

Project Title: The changing Level 3 qualifications market

Principal Supervisor: Professor Gill Wyness

Secondary Supervisor: Dr Jake Anders

Department & Institution: CEPEO, DLL, IOE

Collaborative Organisation: Education Policy Institute

Project Description:

The changing Level 3 qualifications market

The government has recently introduced a new type of qualification known as the T Level. T Levels are technical courses which are equivalent to 3 A levels, but offer a mixture of classroom learning and 'on-the-job' experience. Their aim is to improve the quality of technical education available to young people to meet labour market needs and provide the skills and knowledge to improve young people's productivity, later wages and, hence, life chances.

However, to date, little is known about how effective these new qualifications are for improving the life chances of young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This quantitative research project aims to fill this research gap. The project will use administrative data on educational pathways taken by young people to identify the types of students taking T Levels, and track them through their educational careers, analysing their success rates, and their progression into further and higher education and beyond. We are particularly interested in how those from disadvantaged backgrounds are impacted by T levels.

The student will be supervised by academics from the UCL Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities (CEPEO), where they will be based, and the Education Policy Institute. They will be supervised by Professor Gill Wyness (Deputy Director of CEPEO) and Dr Jake Anders (Deputy Director of CEPEO). The student will be expected to use quantitative methods to exploit rich admin datasets, including cleaning the data, undertaking descriptive and inferential statistical analysis, and potentially using more advanced quantitative techniques, as appropriate to the research questions.

Candidate Requirements:

Candidates must have a first class or upper second class degree (or equivalent) in a quantitative social science (for example, Economics, Psychology, Education, Sociology), and a masters in a similar discipline. Candidates should have some experience of analysing quantitative data using statistical software (e.g. SPSS, Stata R), and of conducting and writing up research. An understanding of issues relating to social mobility and the role of education in reducing inequality is also desirable.

We particularly encourage applicants from widening participation backgrounds to apply.

Key References:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels/introduction-of-t-levels>

<https://epi.org.uk/research-area/he-fe-and-skills/>

<https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/t-levels-students-taking-overlapping-qualifications-and-take-up/>

<https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/disadvantage-gap-16-19-education/>

Further details about the project may be obtained from:

Please contact Shola Adesanya (s.adesanya@ucl.ac.uk) for more information about the project.

Deadlines and how to apply:

To apply, please send the following information to Shola Adesanya (s.adesanya@ucl.ac.uk):

- A CV including full details of all university course grades, academic achievements and any previous research experience.
- Transcripts of degree results.
- Contact details and email addresses for two academic or professional referees (at least one academic).
- A short summary (<500 words) detailing how your research interests and academic background matches the project.