

Online Appendix for:

How wage announcements affect job search - a field experiment

Michèle Belot, Philipp Kircher, and Paul Muller

OA.1 Consent form

# **Consent Form for Participants: “How Do Unemployed Search for Jobs?”**

**Thank you for your willingness to consider taking part in this study. Please read the information below carefully. By signing the consent form below, you indicate that you have understood the purpose of the study, you have been made aware of your rights and you have agreed with the terms and conditions of the study.**

## **Purpose of the study**

The study is undertaken to understand better how people search for jobs. The study aims to observe how people search for real jobs. The goal is to document parts of the job search process.

## **How will this work?**

The study will be conducted over a period of 12 weeks and you are asked to take part to one weekly session of 2 hours taking place at a pre-agreed time slot. You will be asked to come to our computer facilities, located at the School of Economics, 31 Buccleuch Place, EH8 9JT Edinburgh. There will be a maximum of 30 participants present at the same time in the facilities. The research team aims to provide an environment that is conducive to the job search of participants and hopes that participants will attend for the duration of the study or up to the point you find a job.

You will be able to spend most time each week to search for job vacancies. These job vacancies are obtained from two sources:

- Our main data source is the vacancy database of Universal Jobmatch and coincides with those used at Jobcentre Plus.
- Additionally, our database includes a small number of vacancies (no more than 2 per 100 vacancies) that is added for research purposes. These “research vacancies” are included to understand better which types of vacancies people are interested in even if these are not currently offered. If you express interest in such a vacancy, you will be immediately informed that this is a research vacancy before you start any application.

We will track the pages you consult, what vacancies you are looking at and consider applying to. This information will never be linked to any of your personal information such as your name and address, which will be stored separately. Your personal information will never be given out to anyone and will be accessible only to selected members of the research team.

You will also be asked some survey questions about your job search in the past week and your wellbeing. In the initial week, we will also ask a number of questions about your background and unemployment history. Six month after the end of your participation we will send you a survey about your labour market experience and your well-being.

Note that we ask all participants to stay for the full 2 hours in the laboratory. But if you do not want to search for jobs anymore, we provide some alternative ways in which you can use the computer and internet facilities.

If you are unable to participate to a session, please inform us as soon as possible (under [jobsearch@ed.ac.uk](mailto:jobsearch@ed.ac.uk) or 0131 6508324). The research team will attempt to provide additional slots in case a participant misses his time slots for justified reasons (e.g., job interviews, illness).

### **Important notes**

- Participation to this study is entirely voluntary. You should by no means feel compelled to participate. You can also withdraw from the study at any time if you wish to do so.
- Since the study is to gain understanding in how people search for jobs, the research team holds no particular view on how individuals should search for jobs. Thus, you should search for jobs in the same way as you would normally do.
- The study is conducted by the research team, and no personalized information is shared with any other organization. Therefore, no information will be shared with Job Centre Plus or the Department of Work and Pensions. If you would like to obtain a record of your search activities, e.g. to use for discussion with your case worker, you can obtain a printed record to take along at the end of each session.
- You should be aware that **participation in this study does not provide any additional benefits**, and in particular it does not provide particular help in job search. In particular, you **should follow your usual job search strategy**, such as for example looking at other job vacancies beyond those provided in our database, searching from home via the internet, and contacting friends and acquaintances. You should not take the time within the study as an indication of the appropriate time to spend on searching for a job.
- All the data collected during your time in our computer facility is anonymous. Your search activities will not be matched to your identity in any way. You will be attributed a randomly generated number at the first session and all data records will be matched to that number.
- We will ask you for a telephone number that we can use to contact you. We will only contact you to remind you of the time slot you have been allocated to and to inform you of any changes in schedule. Of course the telephone number will not be matched to the data we collect in the laboratory.
- You have the right to withdraw entirely from the study (i.e. ask us to delete all the data records associated with you) at any point during the study.
- The impersonal data collected will be used for research purposes (and ONLY for research purposes). Personal data will never be given out, and will be eliminated after the study is completed. The results of the study will be published in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

## **Compensation**

You will be compensated for your efforts of coming to and participating in each session in our computer facility with a compensation of £12.50 per visit (2 hours) to the laboratory. Additionally, if you participated in all four sessions in the first four weeks you are entitled to a £50 clothing voucher for job market attire as compensation for arranging the visit every week. The same holds for weeks 5 to 8 and for weeks 9 to 12.

