**PhD Secondment Opportunities in DWP**

**Department Profile**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is the UK’s biggest public service department, responsible for the design and delivery of the welfare system, and for addressing social policy challenges ranging from tackling family conflict to supporting the ageing population. DWP is responsible for delivering the State Pension, working age benefits, disability and sickness benefits to 22 million citizens, and the Department’s broader policy remit affects the lives of everyone in the country.

DWP’s ministers and senior officials have to make a huge number of important decisions, affecting the lives of millions. Decisions require evidence, and this is generated and translated by the Department’s analysts and scientists, who work in all parts of the organisation. The Department is a large employer and offers many opportunities for graduate and postgraduate analysts who are employed as Government specialists. Analysts in Government work closely with policy makers and operational decision-makers at all levels, including Ministers. Analytical work has a great deal of influence over policy and operations and can have a substantial impact on the lives of large numbers of people. This is especially true of DWP analysts who work in the evaluation and analysis of very large programmes impacting on labour market policy, poverty reduction, disability, ageing society and welfare reform.

The Analytical Community in DWP is large and multi-disciplinary with over 600 members split between four core professions: Economics, Operational Research, Social Research and Statistics. The Department also employs a growing number of data scientists and expert advisers in Behavioural Science, Psychology and Medicine. Many analysts join the Department having completed degrees and doctorates, attracted by the excellent opportunities for professional development and promotion within the Civil Service. Analysts in DWP are split between four main sites: Leeds, London, Newcastle and Sheffield. Analysts at these sites can work on a variety of topics and areas of work are not restricted by site.

**Objectives**

* DWP offers a unique opportunity to experience an organisation that is directly responsible for both the design and the frontline delivery of its policies and services
* A DWP secondment will support the development of a broad range of analytical, presentational and professional skills, as well as wider professional development from e.g. in-house seminars
* Each student will be matched with an area to contribute to a priority analytical project to support the development of policy or facilitate senior decision-making, via the innovative usage and translation of evidence, data and information
* The work of a DWP secondment will directly address and impact the research questions outlines in our [Areas of Research Interest (ARI) statement](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-areas-of-research-interest-2019/dwp-areas-of-research-interest-2019)
* Students will participate in their team’s wider responsibilities and gain a broad and rich insight into life in DWP as well as an overview of working in the Civil Service
* Students will benefit from being part of a cohort, offering a peer support network and opportunities to share experiences with other seconded students

**Areas and projects**

DWP has approximately 20 secondment projects available across a variety of areas, covering but not limited to:

* Labour Markets
* Universal Credit
* Working Age Benefits and Housing
* Disability and Employment Support
* Work and Health DWP/DHSC Joint Unit
* Pensions and Later Life
* Children, Families and Disadvantage
* Operations
* Behavioural Science
* Digital and Data Science

Projects vary by DWP area but can be broadly categorised as follows:

1. Literature/evidence review/synthesis
2. Quantitative analysis
3. Qualitative research/analysis
4. Specialist modelling or econometrics

Candidates can indicate their suitability for the above project types in the application form, as well as the substantive research topic area that most interests them. We can accommodate specific research skills and will endeavour to accommodate topic preferences where possible, however all secondments offer the same core professional development opportunities.

**Behaviours and essential skills**

The ideal candidate needs to be able to work in a fast-paced team environment, planning and balancing multiple project tasks and communicating effectively with colleagues. Students should have a strong grounding in their academic discipline, but the ability to effectively operate beyond these boundaries in areas they are not specialist in.

Students are required to demonstrate an interest in, and understanding of, analytical and research methods and approaches to reviewing and assimilating data, evidence and information from different sources, and communicating outputs to non-technical audiences.

There is no restriction on academic discipline, with applications welcome from a broad range of backgrounds; past students have come from: economics, social policy, epidemiology, mathematics, history, anthropology, sociology, but this list is not limited – transferrable skills are more important than specific research interests.

Essential skills

The exact skills required will vary according to the project on offer, but essential core skills required for any PhD secondment project are as follows:

* Strong analytical skills in own academic discipline
* Evidence assimilation and synthesis
* Project planning and organisation
* Writing, presentation and communication
* Ability to work as part of a multi-disciplinary team

**Terms and conditions**

Full terms and conditions will be included in a secondment agreement for successful candidates; a summary of the key points is included below.

**Eligibility:** We can only accept applications from funded students. The secondment cannot extend beyond a student’s funded period, as such we recommend a minimum of six months remaining study time at the point of application. Students on Tier 4 visas are not eligible to apply as a condition of their visas.

**Duration and timing:** Three months (full-time), starting Autumn 2019 onwards, with potential for flexibility.

**Remuneration:** During the secondment the student’s funder agrees to pay the PhD Student their normal stipend in accordance with their existing terms and conditions or funding guidelines, and agrees to extend the PhD Student’s funded studentship and registration for a period equal to the secondment duration.

**Expenses:** Travel and related expenses incurred in relation to the secondment will be reimbursed by DWP – via the student’s Home University – up to a value of £2,400 for the duration of the secondment.

**Location and travel:** The successful candidate will be fully embedded and can choose to work from DWP offices in Leeds, London, Newcastle, or Sheffield, balanced with working from their home location as required/agreed. The DWP Analytical Community relies on flexible and inclusive working practices, as all teams are cross-site and multi-location – all team meetings are conducted in a geographically-inclusive way using videoconferencing and teleconferencing to facilitate flexible working. Some travel to other locations may be necessary, as dictated by the specific project.

**Application and assessment process**

The Student should obtain the necessary permission from their Lead Supervisor and funder (as appropriate) and apply by submitting the following documents by email to [evidence.strategyteam@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:evidence.strategyteam@dwp.gov.uk):

* CV – this should be no longer than 2 pages and must include your education and employment history for the last 3 years (minimum)
* Completed application form
* Completed permissions form

Candidates are expected to provide examples of where they have demonstrated the essential skills outlined in this advert, both at application and interview.

Candidates will be shortlisted for interview on the basis of information provided within the application form. Interviews will take place either at a DWP site, or over the telephone, in June 2019.

If you have any queries, please contact us on the above email address.

**Deadline for applications: 26 May 2019, 23:59**