

Lead Data Scientist: Analytical Data – Strategy, Policy and Public Affairs

Basic information

Scale: 2.1

Job family: Digital, Data and Technology Services

Terms: Permanent

Location: Flexible, with travel to Cheltenham

Reports to: Lead Data Scientist – RDP

Direct reports: N/A

Team: Reporting and Data Partnerships

Business unit: Operations

Date reviewed: January 2020



Job purpose:

This role is specifically to support UCAS' Strategy, Policy and Public Affairs function, and will actively explore UCAS data to identify new and emerging trends that are pertinent to the interest areas of the Policy Unit, whilst also seeking to answer the big policy questions facing the sector, and shape UCAS' policy position. This role is key to realising our ambitions, undertaking analysis on a wide range of issues across tertiary education and translating this into digestible and easy to understand analysis.

Key accountabilities:

- To support the Policy Unit's understanding of the tertiary education landscape through analysis of UCAS and third party data
- To undertake research to find the trends and unlock insight within admissions data, drawing on knowledge of topical interests within higher education as well as finding new areas of research
- To lead on the analytics required to take research ideas from inception through to dissemination of results through the most effective channels, in collaboration with the Policy Unit
- To produce timely responses to the Policy Unit's analytic requests, including time-critical requests
- To derive new and valuable insights from data and communicate these effectively
- To maximise the value of UCAS data through linkage and use of third party data sources
- To translate analysis into understandable and digestible insight that can be absorbed by a wide, non-technical audience
- To support development of effective external outputs across the range of policy areas relevant to the Policy Unit
- To engage with other members of the business unit, sharing insights and new analysis across the team
- To support the public affairs and strategy leads to deliver effectively on their responsibilities

- To understand the wider education data landscape, identifying opportunities to maximise the value of UCAS data, analysis and policy insight
- To develop a network across the tertiary education sector or analysts and data scientists in similar roles.
- To adhere to and enhance data science standards within the team and wider business unit
- To embrace agile methodology and work effectively in a self-organising team of data scientists

Skills, qualifications, and experience:

- Qualified to a high level in a numerate discipline, such as mathematics, statistics, computer science, operational research, data science, or a related field – evidenced through a Bachelor's degree (or higher) or demonstrable experience
- Proven experience of communicating insight from analysis for a range of audiences.
- Good working knowledge of programming in R and/or SAS and/or Python (or equivalents) and the ability to write readable, efficient code
- A collaborative nature and the ability to communicate effectively with both technical and non-technical audiences
- A natural curiosity and drive to find things out that really matter from data
- Strong professional judgement in choosing methods that give rapid, high quality, actionable results
- Ability to manage own workload – including prioritising, planning and organising day to day activities, ensuring that deadlines are achieved in a fast-paced business unit
- A high level of numerate, analytical and logical thinking
- Experience of developing, testing and using statistical, numerical and/or machine-learning models is desirable
- Experience of data visualisation tools is desirable

This role profile sets out the scope and main duties of the post at the date when it was drawn up. Such details may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or the level of responsibility entailed. Such variations are a common occurrence and cannot of themselves justify a reconsideration of the level of the post. All UCAS employees are expected to be flexible in undertaking the duties and responsibilities attached to their role and may be asked to perform other duties, which reasonably correspond to the general character of their role and their level of responsibility.

Our values in action:

Customer-focused – We understand what our customers want, and we act on their changing needs.

Collaborative – We collectively create an engaging and positive work environment.

Accountable – We take ownership of our individual and organisational performance.

Service excellence – We realise, grow, and maximise our potential.

Trusted – Individuals are trusted to make informed decisions and take appropriate risks.