Two-year Post-doctoral Fellowship in Education Policy and Methods at the University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education

The University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education is hiring a two-year postdoctoral fellow. Preferred start date is between May and September, 2013. The fellowship, which allows 50% of time to be spent on the fellow’s independent research, includes a salary of $50,000 per year, plus health insurance, and generous funding for conference travel, professional development, and a computer fund.

This post-doctoral fellowship is designed to foster fellows as independent scholars. Emphasis is on developing and/or refining the fellow’s methods, design, fieldwork and/or substantive area expertise in education impact research, providing opportunities for scholarly publication, and the development of the fellow’s independent research agenda. No teaching is required for this position. Approximately half of the fellows time will be spent on their own independent research, and half on collaborative research projects, described below.

While all are invited to apply, we have targeted the program to two types of candidates.

One is an applicant strong in methods and analysis, who wants to hone those skills and acquire more sophisticated design, measurement, and statistical skills in an applied setting, while increasing insight and understanding of education issues and gaining experience with education research, field-based research, and/or randomized control trials. This might be a candidate from a field such as economics, sociology, psychology, or political science.

Another type of applicant may have a solid foundation in education and methods, but want to develop more sophisticated and rigorous design and statistical analysis skills, while gaining deeper insight and experience with specific education policy issues and conducting fieldwork in schools. This might be an applicant from an education school.

The program, broadly focused on the effects of policy on teaching and learning, targets three main areas: 1) research design and methods, 2) education policy, 3) fieldwork. The research projects that fellows will participate in are designed to allow fellows to perform at the highest levels of methodological and substantive rigor. Fellows will have the opportunity to choose among several multi-year projects: These include:

1. a mixed method longitudinal study of math teachers’ mentoring and induction and their effects on teacher knowledge, instruction, and student achievement;

2. a randomized experiment designed to test the effectiveness of a cognitive science curriculum/professional development intervention in middle school science;

3. a randomized experiment designed to test the effectiveness of a computer-based software program in improving 6th grade mathematics achievement;

4. studies related to testing the psychometric properties (including predictive validity) of a cutting-edge leadership assessment, and;

5. longitudinal multi-level analyses of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten cohort, to examine the effects of instruction and other school factors on the achievement gap.

These projects offer opportunities for developing expertise in 1) quantitative analyses such as hierarchical linear modeling, and structural equation modeling, 2) the study of education policy implementation, 3) measurement of instruction, 4) design and analysis of data from randomized experiments, 5) the design of
customized student assessments, qualitative analysis and fieldwork, including development and analysis of surveys, interviews and classroom observations, and 6) psychometrics.

Fellows are encouraged to take leadership roles on the projects in which they participate. Projects are at various stages, so there are opportunities for designing instruments, conducting fieldwork, and analyzing already collected data.

Fellows are also invited to participate in the seminars and methods modules that are part of Penn’s IES pre-doctoral fellows program (see http://www.gse.upenn.edu/pimfer/overview.html).

Fellows will work on collaborative interdisciplinary project teams which include public policy analysts, psychometricians, sociologists, economists, and others. The program will also include opportunities for writing research proposals, both for independent projects and for extending the current projects.

For breadth of experience, fellows will have both a primary and secondary mentor. The primary mentors will be Laura Marie Desimone, associate professor of public policy and education, and Andrew Porter, George and Diane Weiss Professor of Education and Dean of the Graduate School of Education. Collaborators who might serve as secondary mentors include Robert Boruch (psychologist/statistician), or others at the University of Pennsylvania, depending on the fellows’ area of interest.

**Qualifications:** Applicants should have a strong interest in educational policy, implementation, accountability, teacher learning, leadership, and/or instruction. Successful applicants will have a good command of multiple regression, and statistical software such as SPSS, SAS, Stata or R. Preferred (but not required) is some experience with more advanced techniques, such as multi-level modeling, longitudinal growth modeling, or structural equation modeling.

Due to U.S. Department of Education regulations, applicants must be U.S. citizens. Applicants must have received their doctoral degree by the start date.

**To Apply:** A letter of interest, and curriculum vitae should be emailed to Laura Desimone at lauramd@gse.upenn.edu. In your letter of interest, please specify how your interest, expertise, and targeted areas for development fit with the proposed projects, especially in relationship to your methodological expertise and your research interests, and what you hope to gain from a postdoctoral fellowship position. We will begin reviewing applications on October 22nd, and will continue to review applications after that, as needed. Please direct inquiries to Professor Laura M. Desimone at lauramd@gse.upenn.edu.

The University of Pennsylvania is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.