

Research Associate in Geography, Sociology and Education

Project Title: Tutored Childhoods - parenting cultures, youth transitions and social mobility

REQ190006

As part of the University's ongoing commitment to redeployment, please note that this vacancy may be withdrawn at any stage of the recruitment process if a suitable redeployee is identified.

Project Description

Education is high on the political agenda in the developed world as it is crucial to the success of a nation and its citizens. Parents and their children often respond to this political-economic climate by assuming responsibility for educational achievement which they rightly see as vital to young people's successful transitions into adulthood. In this context, record numbers of young people and their families are turning to the burgeoning private tuition industry for help. Private tuition is commercially-provided, supplementary educational instruction that is designed to help pupils who have fallen behind, need support to keep up, or want to get ahead of their peers in their grasp of academic subjects taught in mainstream schools. The market is burgeoning and data from The Sutton Trust demonstrates that 26.2% of state-educated pupils (aged 11-16) have used private tuition. Crucially, access to this service is not equitably distributed: wealthier, Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME), and London-based children are over-represented amongst users. Quantitative research demonstrates that these classed and regional patterns act as a brake on social mobility, but private tuition is one factor, amongst others, that underpins rising attainment amongst Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) children. This raises significant questions about new formations of regional, classed and racialised disadvantage, particularly for poor, Northern, White children (Holloway & Kirby, 2018).

Statistics gathered by third-sector organisation have been crucial in highlighting unequal patterns of service use, but academic knowledge about the processes driving growth in the unregulated private tuition industry is lacking. Combining insights from Geography, Sociology and Education, this project will:

1. Explore drivers of, and road blocks impeding, parental use of private tuition for children and the implications for social mobility;
2. Investigate the impact of private tuition on the contemporary time-spaces of childhood and family life;
3. Consider how children view private tuition's role in their education and future transitions to adulthood.

The project focuses on England and employs a case-study approach to capture regional variations in tuition use. The case study regions are: London (the highest-usage region, 43.8%); the East Midlands (an average region, 27.5%); and the North West (a low-usage region, 13.5%). Qualitative interviews with parents and children aged 11-18 from diverse class and ethnic backgrounds, who do or do not use private tuition, will form the core of the research. The interview transcripts will be subject to systematic qualitative analysis in order to ensure the rigorous interpretation of the data. Project results will be disseminated to multi-disciplinary academic and policy audiences.

The research is funded by a research project grant from The Leverhulme Trust to Loughborough University. The successful candidate will play a full role in the design, execution and dissemination of the project under the guidance of Professor Sarah Holloway and Dr Helena Pimlott-Wilson, Geography and Environment, School of Social Sciences, Loughborough University.

Job Description

Job Grade: Specialist and Supporting Academic Grade 6

Job Purpose

To design, conduct, analyse and disseminate research about private tuition, undertaking primary data collection with parents and young people aged 11-18. The post will be based at Loughborough University but will entail data collection in the North West, East Midlands and London.

Job Duties

- To conduct qualitative research in to private tuition with parents and young people aged 11-18.
- To be responsible for conducting the day to day running of the project.
- To formulate detailed plans for the project based on broad guidance from the project team.
- To feed back to the project team on progress and to make recommendations for next steps.
- To undertake a literature review.
- To complete the ethical clearance forms.
- To design interview schedules.
- To negotiate access to research participants in three case-study areas.
- To travel to and undertake the interviews with parents and young people aged 11-18. This will include some work outside standard office hours, but time off in lieu of these commitments will be given and transport costs paid.
- To organise transcription and check transcript quality.
- To design coding system and code transcripts in NVIVO and analyse outcomes.
- To analyse material for publications.
- To plan press releases; run project social media; prepare and maintain project webpage.
- To write reports for key stakeholders in public and third sector to disseminate research.
- To attend and present at academic conferences.
- To write research papers suitable for publication in high quality academic journals.
- To write up regular progress reports and present outcomes to all Investigators and Advisory Committee.
- To travel to meetings and make presentations both with the advisory committee and to external stakeholders.
- To enhance relationships with existing collaborators and establish relationships with new partners.
- To formulate ideas for new research and enterprise directions.
- To maintain confidentiality at all times and ensure that intellectual property (IPR) agreements are not violated.
- To engage in training programmes in the University that are consistent with the needs and aspirations of the project and those of the School.
- To be aware of, and work within, relevant University Health and Safety Policies.
- To undertake other duties as may be reasonably requested and that are commensurate with the nature and grade of the post.

