



The World Bank’s Bureaucracy Lab: Pre/Post-doctoral and PhD Fellowships

Summary: The World Bank’s Bureaucracy Lab is seeking applications from upcoming, current or recent graduate students for the following positions: i) a paid pre-doc opportunity; ii) unpaid PhD fellowships that provide access to our data sets and opportunities to collaborate on surveys of civil servants/analysis of related data; and, iii) a paid post-doc opportunity.

The Bureaucracy Lab

The Bureaucracy Lab stands at the center of the World Bank’s research and operational work on public administration reform. The initiative works to develop the evidence base for public sector reform by understanding the characteristics of public officials and the systems and organizations in which they work.

Worldwide Bureaucracy Indicators: The Bureaucracy Lab has drawn together existing World Bank data on the public service into a set of indicators that describe the broad features of public administration across the world. Using harmonized versions of the household surveys the Bank has collected, the Lab has created data on the relative characteristics of the public and private sectors. We are continuing to work with Bank data sets—and, increasingly, data from governments—to build a progressively detailed picture of the parameters of the state.

Civil Servant Surveys: The Bureaucracy Lab undertakes surveys of public officials to gather micro-level data on the perceptions and experiences of civil servants, as well as on the key constraints to civil servants performing their duties. Bureaucracy Lab surveys are both operationally relevant tools that inform public sector reform and a means of conducting academic research. The goal of these surveys is to build a foundation for the systematic collection of data on public officials by creating improved survey modules. Through embedding methodological experimentation in every survey we undertake, the Lab aims to continuously improve and perfect methodologies so as to ensure that our civil servant surveys remain at the frontier of public sector reform research.

We are working with a range of academic partners, including the Blavatnik School of Governance at Oxford University, Harvard Business School, Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, McGill University, Michigan University, and University College London.

Working With the Bureaucracy Lab

The Bureaucracy Lab is currently involved in a range of data collection projects around the civil service/public administration. We typically make a commitment to our government partners not to release individual-level data to anyone aside from research team members at the Bank. To expand opportunities for engaging in research related to our work, we are initiating a set of fellowship programs that will increase use of our data.

We are inviting young scholars to work with us as pre-docs, or partner with us as PhD fellows or postdoctoral researchers to utilize our existing data for their own research, and potentially to work with us on new data collection. The existing data includes the harmonized household surveys and civil servant survey data we have collected.

Pre-doctoral Fellowships: The Bureaucracy Lab is looking to hire one paid pre-doctoral fellow as a research assistant for the 2017/2018 academic year (September/October through July/August). Preference will be given to candidates who have an established interest or research profile in the study of the public sector, fluency in Stata, experience of survey design and fieldwork, and/or have worked in the public sector.

The fellow will work on continued development of the Worldwide Bureaucracy Indicators, civil servant surveys, and other activities of the Bureaucracy Lab. For example, s/he will lead analysis of country-level personnel data, undertake analysis of methodological experiments undertaken in surveys, and will assist in the reporting of analysis to Bank staff and government policymakers. The fellow will co-author any academic papers to which they substantively contribute.

Fellows can be from any applied policy research area but must have completed or be expected to complete their masters or undergraduate degree, before their anticipated start date. The position is full time. Fellows are expected to be resident in the Washington, D.C. area during their time with the Lab.

PhD Fellowships: The objective of the PhD fellowship program is to increase usage of Bureaucracy Lab data by inviting PhD student researchers to join the Bureaucracy Lab as research fellows for a period of 3-12 months. Within standard Bank rules, such as ensuring anonymity to survey respondents, students will be able to use Lab data for their own research, as well as co-author any additional academic papers to which they substantively contribute during their time at the Bank. Fellows may potentially work with us on new surveys or analysis of administrative data, but this is not guaranteed.

The PhD fellows have no specific responsibilities but are welcome to engage with the Bureaucracy Lab's activities to the extent that it enriches their studies. The broader objective of the program is to encourage researchers focused on the study of bureaucracy to collect and use high quality data through Bureaucracy Lab projects.

There is no funding or pay associated with the PhD fellowships. Students must have evidence of full funding for the duration of their stay. However, any travel or costs associated with undertaking surveys in collaboration with the Bureaucracy Lab will be fully funded by the World Bank. It is assumed that fellows will stay in residence at the World Bank for one semester, but there is potential for the appointment to be for up to a year depending on the interests and requirements of the individual PhD student.

Post-doctoral Fellowships: The Bureaucracy Lab is looking to hire one paid post-doctoral fellow for the 2017/2018 academic year (September/October through July/August). Preference will be given to researchers who have an established research profile in the study of the public sector, fluency in Stata, survey design and fieldwork, and experience in the public sector.

The fellow will work on a mutually agreed research program that contributes to the objectives of the Bureaucracy Lab. We are looking for individuals who are undertaking policy-relevant, cutting-edge research in the area of public administration. Depending on the specific interests of the fellow, there will be scope to work on pre-existing or new Bureaucracy Lab projects.

The fellow will co-author any academic papers to which they substantively contribute, and will have time to work on their own academic projects. Fellows can be from any applied policy research area but must have completed or be expected to complete their PhD, including oral defence, before their anticipated start date. Fellows are expected to be resident in the Washington, D.C. area during their time with the Lab.

Application procedure

How to apply: Send a CV and a brief description of why you're a great fit for the position you are applying to at kkay@worldbank.org. Please include which program you're applying for – PhD Fellowship or Pre-/Post-doctoral Fellowship – in the subject line.

We will accept applications until the positions are filled.

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