

Application guide

Senior Researcher



March 2021



Message from our Chief Executive



Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in joining us as a Senior Researcher.

The Education Policy Institute is one of the country's leading public policy research organisations. Our authoritative, impartial reports have proven both timely and influential, reaching a large and diverse audience including parliament, government, practitioners and the general public. Our high-quality programme of data-led research generates powerful evidence that is able to shape policy.

That success has been made possible by our diverse, dedicated, and talented team of statisticians, economists, social researchers, and communication specialists. They have grasped the opportunity to help shape the organisation, to carry out innovative data analysis, and see their work reach national and international media and the highest levels of government.

But we want to go further. Our success means that we are now looking to expand and recruit new Senior Researchers who will help take us to the next level by broadening the skills and experience we have, allowing us to delve even deeper into some of the biggest challenges facing our country, and ultimately improve the life chances of children and young people in England.

In this pack you will find further information about the Education Policy Institute, what working as a Senior Researcher is like, the benefits we offer, and how to apply for these roles.

We very much look forward to receiving your application.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Natalie Perera". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Natalie Perera,
CEO

About the Education Policy Institute

Education can have a transformative effect on the life chances of young people, enabling them to fulfil their potential, have successful careers, and grasp opportunities. As well as having a positive impact on the individual, good quality education and child wellbeing also promotes economic productivity and a cohesive society

Too many children, presently, don't get the education and support they need to make the most of their lives. The evidence of the gaps that exist is set out each year in our research on education in England.

Identifying and promoting good education policy is therefore crucial. But the policy debate is often occupied by contradictory views, which can be based on personal experience, anecdote, and political instinct. There is an urgent need for objective, impartial, and independent research that can influence and inform the education debate – rigorous research which is grounded in evidence.

The Education Policy Institute's aim is to help fill this space. Our data-driven research and analysis sheds light on whether current policy is delivering a high quality, equitable, education system, and identifies issues where further policy development is needed. Through research and analysis, our aim is to hold government, policy-makers, and education providers to account for their performance, and help identify the policies which can improve educational outcomes for all, particularly for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people in our society.

An independent and influential organisation needs a team of experienced, talented and motivated staff to achieve this ambition. The Education Policy Institute is fortunate to have assembled a strong and diverse team to lead our research effort and help us achieve our goals to:

Advance education: Promoting the study and discussion of, and the exchange and dissemination of information and knowledge concerning education policy and outcomes in England and elsewhere in the world.

Communicate our findings: Ensuring a wide range of audiences access our research (based on rigorous analysis, empirical evidence and detailed knowledge) – to maximise their impact on policy and inform the public debate.

Promote high quality educational outcomes for all: Meeting world class standards in education, regardless of social backgrounds, through our rigorous analysis and research.

Achieve significant impact and shape the policy agenda: Informing policy making by working collaboratively with government, parliamentarians, other researchers and those who deliver support for education and young people's wellbeing.

Life as a Senior Researcher in the Education Policy Institute

There is no doubt that the role of a Senior Researcher in the Education Policy Institute can be demanding. One day you might be using your technical skills to draw out messages from massive administrative datasets, the next day you might be on afternoon radio explaining your findings to a non-technical audience, or perhaps writing a policy paper making recommendations to government.

But it is also a fantastic opportunity.

It is an opportunity for you to shape your own research priorities, establish yourself as a leading expert in your field (particularly amongst the media and relevant sector), produce policy-relevant research that has a real impact on the ground, and support and contribute to the growth of the organisation.

And you will be supported.

Like you, your colleagues are excited by the power of data and analysis. Like you, they are passionate about using their findings to improve the life chances of young people. So, when you're grappling with a problem – whether that's how to write a new script in R, or what your line to take in your first ever media interview is – they will be there to help. Just as you will be with them.

That means that while you will focus on one area, you'll be picking up knowledge across all of the Education Policy Institute's priorities, spanning the early years, schools, further and higher education, apprenticeships, and young people's mental health. Your work at the

Education Policy Institute will build on the experience you already have. You will:

- Be a researcher with at least two to three years' experience in a relevant field, plus a strong, largely numerate, degree.
- Be ready to lead projects that result in clear policy recommendations.
- Be able to exploit quantitative analytical skills across a range of statistical and/or econometric techniques, and preferably have experience of using large administrative datasets.
- Be an enthusiastic team player who is keen to help build a small but growing research institute.
- Be a confident communicator who wants to get out and explain the research to educators, policy-makers, and journalists.

Your life outside of work is also important to us. So, you'll have the opportunity to work flexibly, including part-time, on secondment or in addition to academic roles within universities.

The available roles

We are looking to recruit Senior Researchers in three of our teams – Early Years, Social Mobility & Vulnerable Learners, and Post 16 and Skills. Whilst the roles in each team have similarities, they differ in their characteristics and context

Early Years: Equalising opportunities in the early years of a child's life is key for tackling some of the most long-standing inequalities existing in the education system and more broader in society. The government's spending in early years has increased in the last decade, but a lot more work is needed to make sure children have access to high quality early education, and particularly the most disadvantaged children. While the focus of the team is on early education, this is inextricably connected to wider topics, such as parental engagement, the link between early education and school experiences, and wider societal dynamics.