Points To Note

The appointment of the successful candidate will be subject to a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.

The purpose of this job description is to indicate the general level of duties and responsibility of the post. The detailed duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character or level of responsibility entailed.

Special Conditions

All staff have a statutory responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves, others and the environment and to prevent harm by their acts or omissions. All staff are therefore required to adhere to the University's Health, Safety and Environmental Policy & Procedures.

All staff should hold a duty and commitment to observing the University's Equality & Diversity policy and procedures at all times. Duties must be carried out in accordance with relevant Equality & Diversity legislation and University policies/procedures.

Successful completion of probation will be dependent on attendance at the University's mandatory courses which include Respecting Diversity and, where appropriate, Recruitment and Selection.

Organisational Responsibility

Reports to Professor Sarah Holloway and Dr Helena Pimlott-Wilson

Person Specification

Your application will be reviewed with respect to meeting the essential and desirable criteria listed below. Applicants are strongly advised to explicitly state and evidence how they meet each of the essential (and desirable) criteria in their application. Stages of assessment are as follows:

- 1 – Application
- 2 – Test/Assessment Centre/Presentation
- 3 – Interview

Essential Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage	
Experience	Background in Geography, Sociology or Education.	1, 3	
	Managing a research project.	1, 2, 3	
	Negotiating access to research participants.	1, 2, 3	
	Conducting qualitative research with diverse social groups.	1, 3	
	Semi-structured interviews with educationalists, parents or young people.	1, 3	
	Coding and analysing qualitative data.	1, 3	
	Authoring original work for academic journal papers, conference presentations or policy reports.	1, 3	
Skills and abilities	Excellent interpersonal skills with ability to develop rapport with parents and children from different backgrounds.	1, 2, 3	
	Ability to work within established ethical frameworks and maintain confidentiality.	1, 2, 3	
	Excellent written and oral communication skills.	1, 2, 3	
	Ability to think critically and analytically.	1, 3	
	Working knowledge of NVivo.	1, 3	
	Competence in IT skills, web-page production and digital media.	1, 2, 3	
	Ability to write research for, and present to, different audiences.	1, 3	
	Ability to work independently and as part of a team.	1, 2, 3	
	Self-motivated with ability to meet deadlines.	1, 3	
	Excellent organisational and administrative skills.	1, 2, 3	
	Training	Demonstrate a willingness to undertake further training and to adopt new procedures as required.	1, 3
	Qualifications	PhD in Geography, Sociology or Education (or near completion).	1, 3
		Full valid licence for driving in the UK.	
Other	Commitment to observing the University's Equal Opportunities policy at all times.	1, 3	
	An ability and a willingness to conduct field work outside normal office hours (with time off given in lieu).	1, 3	
	An ability and willingness to travel independently to conduct fieldwork in London, the East Midlands and the North West.	1, 3	
	A satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.	Post offer	

Desirable Criteria

Area	Criteria	Stage
Experience	Knowledge of literature on parenting cultures, youth transitions and supplementary education.	1, 3
	Undertaking and analysing research about parenting cultures, youth transitions and supplementary education.	1, 3
	Academic conference and/or written publications on the themes of parenting cultures, youth transitions and supplementary education.	1, 3
	Administration and analysis of on-line questionnaires.	1, 3
	Developing academic research proposals for funding from external agencies.	1, 3
Skills and abilities	Working knowledge of Mendeley and SPSS.	1, 3
	Demonstrable ability to write journal papers.	1, 2, 3
Other	Access to a car.	1, 3

Conditions of Service

The position is full-time and fixed-term from 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2021. Salary will be on Specialist and Supporting Academic Grade 6, (£30,395 to £36,361 per annum), at a starting salary to be confirmed on offer of appointment.

The appointment will be subject to the University's Terms and Conditions of Employment for Grade 6 and above staff details of which can be found [here](#).

The University is committed to enabling staff to maintain a healthy work-home balance and has a number of family-friendly policies which can be found [here](#).

The University offers a wide range of employee benefits which can be found [here](#).

We also offer an on-campus nursery with subsidised places, subsidised places at local holiday clubs and a childcare voucher scheme (further details are available at: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/a-z/childcare-information---page.html>)

In addition, the University is supportive, wherever possible, of flexible working arrangements. We also strive to create a culture that supports equality and celebrates diversity throughout the campus. The University holds a Bronze Athena SWAN award which recognises the importance of support for women at all stages of their academic career. For further information on Athena SWAN see <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/athena-swan/>