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Destination

Monash University
The Faculty of Education
Re. Post-Doctoral Research Fellow – Econometrics of Education

Dear Monash University Faculty of Education representative,

I write this letter to apply for the Post-Doctoral Research opportunity within the the Faculty of Education at Monash University, posted on 16th August 2019 on the Seek.com.au web-page.

My name is Sergey Alexeev and I am a PhD in Economics candidate (specialising in Econometrics of Education) at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). On 30th June 2019 I submitted my thesis titled “Three Essays on the Economics of Education and Inequality” and expect to receive my doctorate by October 2019.

In this letter, by addressing the specified selection criteria of the position description, I hope to demonstrate that my research skills and interests, teaching abilities, and general life experience have shaped me as an ideal candidate for the opening at Monash University.

1. A doctoral qualification in the Economics of Education or equivalent qualifications or research experience

I am an econometrician with a PhD in Economics (completed and awaiting conferal). Economics of Education is my speciality and I have conducted both theoretical and empirical research in this area as an academic researcher and a public sector employee.

Throughout my academic career at European, North American and Australian universities, I have been contributing to research into understanding education systems, as well as developing better educational governance and policy. I have also been systematically involved in collaborating with stakeholder groups and partners in ways that afford the translation of research insights across a range of academic and professional forums. My research work, undertaken individually and collaboratively, is on a rising trajectory and tightly aligned with the Faculty’s goals.

I am excited by the potential opportunity to contribute to the ongoing work of the Faculty of Education at Monash University, and to undertake high level and basic

research, exploring how research can be applied to reveal new insights by using my econometrics expertise and unique cross-country experience.

2. Demonstrated knowledge of education theory and quantitative, qualitative and online research methodologies

As a demonstration of my knowledge in education theory, and quantitative and qualitative methodologies, I have finished two papers in the area of the Economics of Education. *The Structure of Wages in Russia: 1985–2015* (Alexeev 2019d) is under review in the A* level general-interest economics journal, *The European Economic Review*, and *The Effect of the Test-Preparation Industry on Centralized College Admission* (Alexeev 2019b) is under review in the B level economics theory journal, *A Quarterly Journal of Operations Research*.

I am currently utilising online research methodologies in a paper in progress, titled *The Right to Kill: Anti-gay Propaganda and Hate Crimes in Russia* (Alexeev 2019c). There, I am using online databases to create a regional level dataset to estimate the change in incidences of hate-crimes against LGBT members of Russian society after the introduction of laws that were institutionalised under the pretext of “protecting” school students against so-called “gay propaganda” in Russia.

3. Demonstrated experience in educational research methods and the ability to use technical skills to find solutions to problems

To illustrate my experience in educational research methods, I am currently contracted by the New South Wales (NSW) Department of Education (DoE) where I am involved in developing econometrics models to evaluate the influence of the government’s “Bump It Up” program on NSW public school students. My evaluation report will soon be published on the NSW DoE’s web-page.

As can be seen in my curriculum vitae, the nature of my work, during my previous industry and academic experiences, has similarly always required an ability to use technical skills to find solutions to problems.

4. Demonstrated expertise in designing, conducting and evaluating basic and advanced data analysis techniques

My research papers demonstrate my experience of working with high quality datasets. In particular, I worked with the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA), the United States’s Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), and the Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey of HSE (RLMS) datasets.

Currently, in my occupation at the NSW DoE, I am working with high dimensional administrative datasets. In addition, I also consult the NSW DoE on the data that is necessary to collect to evaluate their ongoing policy interventions. Similarly, in my previous occupations, I systematically worked with industry and macro level datasets.

I also have a number of research projects in progress, which use unique datasets that I designed and collected myself.¹

5. Excellent analytical, written and oral communication skills and proven ability to translate observations into shared knowledge and represent data in a number of ways to communicate findings to a diverse audience

Throughout my employment at Canadian, Russian and Australian Universities, I successfully taught students from diverse backgrounds. My current teaching evaluation at UTS as a tutor for “Intermediate Microeconomics” is 4.55 out of 5.0. Some of my teaching success is due to my YouTube channel, which supplements my tutorials.²

I believe that modern information technologies, if applied properly, can considerably increase the quality of communication. For example, during my PhD in Economics program, I created a custom Beamer template that allowed me to represent data in a number of ways to communicate findings to a diverse audience.³

As evident in my working papers, I have an exceptional expertise in data visualisation. In fact, currently, while working at the NSW DoE, after demonstrating my data visualisation skills, I have been asked to partake in writing a policy evaluation report.

6. Ability to work independently in a research environment and as part of an inter-disciplinary research team

As evidence of my capacity to work independently in a research environment, I have written all of my working papers without co-authors.

Additionally, throughout my career, I have demonstrated the ability to work effectively as part of an inter-disciplinary research team. I am currently contracted by the NSW DoE where I work in a team of four people led by Principal Evaluator, Sara Rahman, to evaluate the influence of the “Bump It Up” program on NSW public school students. I also tutor for “Intermediate Microeconomics” at UTS, where I am part of a three-person team led by Lecturer, Dr. Massimo Scotti. Finally, in co-authorship with Associate Professor in Real Estate at Deakin University, Dr. Adrian Lee, I am developing a paper that measures how the quality of public schools influences real estate prices in Sydney.