## **Eligibility**

Participants have to be at least 18 years of age, permanent residents of the UK and living in Edinburgh (or within a distance of 5 miles from Edinburgh). You should be seeking for a job for a period of 4 weeks or less at the start date of the study.

## **Signature**

If any of the material above is unclear to you, or if you have any doubts and would like clarification, please consult a member of the research team before proceeding.

If you are willing to take part in this study, please sign the consent form below:

**I certify that I voluntarily participate in this research study. I certify that I read and understood the information above, and am eligible for taking part in this study.**

-----  
(please print your name)

-----  
(please sign)

-----  
(place and time of signature)

## OA.2 Lab instructions

## **UNIVERSITY JOB SEARCH STUDY: INSTRUCTIONS**

**Please do not start using the computer before we indicate you to do so.**

**We will read these instructions aloud at the start of the first session.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome and thank you for coming here today. Before we explain how each session will work, we would like to raise your attention to the following:

- **Health and Safety:** There will always be one person from the research team in the computer room. There is one toilet on this floor that you are free to use. In case of fire, please do follow the signs for fire exit. The main exit is through the staircase you have used to come up here.
- **No smoking:** Smoking is not allowed in this building.
- **Silence:** Since there are many of you in the room, we would appreciate if you would keep silent, so that everyone can concentrate on their computer activity.
- **Mobile phones:** Mobile phones must either be switched off or be on “silent” during each session. We would appreciate if you leave it on only if you are expecting an important phone call. And if you do receive a phone call, please leave the room and take the call outside (in the staircase).
- **Food and drinks** are not allowed in this room.
- **Questions:** Please do not hesitate to call us if you have a question.

### **WHAT IS THE STUDY ABOUT?**

The goal of the study is to understand how people search for jobs. Importantly, we hold no preconceptions regarding how people *should* search for jobs. We designed this study to find out what people usually do and what strategies are most successful. At the moment, we do not know what these are. We are interested in finding out common patterns in search strategies, and kindly ask you to search exactly in the same way as you normally would.

### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN EACH SESSION**

**When you come in, you will be assigned to a computer station. We may provide specific instructions at the beginning of the session, so please do wait for us to indicate the start of the session. We will now describe how each session will proceed.**

#### **1. LOGIN**

You have received a unique login number and password that you can use to login on the website here and also from home. You will be able to access your records using this login information.

## 2. SURVEY

Each weekly session will start with a **short survey**, asking questions about your past week and job search. After filling the survey, you will be re-directed towards the job search engine's main page.

For the first session, we will ask you to fill in a longer survey asking you questions about your background, qualifications and job search experience so far. You will only need to answer this initial survey once, in this session. It should take 20 minutes to fill in this initial survey.

## 3. THE JOB SEARCH ENGINE

We have designed our own job search engine. It allows you to search through all UK vacancies that are also recorded in Universal Jobmatch.

We ask you to search for jobs using this search engine only for a minimum of 30 minutes.

You can search using various criteria (keywords, occupations, location, salary, preferred hours). Importantly, you do not have to specify all of these. You just need to fill at least one of them.

If you specify more than one criterion, it is important to note that the computer will search for vacancies that satisfy all the criteria at the same time. For example, if you enter a keyword and you also select an occupation, it will search for vacancies that match both at the same time. Vacancies that match the keyword but not the occupation will not be shown.

Within some categories you can fill in more than one field. For example, within "occupations" you can specify up to two of them. If you do fill in two occupations, the computer that match either the first OR the second occupation. Vacancies that match one occupation but not the other will still be shown. You can also specify more than one pay range. This allows you to specify, for example, the hourly wages and the yearly wages that you are willing to accept. If you only specify hourly wages, it will not show vacancies that only specify yearly wages.

