

Careers in research

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Overview

- **My career path**
- **Current job description and some projects**
- **Same or different skills?**
- **How can you prepare for life after the PhD?**
- **Tips to my younger self**

My career path

- Undergraduate, Master and PhD at Laval University, Canada
- Research Associate at Warwick University (Psychology Department)
- ESRC grant for 3 years – Warwick University (Psychology Department)
- Cranfield University
- Redundancy
- Ofqual (Stats team)
- Ofqual (Research team)

Current job description – Research Associate

Key Accountabilities:

- Performing research in the field of educational assessment and qualifications.
- Working independently to manage the on-going delivery of research projects.
- Working with other teams across Ofqual to provide methodological, research and evidence based support, as required.
- Performing research on projects in collaboration with external organisations (including academic departments).
- Providing statistical and analytical support to the research team and across the Directorate (including Standards and Comparability), as required.
- Providing research input to and collaborating with members of the relevant technical advisory groups and committees.
- Critically reviewing reports produced by peers, academics and other agencies
- Contribute to the publication of reports, articles and data.
- Keeping abreast of findings from relevant research in the United Kingdom and internationally, making this available to other Directorates and groups.
- Line managing research staff and other team members, as required.
- Respond to internal and external queries about research.
- Performing any other reasonable duties as directed by line management.

Example of recent projects

- Multiple entries
 - Candidates entering more than one qualification in a subject
- Centre variability
 - Candidates' results at GCSE and A level aggregated at centre level

Skills

Similar

- Communication skills
- Creative thinking/problem solving
- Management skills
- Working independently/with others
- Data analysis
- Experiment/study design
- Critically reviewing reports

Different

- Line management
- Influencing
- Stakeholder management

Other differences

- Choice of projects and collaborators
- Deadlines/faster pace
- Impact of your work – research used to inform decisions
- More focus on research and less on administration
- Meetings
- Representing the organisation
- Work 9-5, slightly less flexible but more regular – can work from home
- Permanent (compared to contract) – with decent pension
- Different pressures
- Dressing up 😊

How can you prepare?

- Internship
- Practice explaining difficult concepts/presenting in different contexts
- Get involved in committees
- Supervise students if you can
- Networking/people skills

- Make a list of your transferable skills
- Have a look on jobs websites and look at jobs that ask for these skills
- Any skills that you don't have that you would need to develop?
- Have a go at putting together a non-academic cv
- Could contact recruitment agency

Tips to my younger self

- Leaving academia is not equal to failure!
- The skills you have are wanted by employers
- Non-academic jobs can be extremely rewarding and interesting
- Non-academic jobs require very similar skills
- Learn to present your skills to people outside academia (vocabulary)
- Work is important but life outside of work is also important – Work/Life balance

Finally...

■ Jobs available at Ofqual

- Research assistant
- Research associate
- Research fellow

■ Open day for research vacancies

- If you're interested in working for Ofqual and you want to find out more about the vacancies, why not come along to our open event at our office in Coventry where there will be representatives available to answer any questions you may have. Please email recruitment@ofqual.gov.uk to register. You need to provide your full name to enable us to prepare security passes. We look forward to meeting you.

15 June 2016

Spring Place, Herald Avenue, Coventry CV5 6UB

Please arrive by 4pm for coffee and registration.

The event will start at 4.30pm and end at 6.45pm.

Parking is available on a first-come first-serve basis.

Please note that this event is structured from start to finish and is not a drop in session.