

RECRUITMENT PACK

This document includes the following information:

- Job Description
- Person Specification
- Additional information

Making an application:

When completing the on-line application form you will be asked to answer questions to help you demonstrate how you meet the requirements of the post. Your answers will be used at the shortlisting and interview stages of the recruitment process. We therefore recommend that you take a copy of this recruitment pack to help with your preparation.

NOTE: You don't have to answer the questions in one attempt, but can save your incomplete application and return to it at another time. You may want to draft your answers using Microsoft Word and then copy your text into the application form. Please be aware that formatting (eg. underline, bold, bulleting) will be lost in this process. If you are using an Apple product you will need to use an alternative web browser to Safari such as Google Chrome.

- Links to Guidance Notes and Frequently Asked Questions can be found on the Search Results page. These pages will open in a new window.
- We recommend that you take a copy of this recruitment pack to help with your preparation.

A commitment to sustaining an inclusive and diverse community is one of the University's Core Values and we are keen to address any imbalances in our workforce.

The University of Essex is proud to be part of the Disability Confident scheme and is committed to supporting diversity and equality, representative of our inclusive community. As part of our commitment to this scheme any candidate who has a disability and meets all the essential criteria for the role will be offered an interview. We also work in partnership with national disability organisation DisabledGo who provide detailed online access guides to many of our campus buildings and facilities which you may find useful.

Please note: We are only accepting on-line applications for this post. However, if you have a disability that makes it difficult for you to provide us with information in this way, please contact the Resourcing Team (01206-874588/873521) for help.

Closing Date: 16 April 2017

Interviews are planned for: 10 May 2017

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JOB DESCRIPTION – Job ref REQ00481

Job Title and Grade:	Understanding Society User Support and Training Officer, Grade 8
Contract:	Fixed-term, full-Time, This post is fixed-term for 2 years due to uncertainty regarding its continued funding past this date.
Hours:	A notional minimum of 36 hours per week
Salary:	£32,004 to £38,183 per annum
Department/Section:	Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER)
Responsible to:	Director of Understanding Society
Reports on a day to day basis to:	ISER Research Fellow
Purpose of job:	To provide user support for <i>Understanding Society: the UK Household Longitudinal Study</i> (UKHLS) and contribute to a range of training resources and activities.

[Understanding Society: the UK Longitudinal Study](#) is the largest household panel study in the world, and has approximately 6000 registered data users from a wide range of backgrounds both within the UK and internationally. These include students and staff from higher education institutes, researchers from charities, think tanks and commercial organisations and statisticians and researchers in Government. Our data users have a wide range of skills and hence very varied needs. We provide a range of general and topic-specific resources and training courses to support users as well as an active user support forum.

The role of the User Support and Training Officer is to: engage with data users and others in a wide variety of ways to raise awareness of the study; answer data users queries on a daily basis; manage and develop the user forum and other user support materials and activities; improve our value added data and resources; and, contribute to expanding our training programme. The post holder will need to combine excellent communication skills with a sound understanding of longitudinal data, data management and statistical analysis.

Duties of the post include:

- Managing the user support forum, allocating user queries to relevant experts and following up as appropriate.
- Creating online resources for data users, including FAQs, wider range of user guides and help materials.
- Working with the web and documentation team to improve the website for data users, including developing interactive forum, for example for users to engage with each other as well as the Understanding Society Team.
- Working with the value added team to help create bespoke datasets and derived variables that address needs of different user groups, for example, to allow harmonisation of Understanding Society data with international harmonisation projects, to help undergraduate and masterclass instructors to develop datasets based on this study for their courses, etc.
- With the training team, developing new in-person and online training courses including video tutorials, webinars and Moodle based courses, as well as preparing specific datasets for specialised courses.
- Co-ordinating training activities across different specialist teams within Understanding Society and with other training providers.
- Creating a user panel to facilitate consultations with data users about content, value added resources and support services.