If you fill in your preferred hours, for example full time work, it will only list vacancies where the employer ticked a box that it is full-time work. Vacancies where the employer did not explicitly state that it is full-time work will not be shown.

If you leave a field empty, the computer will not use that criterion to restrict your search.

### Search for Jobs

You should spend at least 30 minutes searching for jobs in the lab, after which you will be able to view / print / apply for your saved vacancies and use the rest of the computer, you have been searching for 30 minutes.

Search for jobs by entering one or more search terms below.

General	Location and Salary
Keywords <input type="text" value="Keywords (e.g. nurse)"/>	Location <input type="text" value="Enter city or postcod"/> <input type="text" value="radius"/>
Occupations <input type="text" value="Select a category"/> <input type="button" value="v"/>	Salary <input type="text" value="min"/> to <input type="text" value="max"/> <input type="text" value="Select a"/> <input type="button" value="v"/>
<input type="text" value="Select a category then an"/> <input type="button" value="v"/>	<input type="text" value="min"/> to <input type="text" value="max"/> <input type="text" value="Select a"/> <input type="button" value="v"/>
<input type="text" value="Select a category"/> <input type="button" value="v"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Include jobs with no salary information
<input type="text" value="Select a category then an"/> <input type="button" value="v"/>	choose up to 2 salary ranges
Hours <input type="text" value="Select desired hours"/> <input type="button" value="v"/>	
choose up to 2 occupations or categories	

Once you have defined your search criteria, you can press the search button at the bottom of the screen and a list of vacancies fitting your criteria will appear. You can click on each individual vacancy to get more information about it. You can then either

- **Save the job (if you are interested in applying)**
- **Do not save the job (if you are not interested)**

**If you save the job**, the computer will keep a record of the vacancy. You will be able to see all records of all saved vacancies at the end of the session.

**If you do not want to save the job and want to go back to the search results**, we will first ask you a few questions about why you are not interested in the job. Your answers are very important to us.

You can modify your search criteria at any point and launch a new search.

Note that we have also created a small number of vacancies ourselves (about 2% of the database), which are there for research purposes only. This is to learn whether you would find these vacancies attractive and would consider applying to them if they were available. We kept them to a minimum not to disturb your search. These vacancies will appear as all the other vacancies and may appear in your search results. But we will inform you at the end of the 30 minutes of any vacancy that may not be real. You will be able to see the list of your saved vacancies immediately after the 30 minutes are over, and we will indicate if any of them was an artificial one.

We may try alternative interfaces for the job search engine in the coming weeks. We will inform you if we do so and will explain the changes at that point in time.

#### **4. FREE USE OF THE FACILITIES (after 30 minutes)**

We will let you know when the first 30 minutes are over. You will then be free to use the computer for other purposes. You can of course keep searching using our job search engine, or you can do other things, such as write your CV, write a letter, or even send e-mails. You can use the facilities for up to 2 hours.

If you do not wish to continue searching or use the computer for other purposes, you are free to leave.

#### **END OF THE SESSION**

We can print a record of your job search for the day (just call us once you have finished), but only if that is your wish. You are free to show these records to your adviser at the Job Centre. They informed us that this would count as a proof of search activity.

Compensation: In general, you will receive a total of £11 as a compensation for your travel and meal expenses. This time, as you will soon discover in the initial survey, we do offer you the possibility of investing part of this compensation in this initial session. This is not compulsory. But if you do choose an investment option, your earnings will then be a function of what investment you have chosen.

Please collect your compensation from the registration room. You will get an envelope and be asked to sign a receipt. Note that the Job Centre has agreed that these £11 are a compensation for expenses and are not an income.

## **IMPORTANT NOTES**

### **LOG IN FROM HOME OR FROM ANOTHER COMPUTER**

You will be able to use our search engine from home or from another computer as well. You just need to log in on the website and use your login information. You will be able to see all the vacancies you saved and will be able to retrieve all the relevant information about them.

Note that as indicated in the consent form, all records saved are anonymous. These will not be matched to your names at any point.

### **YOUR COMMITMENT**

Note that it is very important for us that you come back every week and search in our facilities, unless of course you have found a job. If for one reason or the other you do have to cancel your session in a given week, please let us know as soon as possible. We will either try to reallocate you to another slot or ask you to search from home in that particular week. If you have found a job, please do let us know. This is of course of key importance for our study.

