

(SENIOR) RESEARCH SPECIALIST-EVALUATION

Job Overview

The senior research specialist will support existing and future evaluation efforts, and in this role will (1) contribute to the design and implementation of evaluation projects; (2) coordinate and manage efforts related to internal and external evaluation projects; (3) support data collection, analysis, and reporting for multiple evaluation projects; (4) prepare written and oral presentations for diverse audiences; and (5) contribute to writings and publications, including peer-reviewed manuscripts, reports, briefs, and contract/grant proposals.

Buffett Early Childhood Institute Profile

Envisioned as a new model for how public higher education is engaged in the first years of life, the Buffett Early Childhood Institute (<https://buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu>) is a four-campus, university-wide, multidisciplinary research, education, outreach, and policy institute of the University of Nebraska committed to helping transform early childhood development and education in Nebraska and across the nation. A long-term goal of the Institute is to be a leading center where scholars, practitioners, community members, and policymakers collaborate to advance a unified approach that can improve the lives of young children and families and the systems that support them.

Applicants should note that the goals of the Institute are university-, state-, and nation-wide, but the location of the Institute administration is in Omaha. This position will work primarily out of the Omaha office.

Job Responsibilities

This section describes major responsibilities for the position but is not an exhaustive or exclusive statement of duties, responsibilities, or requirements. Employees may be required to perform other job-related instructions as requested.

- Work closely with Buffett Institute personnel to plan and prioritize evaluation needs.
- Contribute to the development of evaluation plans for current and future initiatives.
- Collaborate with cross-disciplinary partners (program, research and evaluation) at the university, local, and state levels for evaluation planning and implementation.
- Engage with stakeholders across Nebraska to develop and implement context-appropriate evaluation and communicate findings.
- Lead and coordinate data collection efforts, including collecting and analyzing (qualitative and quantitative) data (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, document reviews).
- Train and support Institute staff in evaluation processes.
- Present evaluation content (data, findings, etc.) to stakeholders and other evaluators.

The classification of this position is dependent on the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the applicant. Applicants who meet the criteria for senior research specialist will be appointed at that level.

Research Specialist

Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree
- Two (2) years of experience working in aspects of research projects and conducting work complementary to the overall research objective
- Demonstrated experience in using data analysis software such as SPSS, NVivo, Atlas TI
- Demonstrated experience developing logic models and theories of action to guide evaluation
- Demonstrated experience with multi-site evaluation projects
- Knowledge of equitable evaluation practices
- Knowledge of evaluation theories and practice
- Recognized training and/or experience with qualitative and mixed methodologies used in evaluation
- Capacity to collaborate with internal and external partners on evaluation
- Demonstrated proficiency in verbal and written communication skills with attention to detail

Preferred Qualifications

- Master's degree
- Advanced coursework in program evaluation, research methods, and statistics

Senior Research Specialist

Required Qualifications

- Master's degree
- Advanced coursework in program evaluation, research methods and statistics
- Three (3) years of experience working in aspects of research projects and independently conducting work complementary to the overall research objective
- Demonstrated experience developing logic models and theories of action to guide evaluation
- Demonstrated experience in using data analysis software such as SPSS, NVivo, Atlas TI
- Demonstrated experience with multi-site evaluation projects
- Knowledge of equitable evaluation practices
- Knowledge of evaluation theories and practice
- Recognized training and/or experience with qualitative and mixed methodologies used in evaluation
- Capacity to collaborate with internal and external partners on evaluation
- Demonstrated excellence in verbal and written communication skills with strict attention to detail

Preferred Qualifications

- Knowledge of basic project management practices
- Knowledge of the Guiding Principles for Evaluators put forth by the American Evaluation Association
- Experience working with community groups, which may include schools, school districts, and community programs

An equivalent combination of education and experience from which comparable knowledge and abilities is acquired may be considered.

The ideal candidate will (1) have experience collaborating with researchers, practitioners, and

policymakers on complex evaluation projects; (2) be adept at working directly with internal and external partners to ensure evaluation needs are met in an efficient and effective manner; (3) have knowledge and passion for transforming the lives of young children; (4) be proficient in collaboration with university, public education, human service, and community partners in service of research and evaluation efforts; (5) be skilled in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches, though they may be more experienced with one or the other; (6) possess attention to detail; (7) have the ability to work independently and collaboratively; (8) show initiative and creativity in developing relationships and approaches to addressing complex issues; and (9) be an optimistic, positive, resilient, insightful, and performance-driven decision-maker, problem-solver, and consensus-builder.

How to Apply

Applications are processed through the online job posting at <https://careers.nebraska.edu>. Follow instructions to complete the Standard Application. Along with your application, attach a cover letter, resume, and contact information for three professional references. Direct questions about the position to: humanresources@nebraska.edu. Direct questions about the online application process to: (402) 472-3701.

The University of Nebraska is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer and participates in E-Verify. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation or protected veteran status.

ADDENDUM FOR SENIOR RESEARCH SPECIALIST-EVALUATION

Competencies

- **Nature/Complexity of Work**
This position requires strong research skills, as well as organizational and project coordination skills, and the ability to prioritize and manage multiple tasks. Self-initiative, good follow-through, and ability to work without supervision are also required, as well as the ability to work collaboratively. Ability to integrate, synthesize, and report information. Excellent communication skills, including spoken and written communications for presentation (multiple audiences) and publication (report and peer-review).
- **Problem-Solving/Decision-Making**
Problem-solving and appropriate decision-making will be required as an element of this position. This position requires independent judgment and self-direction to complete tasks assigned, determine the tools and approach to be used in developing analyses, and to use judgment in determining the degree to which detail and information is needed to adequately respond to a request. Collaborative decision-making is also required, with the individual leading decision-making processes.
- **Strategic Input**
This individual is required to be proficient and conscientious when representing the Buffett Institute. Any errors reflect unfavorably on the individual, the Institute, and potentially the university. The individual is accountable for taking appropriate steps to correct any errors.
- **Know-How**
This position demands the ability to take initiative, work as a member of a team, yet operate

independently when necessary, and thrive in an entrepreneurial environment. The incumbent must demonstrate proficiency with database management and analysis software (qualitative and quantitative); be detail-oriented and accurate; able to prioritize effectively, multi-task and quickly respond to shifting priorities; possess strong research skills including the ability to collect, compile, and analyze facts, draw conclusions, and recommend solutions; and have a willingness to learn and use new technologies and train others, when needed.

- **Technical Skills**

The employee must be adept with computer technology and software, and related programs or applications. These include software to support literature reviews, data management and analyses, data reporting and visualization, and writing for publication. The ability to learn new technical skills and programs quickly is also a must.

- **Interactions**

The employee will work extensively with all staff at the Buffett Institute, the University of Nebraska Office of the President, campus representatives, and other community partners.

- **Supervision**

This position exercises no direct supervision over others. This position reports to the associate director of research and evaluation.

Physical Requirements and Work Conditions

The physical requirements and work conditions described here are representative of what an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Attendance at the workplace is critical. While performing the duties of this job, the employee is routinely required to have vision for up close and far away, talk, hear, sit, and use hands to touch, feel, handle, and operate routine office equipment. The employee is occasionally required to stand, walk, climb stairs, bend, reach, twist, and lift, carry, or move up to 15 pounds. The employee is required to occasionally travel to and participate in meetings and conferences that may require the ability to drive a motor vehicle or stay overnight.

The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate, and there are frequent interruptions as the Institute staff conduct business in cubicles, walled office space, and conference rooms.