

Q-Step Summer Project 2017: Planning Support Office (University of Manchester)

Ref: #3 UoMQStep 2017 PSO (UoM)

Team/Department: Planning Support Team (working with the Widening Participation Team and the Careers Service)

Address: Planning Support Office, University of Manchester, Rm: 1.025 John Owens Building, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL

Provisional Title for Project: "Closing the Gap: Understanding the Impact of Institutional Financial Support on Student Success"

100 word abstract of what the project would probably undertake, and any data to be used:

The placement is an opportunity to work at a leading research intensive university in the UK conducting research that will be used to inform policy and practice. The study will involve investigating the impact of financial support packages at The University of Manchester in relation to a range of student outcomes. The study is important in the context of the university understanding whether students from disadvantaged backgrounds are fulfilling their academic potential and going on to achieve positive outcomes in their chosen careers. The University is committed to widening participation and works to ensure fair access and a key feature of the research will be assessing how students from less advantaged backgrounds experience Higher Education.

The student will gain experience of working with large scale datasets and applying a range of statistical techniques. The placement is suited to any student that is looking to develop their excel skills, statistical knowledge and learn how to produce a detailed research report.

Key Words (up to 12): Widening Higher Education Participation, student financial support, equal access, graduate outcomes, categorical data, socio-demographic variables, statistical modelling, policy development.

Essential and desirable skills that the student would need to have:

Essential: Computer literate with knowledge of Access, Excel, Word, Outlook and experience of working with large datasets
Excellent numeracy skills and the ability to use initiative
Excellent attention to detail and a high degree of accuracy
Excellent organisational and time management skills with the ability to prioritise work in a busy environment and meet strict deadlines
Good communication skills with the ability to communicate clearly and effectively both orally and in writing

Desirable: An interest in quantitative analysis and data management
Experience of statistical software packages (e.g. SPSS or R)
An understanding of current issues across the Higher Education sector

Preferred selection method: Interview

Support and training offered by the organisation:

The student will receive a high level of supervisor assistance and will work within a supportive team. The Planning Support Office has previously undertaken three successful Q-Step placements and will provide an environment that a student can learn a range of quantitative research and professional skills.

Any issues of data confidentiality and/or IPR that would need to be resolved:

The student will have access to a wide range of sensitive student data and it is important he/she understands the confidential nature of the data and only accesses information relevant to the research. The student will have to sign a 'Conditional Disclosure Agreement'.

Supporting Information:

The student will work with the Planning Support Office and Careers Service and will be primarily supported by the Research Analyst within each Team. The research project has been requested by the Student Recruitment and Widening Participation Team and the work will involve close liaison with this Team. The post will have the opportunity to disseminate findings through the relevant meeting structures and to senior staff members.

Financial assistance offered by the organisation: the University will cover any expenses incurred through the placement