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Dear Hiring Team,

I'm a recent graduate from the University of Leeds with a First Class degree with Honours in Politics, Philosophy and Economics. I have developed practical experience carrying out quantitative research, working professionally with others, and polishing my oral and written communication skills to a high standard. Most importantly, I have a deep interest in public policy, which has led me to work in the Department for Work and Pensions as a policy analyst, and to also found and lead a student-run think tank called the Leeds Policy Institute during my final two undergraduate years at university. I enjoy writing about economics in my free time, particularly on tax policy developments and potential improvements; for example, I recently wrote a piece explaining a proposal by the IFS suggesting that capital gains tax should have a tax-deductible element equal to the annual natural rate of interest. For these reasons, I'm excited to join a team which specialises in economic analysis, particularly on taxes and their effects on incentives for innovation.

I clearly meet the criteria set out in the job description and I hope to continue my academic and professional career by contributing and growing as a Research Assistant at the Blavatnik School of Government.

- Hold a Bachelor's degree in economics, finance, public policy, or other degree with a quantitative focus;

I have a First Class Bachelor's degree in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics with a strong quantitative focus on economics and econometrics. I excelled when learning quantitative material, for example, I received 75% in Applied Econometrics, 93% in Maths for Business and Economics, 71% in Advanced Microeconomics, and 76% in Advanced Macroeconomics. Over 50% of my module credits were from economics modules. My dissertation involved independent statistical analysis using Stata.

- Demonstrable ability to carry out independent quantitative research, including excellent practical proficiency in the use of R or Stata, and a willingness to work in either;

I have extensive experience with R and Stata for statistical econometric analysis and have developed models in EViews and Stata to forecast economic outcomes under different base scenarios.

At Leeds Policy Institute, I led research into a proposed tramline by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, applying multi-criteria decision analysis in R to rank alternative routes based on local survey data and available real-world data on metrics such as critical risk points, distance from population centres, and travel time to the city centre. Our findings, which showed the official proposal ranked only third, were accepted for presentation at the British Conference for Undergraduate Research. For my dissertation, I used Stata to replicate Stansbury & Summers (2018) for the UK, investigating productivity–compensation decoupling through time-series regression and robustness checks. I found that while the long-run relationship was broadly stable, investigating only the post-2008 period found a clearly weaker relationship, consistent with weaker labour bargaining power and labour-hording by firms. I received a strong 2:1 for this project with 67%, even while dealing with mental health issues and bereavement. Finally, through the IMF's Macroeconometric Forecasting course, I went beyond my undergraduate level Applied Econometrics course, using EViews and Stata to build VAR, SVAR and VECM models for short- and medium-term forecasts of the US savings rate. I completed this course with a strong final grade of 76%.

Across all three projects, I have shown the ability to work independently with complex datasets, apply econometric methods rigorously, and use multiple statistical software packages to deliver policy-relevant insights, all to an extremely high standard.

- Possess sufficient specialist knowledge in economics to work within established research programmes;

I possess a strong foundation in core economic theory, including micro- and macroeconomics, and econometrics, which has been enhanced by rigorous applied experience both professionally and academically.

Professionally, I contributed to policy-related research at the DWP while working for their Horizon Scanning team as a summer intern. I had to synthesise broad economic evidence to produce policy insights detailing the future impact of data regulation legislation. I integrated cost-benefit models and regulatory theory with contemporary literature on the matter to produce scenario projections that informed cross-departmental policy discussion.

This expertise has been further developed through advanced academic study and applied research, including my dissertation on productivity–compensation dynamics, my Applied Econometrics coursework investigating the determinants of inflation, and specialist training with the IMF’s course in macroeconometric forecasting.

Within research programmes, this knowledge enables me to engage quickly with established methodologies and to contribute to producing robust, evidence-based outputs both independently and as part of a team. My internship at the Department for Work and Pensions further demonstrated my ability to integrate economic concepts into ongoing research streams, collaborating with colleagues to deliver timely, important insights. This combination of theoretical grounding, technical competence, and practical application ensures I can contribute effectively to established research programmes.

- A systematic, thorough and well-organised approach to work, with high levels of accuracy and attention to detail and the ability to take responsibility for delivery of research tasks to specific deadlines;

I have extensive professional experience delivering research tasks to specific deadlines at a high quality.

During my summer internship at the DWP, the general election had only recently happened. My manager assigned me the task of summarising and translating technical jargon in newly published political documents, such as the Chancellor’s maiden speech, the King’s Speech, or various think tank papers. I was assigned a few policy teams who would make requests for summaries of whatever documents they needed. Because of my systematic, thorough, and well-organised approach, I kept in constant contact with this set of teams, updating them on my progress and alerting them when I needed to shift deadlines due to a particularly high-volume week. High levels of accuracy were critical, because many of these documents were used as a basis for ministers’ briefing notes.

