Paid Student Research Opportunity

Are you looking for part-time work?

IATL is looking for four Student Research Assistants who are enthusiastic about contributing to the Widening Participation (WP) agenda at the University. You will be required to research relevant background reading, develop interview questions, organise and facilitate focus groups, transcribe interviews and analyse and report findings in order to establish an understanding and awareness of issues faced by students from diverse backgrounds. In order to ensure our systems and processes here at Warwick are accessible to all, you will identify potential best practices across departments which could be beneficial to meet the different needs of our diverse student body going forward.

Each Research Assistant will be employed for **40 hours' work**, between December and April, at the rate of **£10.63 per hour**. The work is flexible and can be organised to suit your schedule. Although you will be required to attend a few meetings on campus, work can be done remotely.

You will be an undergraduate student with an understanding of diversity issues in a University setting, an interest in improving the student experience academically and socially and the ability to liaise with other students well. Some experience of social research (conducting interviews, focus groups, etc.) is desirable and knowledge of such methods essential.

Further details can be found on the attached pages; informal enquiries may be made to the Project Manager Victoria Jelicic Victoria.Jelicic@warwick.ac.uk.

To apply, please email a letter of application and a CV to Victoria Jelicic Victoria.Jelicic@warwick.ac.uk, the Project Manager in IATL.

The closing date for applications is **5pm** on **Thursday 28 November**.

Interviews will be held in the morning of **Monday 2 December**.

Successful candidates should be available to start work the week of **2 December**.

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST TITLE: Research Assistant (4 posts)

DEPARTMENT: IATL

POST RESPONSIBLE TO: Victoria Jelicic

SALARY: £10.63 per hour for 40 hours' work

CLOSING DATE: 5pm on Thursday 28 November 2013

JOB PURPOSE:

To provide an understanding and raise awareness of issues faced by students from diverse backgrounds; to identify and share best practice within and between departments at Warwick in order to engage and retain students from all backgrounds. This project will require you to work with various stakeholders in the University, highlight areas requiring improvement and design interview questions and facilitate focus groups with a diverse mix of undergraduate students. You will be responsible for transcribing and analysing the results of the focus groups and providing realistic and reasonable recommendations or suggestions for improvements in the short term and long term based on your findings.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Research background reading related to student retention and diversity issues. December 2013. (3 weeks)

2. Gather and analyse data (from across departments and from Statistics Office), which will be used to formulate interview questions under the supervision of the Project Manager. December 2013. (3 weeks concurrent with above)

3. Recruit focus groups and arrange interviews. Review questions with project manager. January 2014. (3 weeks)

4. Gather in-depth feedback through qualitative interviews and focus groups of undergraduate students (and where appropriate triangulate the conclusions from current department practices). January-February 2013 (3 weeks)

5. Analyse focus group data and draft a report, making specific short and long term recommendations for improvements to WP and to ensure continued accessibility and retention. February-April 2013 (6 weeks)

6. Undertake other project-related duties as and when required by the Project Manager.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

POST TITLE: Research Assistant (4 posts)

DEPARTMENT: IATL

The Person Specification focuses on the knowledge, skills, experience and qualifications required to undertake the role effectively.

REQUIREMENTS The post holders must be able to demonstrate:	ESSENTIAL (E) or DESIRABLE (D) REQUIREMENTS	MEASURED BY: a) Application Form b) Test/Exercise c) Interview d) Presentation
Academic results to date at a minimum 2:1 level (if applicable)	E	a
Competence in social science research methods (e.g., qualitative and quantitative)	E	a, c
Ability and interest in developing research skills in data analysis and reporting	D	a, c
Effective communication (oral and written) skills	E	a, c
Ability to work independently and as part of a team	E	a, c

FURTHER PARTICULARS

The Department

IATL was established in 2010 to support the University's clear commitment to teaching and the development of innovative programmes and modes of delivery which have a real impact on student experience. IATL provides academic leadership for teaching and learning innovation and is proactive in capturing enthusiasm and new ideas amongst the academic community, encouraging and supporting colleagues to explore and apply innovative teaching practices and methodologies, generating new ideas within strategic themes to help shape teaching and learning across the University and disseminate, embed and raise the profile of new approaches and successful innovations.

The IATL core team consists of a Director, an Assistant Director, a Senior Teaching Fellow/Practitioner, supported by five clerical and administrative posts to manage and support all aspects of IATL's programme services and infrastructure.

For further information about IATL, please see our website at
http://www.warwick.ac.uk/go/iatl

The Project

The widening participation agenda at Warwick is intended to provide opportunities that widen access to students who have entered higher education outside of 'traditional routes.' Many of these students come from disadvantaged or diverse backgrounds, i.e. low socio-economic groups, minorities or persons with disabilities. There is limited understanding of how these students engage within the University, what resources can be (or have been) used to ensure that they succeed at the Undergraduate level and how performance and confidence can be increased, to motivate them to transition to and pursue further studies at the Postgraduate and Graduate levels, where they are significantly underrepresented.

This research project seeks to explore how the University can better support students and ensure they remain at the University. It is a project which ties directly into IATL's aims of inclusiveness and diversity, supported via varying methods such as open-space/distance learning; innovative teaching, assessment and support; staff and student collaboration, with the hopes of nurturing a sense of community amongst all students here at Warwick. This project has the potential to foster an innovative approach through strategic interventions to WP practice and to have an impact on student retention within the University and an impact on the wider community going forward.

In order to establish what works, what doesn't, and understand how students feel and what their needs and desires are, this research project will engage diverse students from academic departments across the four faculties and departmental staff responsible for WP, through focus groups/interviews aimed at understanding their attitudes/feelings and obtaining feedback about current practices or suggestions for future ones. One of IATL's Academic Managers will have oversight.

This is an exciting opportunity to contribute to a wider project aimed at developing and enhancing participation and engagement within the student community at Warwick.