



**A step-change in  
quantitative social  
science skills**

Funded by the  
Nuffield Foundation,  
ESRC and HEFCE

## **Q-Step work placements – FAQ for host employers**

### **What are Q-Step work placements?**

Q-Step work placements give undergraduate social science students who have been trained in quantitative research methodology the opportunity to apply their data analysis skills in the workplace.

### **When do the Q-Step work placements happen?**

The placements normally happen towards the end of the second year of the students' degree programme – sometimes on a day per week basis during term time, sometimes on a fulltime basis during the summer or other vacation. The duration of the placements may vary between four and eight weeks (or their daily equivalent).

### **Who organises Q-Step work placements?**

The students are studying at one of fifteen UK universities that are being funded by the Q-Step Programme to enhance quantitative skills training within their social science undergraduate degrees. Each university has established a Q-Step Centre to co-ordinate this work. Arrangements for the work placements would be on a partnership basis between the employer and the Q-Step Centre and may vary from university to university.

### **What would the Q-Step work placement offer the student?**

The placement would offer the student the opportunity to gain experience of a workplace that utilises data management and analysis and to undertake a discrete piece of social research that they might then build on for a quantitative research dissertation.

### **What would the Q-Step work placement offer the host employer?**

Host employers benefit from the additional skills and resources that the students bring and the development opportunities for their staff if mentoring a student. The placement enables the student to see for themselves how quantitative analysis is used professionally and this experience will inform their career choices - ideally in employment that enables them to apply their quantitative skills training, perhaps for your organisation.

Placements also give employers the opportunity to shape students' learning and may lead to greater involvement with the university. This could include helping to develop the taught curriculum (so it better reflects the needs of employers) or in a strategic capacity (for example, as part of the Programme steering group at a university).

### **What kinds of project could the Q-Step work placement cover?**

The project should be self-contained, or be a self-contained element of a larger project. It must contribute to the work of the host employer and have a clear data analysis component.

### **What supervision/management is required by the host employer?**

The placement students will not be experts – the host employer will need to have some experience of doing the kind of analysis work asked of the student and be prepared to provide mentorship. Some Q-Step Centres may provide technical support and assistance to students on placement but this would need to be agreed in advance.

### **Does the host employer have to pay the student?**

No. Some of the Q-Step Centres offer bursaries to their students for work placements, covering part or all of their living costs. Some host employers agree to pay the student's travel costs and/or lunch.

### **Health and Safety**

Insurance and health and safety issues are made under the partnership arrangements between the host employer and the Q-Step Centres.

### **How can I offer a Q-Step work placement?**

If you are interested in offering a work placement, or have any other questions about placements, then please contact Hannah Broad at the Nuffield Foundation ([hbroad@nuffieldfoundation.org](mailto:hbroad@nuffieldfoundation.org)) in the first instance telling us the kind of project you think might be carried out by a Q-Step student and where that student would be based. We can then put you in touch with the most appropriate Q-Step Centre who will contact you to explore the possibility further.