- Co-ordinating activities to promote the use of the data to a wide range of users, and broaden the study's user base.
- Developing a working paper series for external data users to publish Understanding Society research with associated value added data (e.g. syntax files for derived variables, specialised datasets), to collaborate with the UK Data Service Reshare programme on this.
- Organising user consultation and other user engagement activities (e.g., data surgeries at the bi-annual Understanding Society Scientific Conference).
- Working with the communications team to develop targeted newsletters, and other communication activities, for different data user groups.
- Any other duties as may be assigned from time to time by the Director of Understanding Society or his/her nominee.

ISER is ISO27001:2013 certified. All ISER employees have a responsibility to adhere to the Institute's information security policies and procedures. This post may hold specific duties with regards to information security and may therefore be subject to a Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) check, including verification of identity; nationality and immigration status; employment history (past 3 years) and criminal record.

These duties are a guide to the work that the post holder will initially be required to undertake. They may be changed from time to time to meet changing circumstances.

Terms of Appointment

For a full description of the terms of appointment for this post please visit:

<http://www.essex.ac.uk/hr/current-staff/terms.aspx#>

March 2017

PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE: Understanding Society User Support and Training Officer

Qualifications /Training

	Essential	Desirable
▪ An undergraduate degree in a quantitative social science	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ A postgraduate qualification (MSc, MA, PhD, etc.) in a relevant quantitative social science or statistics discipline	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Experience/Knowledge

	Essential	Desirable
▪ An understanding of, and interest in quantitative social sciences research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ A basic understanding of standard statistical analysis techniques	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Experience of using statistical software such as Stata, R, SPSS, SAS for data management and statistical analysis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ An understanding of issues associated with longitudinal research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ A good understanding of data management issues in complex datasets (experience of using Understanding Society or other household panel data would be an advantage)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Excellent communications skills and experience of engaging with different kinds of audiences	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Experience of teaching and/or providing training course and of creating training and learning support materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
▪ Experience of working in a customer relations or user support role	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Experience of working in academia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
▪ Experience of website content creation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
▪ Experience of working on a helpdesk or in customer services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Skills/Abilities

	Essential	Desirable
▪ Excellent interpersonal skills	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Self-motivation and ability to work independently	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Good team working skills	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Excellent written and oral communication skills	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ IT literate and familiarity with email, MS Office, networks and internet technologies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ An organised and methodical approach to work	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Time management and prioritisation skills to enable deadlines to be met	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Other

	Essential	Desirable
▪ Ability to meet the requirements of UK 'right to work' legislation*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

* The University has a responsibility under the Asylum, Immigration and Nationality Act 2006 to ensure that all employees are eligible to work in the UK. Prior to commencing employment, the successful candidate will be asked to provide documentary evidence to this effect. Please note that the University will not be able to issue a Tier 2 Certificate of Sponsorship for this post. For further information about UK immigration requirements please follow this link <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

March 2017

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER)

ISER, founded over 25 years ago, is a research department in the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Essex. It has a worldwide reputation as a multidisciplinary centre of quantitative social science research and as a producer of household panel data of the highest quality ('*Understanding Society*' the UK Household Longitudinal Study and its predecessor the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS)). ISER is also home to the long-running ESRC Research Centre on Micro-Social Change (MiSoC) and EUROMOD, the tax-benefit micro-simulation model for the European Union. ISER's research excellence is demonstrated by its outstanding publication record and substantial research funding. ISER employs scholars of international prominence publishing in the top journals in their fields.

An excellent record of high-quality research

ISER's research currently addresses topics including: income distribution and poverty; employment and self-employment dynamics; the family and intergenerational transmission processes; health and ageing across the lifecourse; social behaviour, beliefs and values; education, labour markets, and skill formation; social policy; social stratification and disadvantage; risky behaviour; ethnicity and migration; neighbourhood influences on individual outcomes; cross-national comparative research; the measurement and use of data on individuals' expectations; analysis methods; and survey methodology.