To tackle these issues, you will apply a range of quantitative techniques on existing administrative and survey data, as well as mixed-methods techniques to explore important questions that have not been adequately addressed so far.

We are looking to recruit one Senior Researcher into this team. You will report to [Sara Bonetti, Director of Early Years](#).

Social Mobility and Vulnerable Learners: Inequalities in educational outcomes have come into sharper focus since the pandemic struck, and many have widened both before and since March 2020. The question of how to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people is complex and requires choices on how to allocate resources and organise practices, not only within schools but also across other services such as children's social care, child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), the local special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) offer, and a diminished stock of local family support and youth services. The increasing role of child poverty and longstanding ethnic disparities present external policy challenges to the education system that reach across government departments and pose questions about the limits of what schools can achieve.

The Social Mobility and Vulnerable Learners team plays a key role in producing EPI's high profile [Annual Report on Disadvantage Gaps](#). On this project and in a range of research priorities, you will explore the rich administrative data available in the National Pupil Database and elsewhere. You will design and develop innovative quantitative analyses to expand the evidence base in under-researched topics. Seeking to identify what drives and transmits educational disadvantage, you will communicate your findings compellingly to make the case for better policies.

We are looking to recruit one senior researcher to this team. You will report to [Jo Hutchinson, Director for Social Mobility and Vulnerable Learners](#).

Post 16 and Skills: Post 16 education has recently returned to the centre of the education policy debate. In higher education, decisions around the funding of the sector remain unresolved, whilst access for disadvantaged groups remains a significant policy challenge. Further Education, which has been under-resourced in recent years, is now undergoing large scale reforms to access, qualifications, funding and accountability, the success of which are yet to be seen. Meanwhile changes in the labour market caused by factors such as automation and Brexit are resulting in changes to the demand for skills and increasing the need to reskill throughout a working life. And now the Covid-19 pandemic appears to be both exacerbating existing inequalities and creating new ones.

To tackle these issues, you will apply a range of quantitative techniques on existing administrative and survey data covering post-16 education (such as the NPD, ILR and HESA, LSYPE) data, and will explore the potential of emerging data such as data that links education to earnings or on the characteristics of teachers in the further education sector. You will develop a deep understanding of the range of post-16 educational pathways available to young people and draft reports designed to maximise the impact of our research on policy making.

We are looking to recruit two Senior Researchers into this team. You will report to [David Robinson, Director for Post 16 and Skills](#).



Benefits

- We offer a salary of £32,000 - £44,999 depending on experience, plus 8 per cent employer pension contributions.
- We offer flexible working hours, including the opportunity to work from home, because it's the outputs that matter, not the hours you spend sitting at a desk, and we know you have a life outside of work.
- You'll get 30 days annual leave in addition to bank holidays. EPI also shuts between Christmas and New Year, and that won't count towards your 30 days.
- We offer season ticket loans and a cycle to work scheme.
- We are a [Time to Change employer](#) and we provide an employee mental health assistance programme.
- We welcome part-time applicants and applications on secondment or in addition to academic roles within universities.

Location

EPI's offices are based in central London, on Buckingham Palace Road and are very well connected – situated just 5 minutes away from Victoria Station.

All the EPI team are currently working remotely, and this will continue until government guidance changes.

Other requirements

All positions at EPI are subject to reference checks and a DBS check. We ask you to provide two referees in your application. References will only be sought, and a DBS check carried out once a job is offered.

Please note that all EPI roles are subject to a 6-month probation period.

How to apply

If this sounds like you, please apply by **11.59pm on Wednesday 7 April 2021**, using this [link](#)

This is to help us improve the fairness of our recruitment process, the staff involved in the sifting process will not have access to your name, personal contact information or the names of the education institutions you have attended. To help us achieve this aim we ask that you do not send in

CVs and covering letters as they will not be considered. We also ask that you do not reveal personal information about yourself in your application answers.

Our selection process is fairly short and quick: **interviews will take place over video conference within two weeks of the closing date**, though we can be flexible with timing for the right candidate. The interview will ask the questions about your skills and experience. The interview panel will include EPI directors as well as an additional panel member from outside the organisation.

We will then invite candidates who do well in the interview to **a second interview with our Chief Executive and Head of Analysis**, after which we'll decide whether to make an offer.

If you have any questions about the post, the application process or require any reasonable adjustments, please do contact info@epi.org.uk before applying and we'll be happy to discuss it.

Please note that we are only able to consider applicants who have a right to work in the UK as we are unfortunately unable to sponsor applicants at this time. For more guidance on the right to work in the UK please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work>

EPI's commitment to having a diverse workforce

EPI is committed to having a diverse workforce and eliminating discrimination. Our aim is that each employee within the organisation feels respected and able to give of their best. This commitment is in keeping with EPI's mission and purpose to improve the outcomes for all children and young people regardless of background.

We need your support, so we especially welcome applications from candidates from Black, Asian, Mixed or Multiple and Other Minority Ethnic backgrounds. We especially welcome these candidates to discuss the role and any questions they have with the hiring panel prior to application.

We also ask all candidates fill out an optional and anonymous diversity monitoring form alongside their application form to help us understand how we can improve the fairness of our recruitment process. Staff involved in sifting and interviewing candidates will not have access to this data. The form is entirely voluntary so if you would rather not disclose this information please click through to the end of the form.

We look forward to receiving your application