

Research Assignment: The Impact of the Unite Foundation

Outline:

To review, design, test and operationalise an impact monitoring regime for the Unite Foundation Scholarship Scheme.

Context:

The Unite Foundation is the leading provider of scholarships to support care experienced and estranged young people at university in the UK. We offer our scholars a free, stable student home for three years of study, along with joined up pastoral care through Unite Students support teams and our university partners.

We seek to better understand the direct impact that our scholarships have on our beneficiaries over time; establishing a monitoring regime that will allow us to report that impact robustly in social policy as well as HE contexts. Findings will also inform the continual improvement agenda of the Foundation scheme.

This assignment may be suited to early-career researchers and PhD students in social science disciplines who have the support of a more experienced academic leader in this field. Additionally, consultants with strong experience in the evaluation of direct grant schemes within the voluntary sector would be welcomed.

More information about the Unite Foundation can be found at www.unitefoundation.co.uk

Key elements:

The project will take place in four stages to begin in June 2019 and completed within the course of a year;

1. Information Audit

The researcher will conduct a review of the information already available and being collected operationally and through existing surveys. They will identify opportunities to draw meaningful KPIs from existing information where possible, and provide an assessment of the information needs that are not currently addressed.

Output: Audit report

Delivery: 14 June 2019

2 Retrospective data analysis

Undertake a retrospective analysis with existing data with a view to identifying indicators of impact and informing the development of item 3.

Output: Data review

Delivery: 12 July 2019

3 Design monitoring regime

The researcher will design a monitoring regime that will enable the Foundation to measure the impact of its work consistently over time. The regime will need to:

- Be objective, robust and clear,
- Be cost-effective and not burdensome to implement,
- Be repeatable and comparable with published sector data,
- Take into account the Foundation's access to audiences and data collection mechanisms, and
- Be sensitive to the audience and the direct beneficiary/donor relationship that is central to the scholarship scheme.

Output: implementation plan, including survey design, data collection methodology, risks mitigation analysis and reporting framework.

Delivery: 14 August 2019

4 Implement monitoring regime

Oversee Unite Foundation team's implementation of the monitoring regime within one academic cycle, providing data analysis tools for the team and assistance in presenting the information collected for an annual report.

Note: the monitoring regime will become an annual activity, and therefore needs to be capable of repeated implementation by a small staff team.

Output: impact report based on monitoring regime (either co-produced with Foundation staff or produced by the researcher). Delivery: 30 April 2020

5 Review and report on the regime, making recommendations for improvement

Once an annual report is produced, assess the effectiveness of the monitoring regime in gaining information that helps the Foundation improve its practice and demonstrate the impact of its work on the long-term outcomes of its scholars.

Output: evaluative report and improvement plan Delivery: 30 April 2020

Decision Gateways:

The Foundation Director wishes to receive an outline report on each stage before approval to proceed with the next is offered.

Next steps:

Expressions of interest should be submitted by **12 April 2019** to:

Helen Arber, Head of Operations Helen.arber@unitefoundation.co.uk

Expressions of interest should include -

- An outline CV for the researcher/consultant.
- An outline CV for the research supervisor (if applicable).
- An overview of the approach you intend to take to each stage (max 2 pages).
- A statement outlining your suitability to complete this work (max 1 page).
- Evidence of relevant experience (max 2 examples).
- An itemised costing for the work proposed including projected period and day rate.

For further information or an informal discussion about the project, contact:

Eluned Parrott, Unite Foundation Director.

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