ISER has a strong publication record, with regular contributions to top-five journals in Economics and to leading journals in Sociology such as *European Sociological Review* and *American Journal of Sociology*. We have strong links with the University's departments of Economics and Sociology, both of which are recognised as being among the strongest in the country. ISER contributes to these two Units of Assessment in the REF, and in future is likely to support two more. ISER has its own seminar series and also runs joint seminars with Economics and Sociology and for health researchers across the University. It operates an active Working Paper Series providing an outlet for papers prior to publication: <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/publications>.

Substantial research funding

ISER is currently one of the largest single recipients of research and resource funding from the ESRC, with quinquennial core funding currently supporting our two primary activities: the Research Centre on Micro-Social Change (MiSoC) for substantive research, and the UK Household Longitudinal Study. With its unique combination of research and resource functions, and a core focus on the use of advanced quantitative techniques applied to micro-data usually on individuals, families or households, ISER offers quantitative social scientists an ideal research environment.

The MiSoC research centre (<https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/misoc/>) has enjoyed continuous ESRC funding from its inception in 1989. The 2014-2019 research programme, "Understanding individual and family behaviours in a new era of uncertainty and change", is organised in three main strands:

- Vulnerability, social insurance, and the dynamics of family finances, employment and health;
- New members of society: the formation of capabilities in children and young adults, and social mobility and integration amongst immigrants;
- Values, preferences and expectations.

A cross-cutting strand will focus on advancing statistical methods to improve our ability to obtain robust empirical evidence from data analyses with statistical and econometric methods. It is directed by Professor Mike Brewer, with co-Directors of Professors Sonia Bhalotra, Paul Clarke, Emilia Del Bono, Adeline Delavande, Steve Pudney and David Voas.

'*Understanding Society*' <https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/> is a flagship ESRC initiative, which started with a sample of 40,000 households across the four countries of the UK and includes the former BHPS sample. The BHPS is one of the most heavily used social science data sets in the UK, and recognized as one of the world's highest quality longitudinal surveys. Unique features of

Understanding Society are the *Innovation Panel* which is reserved for experimentation, immigrant and ethnic minority boost samples and the collection of objective health measures including biomarkers, direct physical measures and genetic data. The Study is underpinned by survey methodological research which is world leading. There is an extensive programme of data linkage to a wide range of administrative records. The Study also has its own Policy Unit which works directly with government departments to undertake research and share findings.

The EUROMOD micro-simulation project (<https://www.euromod.ac.uk/>), funded by the European Union, provides a major resource for European comparative tax-benefit policy research. As well as calculating the effects of actual policies it is also used to evaluate the effects of tax-benefit policy reforms and other changes on poverty, inequality, incentives and government budgets. EUROMOD is a unique resource for cross-national research, designed to produce results that are comparable across countries and meaningful when aggregated to the EU level.

In addition to our substantial funding from the ESRC, ISER has a strong track record of success in securing funding from other sources including the European Union, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Leverhulme Trust, the Nuffield Foundation, government departments such as the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department for Education, and the Home Office, and organisations such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Low Pay Commission, the Financial Services Authority, and the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Research with impact

ISER has a very good record at communicating and disseminating its research, and our key audiences include policy-makers, government departments, opinion formers, data providers, the third and private sectors, national and international organisations, the media and funding bodies. Its research also has impact at the highest level (research from ISER underpinned 7 Impact Case studies submitted to the 2014 REF, for example). This is all achieved through a professional communications and web team, the Understanding Society Policy Unit, and activities that are part of the MiSoC and EUROMOD research programmes, working alongside University and Faculty staff.

A top research environment in a leading university

ISER is a flagship social science department within the University of Essex, internationally recognised as a centre of excellence and expertise in the analysis of longitudinal data and providing a stimulating and innovative research environment. The University of Essex is one of the leading universities in Europe for social science research: the results of the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) put it in the top 5 in the UK for social science, and the University is ranked 7th in the UK for economics. ISER makes a major contribution to the University's success. The University also appeared in the top 100 of The Times's World Social Science University Rankings ([World University Rankings in the Social Sciences](#)).