7. High level organisational skills, with demonstrated capacity to establish and achieve goals

I am a highly organised individual, and the projects that I have been trusted to work on throughout my industry and academic experiences, including those mentioned above, have always been delivered in a timely manner. I believe that it is important to produce deliverables and outcomes well before their deadline, and then use the remaining time for revision, editing and external evaluation.

Although I started the PhD program in 2015, my work on research papers started in 2017, as economists at UTS are required to successfully finish coursework during the first two years of their degree. From 2017 to 2019, I managed to finish three research papers, and I hope to produce many more.

As further evidence of my organisational skills and capacity to establish and achieve goals, I also worked as Lead Project Manager at Saint Petersburg University of IT, Mechanics and Optics in 2011, where I systematically utilised my organisational skills to help students and graduates secure funding for their research and start-up projects.

8. Sound interpersonal skills including demonstrated ability to effectively collaborate with team members, other colleagues and external parties

As evidence of my sound interpersonal skills, including demonstrated ability to effectively collaborate with team members and other colleagues, I am currently managing the Australian chapter of the GSOM SPbU alumni organisation, and I am an active participant of the Australian chapter of the University of Paris Dauphine alumni organisation.

Additionally, in 2015, while working at GSOM SPbU, I introduced a faculty member of York University, Associate Professor, Dr. Andrei Semenov, to GSOM SPbU Academic Director, Dr. Igor Baranov. This resulted in Dr. Andrei Semenov's appointment as Visiting Researcher and Visiting Professor at GSOM SPbU, and he still regularly visits Saint Petersburg to teach graduate students.

As demonstration of my ability to effectively collaborate with external parties, in 2017, while doing my PhD in Economics at UTS, I was asked to give an interview to the GSOM SPbU alumni organisation about my research.⁴ In 2011, during my work as Lead Project Manager at Saint Petersburg University of IT, Mechanics and Optics, I gave an interview to a local magazine "Lumiere" about business development and entrepreneurship.⁵ In the same year, I also wrote a piece that was published in a local newspaper, "Gatchina-Info", about the utility of nations using history as guidance for modern-day problems.⁶

I also regularly post pieces about various subjects on my private blog.⁷

9. Record of independent research resulting in high-quality publications and evidence of growing citation impact

One of my papers, *On Australian Exceptionalism: The Role of Home Ownership in Income Mobility, Inequality and Polarization* (Alexeev 2019a), has a "revise and re-submit" status in the A level Journal of Housing Economics.

I also have a number of other research projects in progress, as described earlier in this response.

10. Advanced computer skills with experience using statistical packages

and the Microsoft Office suite

I have many years of experience with Microsoft Office suite through my industry and public sector work.

During my studies at York University, I used Gauss for two graduate level research projects; during coursework at UTS, I have been using both R and Matlab. I am also proficient in Stata, LaTeX, Unix and Mathematica and I am currently learning Python.

I hope I have addressed the selection criteria adequately, but please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries or require further information. I believe that the work that is being done by Monash University's Education Futures team is very important, and it would be a privilege to have an opportunity to contribute to it.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my application.

Yours sincerely,

Sergey Alexeev

Notes

1. My current research projects in progress in the area of Applied Econometrics can be accessed on my private web-page:
<http://www.backwardinduction.blog/his-research/>.
2. My teaching materials and student feedback for the course "Intermediate Microeconomics" can be accessed on my private web-page:
<http://www.backwardinduction.blog/2017-2018-intermediate-microeconomics-business-course-at-uts/>.
3. An example of the template can be accessed on my private web-page:
<http://www.backwardinduction.blog/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Alexeev.-14.08.2019-Mobility.pdf>.
4. The interview can be accessed at the GSOM Family web-page:
https://gsom.spbu.ru/blog/blog2017_02_13/.
5. A copy of the magazine's issue can be accessed at my private web-page:
http://www.backwardinduction.blog/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/lumiere_4i.pdf.
6. A photocopy of the magazine's issue can be found at my private web-page:
<http://www.backwardinduction.blog/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/WhatsApp-Image-2019-08-13-at-6.36.16-PM1-1.jpeg>.
7. The private blog can be accessed at the my private web-page:
<http://www.backwardinduction.blog/blog/>.

References

- Alexeev, S. (2019a). *On Australian Exceptionalism: The Role of Home Ownership in Income Mobility, Inequality and Polarization*. Working Paper. URL: [↗](#).
- (2019b). *The Effect of the Test-Preparation Industry on Centralized College Admission*. Working Paper. URL: [↗](#).
 - (2019c). *The Right to Kill: Anti-gay Propaganda and Hate Crimes in Russia*. Working Paper. URL: [↗](#).
 - (2019d). *The Structure of Wages in Russia: 1985–2015*. Working Paper. URL: [↗](#).