

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 (e.g. 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 AccessAble 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 876559) for help.

Closing Date: 1 September 2019

Interviews are planned for: 1 October 2019

Expected Start Date: 4 November, or as soon as possible thereafter



## JOB DESCRIPTION – Job ref REQ02827

<b>Job Title and Grade:</b>	Research Assistant Grade 6
<b>Contract:</b>	Full-time, fixed-term for 1 year in the first instance. This post is fixed-term because there is uncertainty about its continued funding in the foreseeable future.  Part-time hours will be considered at a minimum of 0.6 FTE.
<b>Hours:</b>	A notional minimum of 36 hours per week (full-time). Part-time hours will be considered at a minimum of 21.6 hours per week.
<b>Salary:</b>	£26,243 - 29,515 per annum, pro-rata for part-time
<b>Department/Section:</b>	Institute for Social and Economic Research
<b>Responsible to:</b>	Director of the Institute for Social and Economic Research
<b>Reports on a day to day basis to:</b>	Professor Mike Brewer, Principal Investigator of the ESRC Centre for Micro-Social Change (MiSoC)
<b>Purpose of job:</b>	To provide research assistance and support that contributes to several aspects of the research programme of the ESRC Research Centre on Micro-Social Change (MiSoC).

**Duties of the Post:**

The post-holder will provide research assistance and support to several senior members of the MiSoC team in order to contribute to several aspects of the MiSoC research programme. As most of the research in the MiSoC programme is empirical (applied) research using micro-data sources, this research assistance is likely to include (but need not be limited to):

1. Preparation of quantitative data sets, using existing secondary data and administrative data, with advanced statistical software such as Stata or R
2. Basic data analysis, including coding free text responses or creating indices
3. Creating graphics and contributing to the writing of reports or research papers
4. Conducting literature reviews and creating bibliographies
5. Any other duties may be assigned from time to time by Director of the Institute or their nominee.

There may be the opportunity to co-author, especially later in the tenure of the post but, in general, this will depend upon the postholder's skills and on the specific projects in which they are involved.

**Context:**

The Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) is seeking to appoint a quantitative social scientist to the post of Research Assistant to work in the ESRC-funded Research Centre on Micro-Social Change (MiSoC).

Candidates should have a Master's degree (or equivalent research experience) or a first class undergraduate degree in a social science and should demonstrate experience of, or an interest in, research areas that form part of the research programme of the ESRC Research Centre on Micro-Social Change (<https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/misoc/>). Candidates should also have knowledge of quantitative methods for the analysis of survey data or other micro-data appropriate to their discipline. It is highly likely that the work will involve the use of statistical software packages such as Stata, R or

MPlus, and candidates will need to demonstrate these skills (ideally in Stata) or demonstrate the capacity to develop such skills.

The post is full-time, fixed-term for 1 year in the first instance. Part-time working may be considered at a minimum of 0.6 FTE. It offers an excellent opportunity to learn research skills and could provide valuable experience of undertaking empirical research before a postgraduate degree or a PhD. MiSoC currently contains researchers with backgrounds in economics, sociology, social policy, demography, health research, and social statistics. We welcome applications from researchers from any social science discipline who meet the criteria for the post.

MiSoC's substantive research programme is wide-ranging and multi-disciplinary, although a unifying theme is the use of advanced quantitative methods, usually applied to micro-data on individuals. The 2019-2024 programme is organised as three substantive multi-disciplinary Strands, supported by a fourth cross-cutting methodological Strand.

**Strand 1 "Productivity in the labour market and skill acquisition from early childhood to late adolescence"** is primarily motivated by the need to understand the factors affecting the production of a wide range of skills in childhood and adolescence, how they are rewarded in the labour market, and how they can be enhanced to reduce social, gender and ethnic inequalities.

**Strand 2 "Changing family life-courses and inequalities"** will improve our understanding of how families are changing, and the implications of these changes for economic and health inequalities.

**Strand 3 "Intergenerational transmission and exchange in a diverse society"** will examine the social and economic consequences of population ageing and migration.

**Strand 4 "Cross-cutting methodological work"** focuses on advancing statistical methods to improve our ability to obtain robust empirical evidence from data analyses using machine learning, genealogical data, and survey data.

Projects that the post holder might contribute to include the analysis of gender and socio-economic inequalities in educational outcomes using either survey (e.g. Understanding Society, 2000 Families Data) or linked survey and administrative data (e.g. HESA student records, National Pupil Database).