ISER contributes to three masters degrees run jointly with the departments of Economics and Sociology. Each has ESRC '1+3' recognition status.

ISER occupies a modern purpose-built building on the University campus. The building provides spacious office accommodation for all ISER staff and PhD students, meeting and seminar rooms, a common room, and a specialist research library. There are excellent IT facilities in ISER and throughout the university. The University's Albert Sloman Library is widely acknowledged to have excellent holdings in the social sciences. ISER's two weekly multidisciplinary seminar series are regularly attended by some 30-40 researchers from ISER and other departments, and researchers from ISER also regularly engage in departmental seminars in other departments in the Faculty.

ISER has about 80 staff in total, including researchers from several disciplines (mainly economics, sociology, health sciences and survey methods), survey specialists, and computing and support staff. There are over 30 part- and full-time PhD students and ISER hosts a large number of visitors from around the world. Forty external Research Associates are actively engaged in collaborative research with ISER staff.

The ISER senior management team consists of the ISER Director (Nick Buck), the Director of MiSoC (Mike Brewer), the Research Director (Adeline Delavande), the Director of EUROMOD (Holly Sutherland) and the Director of Understanding Society (Michaela Benzeval).

Strategic planning and management are organised by senior staff. There are six Research Groups with a strategic role of promoting collaboration in our main areas of research interest: Work; Family and education; Policy, incomes and welfare; Ethnicity and migration; Health; and Methods. These groups also have a strategic role in planning research funding initiatives.

Further information about ISER, its staff, and its activities, is available from our website: <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk>. Information about the University of Essex is available from <http://www.essex.ac.uk>.

General information

For informal enquiries about this post, please contact the Director of Understanding Society: Michaela Benzeval, email: mbenzeval@essex.ac.uk. However, applications for the post must be made online.

People Supporting Strategy

Please find a link to the People Supporting Strategy.

<http://www.essex.ac.uk/hr/policies/docs/people-oct15.pdf>

Removal and Relocation

ISER aims to make a contribution towards the relocation costs of new staff members. (Automatic contribution by the University is not always standard.) We are willing to offer a contribution of up to £1,000 (maximum), subject to production of appropriate receipts. Subject to negotiation, an additional £500 (maximum) may be available for staff relocating from outside the UK.

Staff Vetting Procedures for Government Contracts

The University of Essex has Government contracts, some of which require it to access UK government systems, information or data. We have a duty to protect these assets and this obligation extends to our employees.

Due to the nature of the work in the Institute for Social and Economic Research, some job roles require a Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) check before appointment is confirmed. Applicants who are offered employment to qualifying roles will be subject to a vetting procedure to enable the University to verify the following for the successful candidate:

- Identity
- Employment history (for a minimum of the past 3 years)
- Nationality and immigration status
- Criminal Record (unspent convictions only)

Information Security

Information is the lifeblood of ISER. All ISER staff and students are responsible for its security to the organisations and individuals who provide it. ISER is ISO27001:2013 certified and all ISER staff and students have a responsibility to adhere to the Institute's information security policies and procedures.

Benefits

Our staff and students are members of the University for life. We believe a person's potential is not simply defined by grades or backgrounds, but by a willingness to question, to collaborate and to push at the edges of knowledge and their own potential.

As an employer we offer a range of benefits and a commitment to career development and equal opportunities in an environment that both reflects and creates a rich interaction of people, disciplines and ideas.

- Pension scheme
- Generous holiday entitlement
- Competitive salaries
- Training and development Family Friendly policies
- On campus childcare facilities, for more information visit www.wivenhoe-park-day-nursery.co.uk
- Childcare vouchers
- Relocation package for qualifying staff
- Interest free season ticket loan
- Range of optional salary exchange tax benefits (pension, childcare and bicycle schemes)

No smoking policy

The University has a no smoking policy

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