EPIC Pre-Doctoral Fellowships

The Energy Policy Institute at Chicago (EPIC) invites applications for full-time pre-doctoral fellows for the academic year 2020-21. An interdisciplinary research and training center at the University of Chicago, EPIC is contributing innovative solutions to the global energy challenge: How can we ensure that people around the world, today and in the future, have access to reliable, affordable energy needed for human development without putting our health, environment and climate at risk? Previous results from EPIC projects have been influential with policymakers worldwide and featured in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and other leading publications.

Successful candidates will report to Thomas Covert, Assistant Professor, University of Chicago Booth School of Business and Ryan Kellogg, Professor and Deputy Dean, University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy. Their research examines the widespread improvements in the productivity of hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling (“fracking”) that have dramatically reshaped U.S. energy markets, unlocking nearly $1 trillion of previously uneconomic shale oil and gas reserves. In a research project that is expected to span multiple papers, professors Covert and Kellogg aim to document the causes of productivity growth in the U.S. shale business and measure barriers to further improvements in efficiency. This effort will shed light, for instance, on how the oil and gas price environment and contracting behavior between firms and local landowners have affected shale development to date.

Overall, this research agenda will provide the first large-scale evidence of how the evolution (and distortion) of the efficiency of the industry has affected the U.S. oil and gas sector. The results are expected to inform predictions for the shale industry’s future trajectory, along with further implications for energy markets and the environment, and to speak to long-standing questions in the field of industrial organization regarding productivity growth and misallocation of economic activity.

The predoctoral fellow’s responsibilities will span all stages of research, including collecting data of in both tabular and spatial formats, developing algorithms that clean and organize data, conducting statistical analyses, running simulations, and preparing manuscripts and presentations. The program is intended to serve as a bridge between college and graduate school for students interested in empirical economics. People in similar positions have gone on to Economics Ph.D. programs at Harvard, MIT, University of Chicago, University of California, Berkeley, Princeton, LSE, and similar schools upon completion of this program.

Applications for the fellowship are reviewed in fall and winter cycles. The fall deadline is October 28th, with final decisions made around November 25th. The winter deadline is January 6th, with final decisions made around March 1st. To apply, please visit https://www.epicpredoctoralfellowship.com.

Applicants must have completed a Bachelors or Master’s degree by June 2020 and have strong quantitative and programming skills. Candidates with research experience are strongly preferred, especially those with
Stata, R, Python or Matlab. The ideal candidate would begin on June 1, 2020 and work for EPIC for one or two years before applying to graduate school in Economics or another quantitative social science. EPIC offers competitive salary and employee benefits.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Do you offer visa sponsorship for international applicants?**
   
   Yes, EPIC sponsors work or student visas.

2. **Are there any specific requirements for the writing sample?**
   
   There are no requirements for the length or topic of your writing sample. Many successful applicants submit economics research papers (e.g. a thesis, or term paper) that highlight their abilities in writing and empirical analysis.

3. **What kind of applicant does EPIC look for?**
   
   Successful applicants have typically completed advanced coursework with high marks in economics, math, statistics, or computer science. Many pre-doctoral fellows have had past economics research experience at their university, or other research institutions such as the Federal Reserve, World Bank, J-PAL, or IMF. A demonstrated interest in energy and environmental economics is helpful, but not necessary.

4. **Does EPIC offer summer research opportunities?**
   
   EPIC offers summer research fellowships to 2-3 undergraduates each year. Recruiting for summer fellows will begin in Spring 2020.