and conduct new decompositions to measure how full-time students contribute to the unemployment rate. Extensions may explore differences by age group (15–19 vs. 20–24), gender, province, immigration status, and labour-market attachment. The project will deliver an updated empirical report to assess whether full-time students continue to exert an outsized influence on unemployment, how this compares with other countries, and what this implies for youth labour-market policy.

Student Benefits:

Students will gain experience working with high-quality labour-market data, applying decomposition methods, and conducting reproducible empirical research. They will strengthen quantitative skills in time-series analysis, data visualization, and labour-market economics—highly valuable for careers in government, research organizations, and applied economic analysis.

Tasks and Deliverables:

- Replicate the methodology and main results from the 2018 CSLS study.
- Extend the analysis using LFS data through 2025 and compare with OECD countries.
- Prepare a research report and a short policy brief summarizing the findings.

Skills Required:
Applied econometrics, proficiency in Excel, or R; interest in labour economics and youth labour-market outcomes; familiarity with Statistics Canada data is an asset.

We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with University of Ottawa students on these important projects. CSLS has a strong record of mentoring students through directed research placements, and we are committed to ensuring participants gain valuable applied experience.

Sincerely,

Dr. Stephen Tapp
Chief Executive Officer
Centre for the Study of Living Standards
Stephen.Tapp@csls.ca | 613-462-5474