***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:  
<https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/employment-policies-procedures/my-contract>

ISER is ISO27001:2013 certified. All ISER employees have a responsibility to adhere to the Institute's information security policies and procedures.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

<b>JOB TITLE: Research Assistant</b>	<b>REQ02827</b>
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**Qualifications/Training**

	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A Master's degree (or equivalent research experience) or a first class undergraduate degree in a social science.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Experience/Knowledge**

	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Experience of, or a demonstrable interest in, research areas that form part of the research programme of the ESRC Research Centre on Micro-Social Change.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Knowledge of quantitative methods for the analysis of survey data or other micro-data</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Experience of general data management and statistical analysis using Stata, R or similar software packages</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Experience of contributing to small research programmes or defined areas of larger projects, and of collaborating to reach research objectives.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Skills/Abilities**

	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Skills in programming statistical software, such as Stata, R or MPlus, or skills in programming in other computer languages.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ IT and familiarity with Windows-based software.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ability to interpret and analyse patterns or trends in data.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good organisational and time management skills including the ability to plan and prioritise effort to meet often competing demands.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good communication skills allowing effective engagement with undergraduate/postgraduate students and researchers.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good interpersonal and organisational skills; demonstrated ability to work independently and show initiative.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Proven ability to work effectively as part of a team.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Other**

	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
<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"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Willingness to undergo additional training, as necessary.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reliability, flexibility and good time keeping.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Willingness to support knowledge exchange activities by contributing to research projects funded by public sector organisations.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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>

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**The Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER)**

ISER, which celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019, 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 since 1989. The 2019-2024 research programme is organised in three main strands:

- "Productivity in the labour market and skill acquisition from early childhood to late adolescence";
- Changing family life-courses and inequalities;
- Intergenerational transmission and exchange in a diverse society.

Cross-cutting methodological work focuses on advancing statistical methods to improve our ability to obtain robust empirical evidence from data analyses using machine learning, genealogical data, and survey data.. MiSoC is directed by Professor Mike Brewer, with co-Directors of Nicola Barban, Sonia Bhalotra, Paul Clarke, Emilia Del Bono, Adeline Delavande, Emily Grundy, Susan Harkness, Renee Luthra, Birgitta Rabe and Spyros Samothrakis and.

'*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 weekly multidisciplinary seminar series is regularly attended by some 30-40 researchers from ISER and other departments, and researchers from ISER also regularly engage in seminars in other departments in the Faculty.

ISER has about 90 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 (Emily Grundy), the ISER Deputy Director (Paul Clarke), the Research Director (Emilia Del Bono), the Director of MiSoC (Mike Brewer),

the Director of EUROMOD (Matteo Richiardi) 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: Family & Work; Diversity & Intersectionality; Policy, income and welfare; Health; Methods; and Social Demography. 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**

Informal enquiries may be made to [mbrewer@essex.ac.uk](mailto:mbrewer@essex.ac.uk) however, applications for the post must be made online.

### **Removal and Relocation**

Due to the short, fixed-term duration of this post there is no removal and relocation package available for this post.

### **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)

### **Criminal Record Disclosure Checks:**

We encourage all applicants to provide details of warnings, reprimands, cautions or unspent criminal convictions at an early stage in the application process. Should you wish to declare such information, please email the Resourcing Team in confidence, ([resourcing@essex.ac.uk](mailto:resourcing@essex.ac.uk)) attaching brief details, or alternatively post details to the Resourcing Manager, Human Resources, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3SQ. This information is seen only by those directly involved in the recruitment process.

Should you be appointed to this post you will be asked to make an application for a basic Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to get a copy of your criminal record. This is called 'basic disclosure'. This only asks about unspent convictions. More information about the process can be at <https://www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record> .

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us – this will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background to your offence. A copy of the University of Essex policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders is available on the University website: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/recruiting-staff/recruitment-of-ex-offenders-and-disclosure-and-barring-service>

### **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.

### **People Supporting Strategy**

Please find a link to the People Supporting Strategy below:

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/human-resources/people-supporting-strategy.pdf>

### **Pay and benefits**

We advertise our salaries on a range to indicate the trajectory of progression that can be made. Appointments are usually made at the start of the salary range. The university salary structure includes automatic pay progression within the published grades, subject to service and performance. In addition to this, there are performance related annual pay review schemes in place.

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)
- Relocation support package for qualifying staff
- Interest free season ticket loan
- Range of optional salary exchange tax benefits (pension and bicycle schemes)

**This document is produced by:**

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