Because of my high-quality written work and ability to keep to deadlines, I kept receiving requests until the end of my internship and was later directly assigned briefing work. The teams communicated clearly with my manager that they were impressed with my quick turnaround.

- A committed and collaborative team-player, with the ability to work constructively and effectively with research partners;

I am a committed and collaborative team-player, and I have a wide range of experience both academically and professionally to show that I can work constructively and effectively with research partners.

At Leeds Policy Institute, I led the Urban Planning and Transport group in researching and analysing a newly proposed tramline in Leeds. I showed my commitment and collaborative skills by developing new Excel progress-tracking tools, and regularly communicating with team members who were lagging behind on their commitments, to understand the reason why and to shift deadlines to empower them to meaningfully contribute. My research partners had a difference of opinion on which methodology we should use, the main disagreement being whether we should stick with a simpler, better understood Cost-

Benefit Analysis (CBA) or use a method that was reflected in recent literature, but that we were less familiar with – the Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA). To ensure everyone felt listened to and to attain collective buy-in from the team, I held a group meeting where we discussed the pros and cons of each approach and finally voted. While some were disappointed, I followed up with them individually, focusing on each of their strengths and assigning tasks according to these so that they remained engaged and output quality remained high.

This approach ensured the team worked constructively and effectively, securing our place in the British Conference for Undergraduate Research where we worked together to present our research.

- Flexibility and a willingness to spend a period of time working from London;

I am highly flexible on my living situation. I have access to accommodation in Stirling, Leeds, and London, and I am very willing to relocate around the UK as and when I would be required to do so.

- Excellent oral and written communication skills, including the ability to write text that can be published;

My oral and written communication skills have always been at the top among my peers. I have a wide range of effective communication style, from more of a more academic-focused tone to a simplified tone for non-technical colleagues and ministers.

During my time at the DWP, I was tasked with two important outputs – first, to present my research in a series of interactive workshops for my colleagues and managers, and second, I temporarily worked on the briefings team to summarise and refine public sector analysis into non-technical terms for different DWP ministers.

My interactive workshops were praised for my ability to actively seek contributions in a face-to-face setting, engage the whole audience, and guide listeners through complex topics, using my own initiative to include analogies when I could see listeners were slightly confused.

My written communication is also excellent, principally because I can adapt my style to fit different circumstances, and translate complex areas in such a way that non-technical colleagues can still engage with the subject matter. When I was in the briefings team, I was tasked with summarising analysis on Job Centre productivity for ministers. At first, I was not used to writing in such a condensed style, however over time with the help of my colleagues I improved significantly and my manager noted my steep learning curve and ability to respond well to criticism.

Finally, I regularly publish my own work on my personal blog, which discusses welfare and tax policy. While it is self-published, my writing has been praised by subject matter experts, most recently those at the Benefits Training Company, for its clarity, cogency, and use of data in argumentation. Prior to this blog I was also a writer and editor at the Leeds Policy Institute (LPI), where I regularly implemented suggestions on the structure of my articles and used the LPI style guide to make editorial recommendations to other writers.

- Demonstrated interest in public policy.

I have demonstrated my interest in public policy consistently, in my professional and academic career and in my personal free time.

First, academically, I co-founded the Leeds Policy Institute (LPI), a student-run non-partisan think tank, inspired particularly by the IFS. The LPI started because I felt that too many student-run think tanks nationwide did not write policy reports to a high enough standard, nor did they write them frequently enough. My interest in public policy led me to oversee and get involved with all the different research

groups, of which there were initially six, ranging from the Macroeconomic team who investigated the Bank of England's failure to adequately raise rates during the Covid pandemic, to the Social Policy team who investigated the causes and rise of hidden homelessness. Finally, when the Urban Planning and Transport team were lagging behind and had problems because their policy lead resigned due to personal reasons, my organisational skills and interest in public policy led me to fill in for her and ensure the team stayed on track.

Professionally, my time at the DWP gave me a practical lens with which to view the complexities of public policymaking and the long-term planning methodology which the civil service employs.

Finally, my interest in public policy led me to start my own blog, where I write about efficient taxation and effective welfare policy. I am particularly proud of the reception of my most recent article, which was praised by the Benefits Training Company for its clarity, strength of argument, and understanding of the current situation.

I hope that my quantitative research skills – particularly my familiarity with R and Stata – my specialist knowledge in economics, and my ability to work smoothly as part of a team and to tight deadlines has been made clear throughout this supporting statement. I have repeatedly proven myself both academically and professionally in terms of my oral and written skills, through my interactive workshops or writing projects at the DWP, LPI and during my free time. I would be thrilled to join the Blavatnik School for Government as a Research Assistant, to grow as a researcher and prepare myself for a Master's degree in economics.

Kind Regards,

Diogo Ferreira