

## RECRUITMENT PACK

This document includes the following information:

- Job Description
  - Person Specification
  - Additional information
- 

### Making an application:

**Please complete the short on-line application form and attach the following 4 documents:**

- a) A covering letter setting out how you meet the requirements of the role as set out in the person specification.
- b) A full curriculum vitae (CV) including any publications. You should specify your 4 most significant papers published within the past 5 years (or an equivalent number appropriate to being an early career researcher). Applicants from within the UK should indicate which publications have been submitted to the REF 2014 and any assessment of the rating for each piece of work; For more information about the REF visit [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk)
- c) For posts at salary grade 9-11, a research statement of no more than two sides of A4 providing details of your research plans for the next three years. This should include details of books, chapters or papers in progress together with planned publication dates. For journal articles please provide details of target journals and planned submission dates. If you have papers that are currently under review please detail the stage these have reached and the timescale you expect those papers to be accepted for publication. If you have papers that have been accepted for publication but not yet published please provide the date the paper was accepted for publication.
- d) For posts at salary grade 9-11, please include a document of no more than two sides of A4 setting out your three year plan for generating external funding to support your research.

Shortlisting is undertaken by a panel after the closing date on the basis of information provided and failure to upload the requested documents will result in an application being rejected.

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 (01206-874588/873521/873461) for help.

**Closing Date: 11 March 2018**

**Interviews are planned for: w/c 2 April 2018**



## JOB DESCRIPTION – Job ref REQ01124

<b>Job Title and Grade:</b>	Senior Research Officer Grade 8
<b>Contract:</b>	Fixed-term, full-time for 2 years in the first instance. This post is fixed-term because there is uncertainty about its continued funding in the foreseeable future.
<b>Hours:</b>	A notional minimum of 36 hours per week
<b>Salary:</b>	£32,548 - £38,832 per annum
<b>Department/Section:</b>	Institute for Social & Economic Research (ISER)
<b>Responsible to:</b>	<i>Understanding Society</i> Director
<b>Reports on a day to day basis to:</b>	Director of <i>Understanding Society</i> Policy Unit
<b>Purpose of job:</b>	The successful candidate will undertake analysis and research designed to meet the needs of policy-makers in central and local government and the devolved administrations and other non-academic users of <i>Understanding Society</i> including think tanks, third sector and private sector organisations.

### Background and purpose of the job

*Understanding Society* is a major longitudinal survey initially covering 40,000 households across the UK (<http://www.understandingsociety.org.uk>), and has been described as “the living laboratory of British society”. In these turbulent times, it offers unprecedented opportunities for investigating the implications of macro social, economic and policy changes on the populations of the four countries of the UK and different subgroups within it. This post is based in the *Understanding Society* Policy Unit, which aims to promote the policy impact of the Study, and has developed effective working relationships with a range of government departments and third sector agencies to support and collaborate with them on policy research.

This post provides an opportunity for a talented and ambitious quantitative social science researcher to undertake research relevant to the policy issues of today. The successful candidate will be excited about the task of influencing public policy, and drive a wide and deeper appreciation of the Study among users in Government, NGOs, think-tanks and commerce. In doing so, they will play a critical role in demonstrating and delivering policy impact from the study. The Policy Unit has a growing reputation for effective collaborations with government departments, and the team consists of a Director, an Impact Fellow, and two Senior Research Officers (SROs). The Unit collaborates with colleagues across the *Understanding Society* team, ISER and more broadly to draw in relevant expertise as required.

### Responsibilities

The successful candidate will undertake analysis and research designed to meet the needs of policy-makers in central and local government and the devolved administrations and other non-academic users of *Understanding Society* including think tanks, third sector and private sector organisations. This will consist of research commissioned by external agencies or government departments as well as original research that demonstrates the value of *Understanding Society* in the policy arena. On balance we anticipate the role will include one third of the postholder's time spent on supporting Government Departments and charities in their use of the Study, one third on Knowledge exchange activities and one third on academic policy-relevant research, although this is subject to change with the changing demands on the Study.



The successful applicant will:

1. Develop effective working relationships with government departments and third sector agencies to facilitate and encourage their use of *Understanding Society* data.
2. Advise on use of data, undertake data analysis, write reports on data findings, policy briefing notes and other materials for co-funding Government departments and charities.
3. Contribute to a range of outreach and engagement activities, including workshops and other events, possibly using online or other innovative delivery methods.
4. Work with the *Understanding Society* Impact Fellow to maximise the impact of the study for policy-makers, both through the activities of the Policy Unit and by supporting external researchers.
5. Carry out quantitative analysis of *Understanding Society* data to produce policy relevant research.
6. Write peer review research papers based on *Understanding Society* data in a policy relevant field.
7. Participate, like all ISER staff members, in various institute-level activities appropriate to seniority.
8. Perform any other such duties as may be assigned from time to time by the Director of *Understanding Society*.

***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#>

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.

January 2018

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

**JOB TITLE:** Senior Research Officer

### Qualifications/Training

	Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A PhD in a social science discipline with a strong quantitative focus, or a Master's degree with a track record of academic publications in quantitative social science and near completion of a PhD</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Experience/Knowledge

	Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience of the use of longitudinal survey data or demonstrable capacity to use such data including awareness of the issues involved in their analysis</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience of using Stata, SPSS, SAS or equivalent for statistical analysis</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience in the analysis of complex survey data</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of survey data, ideally longitudinal, in research for policy evaluation</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrable experience of carrying out policy relevant research</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An interest and awareness of policy relevant issues, and of research findings that successfully meet the needs of policymakers</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ability to work collaboratively in a multidisciplinary environment</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience of working with and building links with users such as government departments, public bodies, regulatory agencies, third sector organisations and commerce</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience of communicating research findings to a wide range of audiences</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A track record of publication in a substantive area of relevance to <i>Understanding Society</i></li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A potential for building a strong personal publication contribution to the Research Excellence Framework in 2020</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### Skills/Abilities

	Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent written communication skills</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear communicator who is able to effectively engage with diverse groups</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to quickly absorb and communicate complex information</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A creative approach to problem solving</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Other

	Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to meet the requirements of UK 'right to work' legislation*</li> </ul>	<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. The University may be able to offer Tier 2 Sponsorship for this role. For further information about UK immigration requirements please follow this link <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

January 2018

## Additional 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 Master's 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>.

### **People Supporting Strategy**

Please find a link to the People Supporting Strategy.

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

### **General Information**

For informal enquiries about this post, please contact the *Understanding Society* Associate Director for Policy, Susan Harkness.

Email: [s.harkness@essex.ac.uk](mailto:s.harkness@essex.ac.uk)

However, applications for the post must be made online.

### **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.wivenhoeParkdaynursery.co.uk](http://www.wivenhoeParkdaynursery.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.

This document is produced by:

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