Also, importantly, you will receive a £50 clothing voucher for each four consecutive weeks you come. The first voucher will be distributed in the fourth week, that is, three weeks from now. The second voucher will be distributed in the eighth week and the third voucher in the twelfth week.

Thank you very much for your attention. If you have any questions, please raise your hand and we will come to you.

### OA.3 Vacancy perceptions survey

## VACANCY SURVEY

Thank you for participating to this survey. We will show you 20 job advertisements and ask you to answer questions about these ads. After that, we will ask you a few questions about your background characteristics.

### **Preamble**

Please confirm that you are eligible to participate to the study (click all that applies):

1. I am currently living in Edinburgh
2. I am not a student
3. I am a registered participant of the BLUE subject pool

*[Participants will be shown 20 vacancies in total, one vacancy at a time, and will be asked to answer the following questions]*

1. Given the skill and experience requirements described in the job announcement (if any), how good would you expect an applicant needs to be in order to be considered for this job?
  - a. Very much above average
  - b. Above average and higher
  - c. Average and higher
  - d. Below average and higher
  - e. Very much below average and higher
2. For someone with the skill and experience requirements described in the job announcement (if any), how much competition would you expect for this job relative to other jobs in the same profession and area?
  - a. Very much above average
  - b. Above average
  - c. Average
  - d. Below average
  - e. Very much below average
3. For someone with the skill and experience requirements described in the job announcement (if any), how would you expect the overall (non-monetary) working conditions of this job to be? Examples of non-monetary working conditions are working hours, career prospects, demands associated with the job, health and safety, etc.
  - a. Much better than average
  - b. Better than average
  - c. Average
  - d. Worse than average
  - e. Much worse than average
4. What is your gender?
  - a. Female
  - b. Male

5. How old are you? [text]
6. What is your current occupation?
  - a. Employed part or full time
  - b. Self employed
  - c. Unemployed and not looking for work
  - d. Unemployed and looking for work
  - e. Retired
  - f. Student
  - g. Other
7. Are you currently looking for work?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
8. What is your unique BLUE id?
9. What is your e-mail address (that was used to send the survey link)?

#### **OA.4 Example vacancy pair**

Note that the visualizations below have been generated from the underlying data of the vacancies. Thus, this is not how they appeared to the job seekers. ID-numbers were also hidden for job seekers.

id: 1940173

id2:102278128

## **Job Title: Room Attendant**

**Location:** Edinburgh (EH23DT)

**Skills requirements:** Punctual,Attention to detail,Efficient

**Salary:**

**min:** £9.66 (Per Hour)

**max:** £9.66

**Contract:** Full time

Room attendant required. Should be dependable, quality focussed and able to provide good customer service. Duties include: maintaining hotel rooms by cleaning, dusting, vacuuming, and polishing; providing linen services; other cleaning activities as required.

id: 1940172

id2:102278128

## **Job Title: Room Attendant**

**Location:** Edinburgh (EH75DW)

**Skills requirements:** Punctual,Attention to detail,Efficient

**Salary:**

**min:** £6.90 (Per Hour)

**max:** £6.90

**Contract:** Full time

Job Purpose:

Maintains hotel rooms by cleaning, dusting, vacuuming, and polishing; providing linen services.

Duties:

\* Maintains cleaning schedule priorities by following room assignment list; servicing rooms requesting early cleaning first. Skills/Qualifications:

Dependability, Quality Focus, Customer Service

id: 1870132

id2:102290576

## **Job Title: Welder**

**Location:** Edinburgh (EH141AR)

**Skills requirements:**

**Salary:**

**min:** £11.90 (Per Hour)

**max:** £12.60

**Contract:** Full time

Temporary Assignment - Immediate start. We are looking for experienced fabricator/ welders for our client. Candidates applying for this role must have experience of MIG/TIG welding, and be able to set up and run machines in a fabrication environment. You must also have a good level of English and be able to read drawings and instructions.

Successful candidates must have an engineering background.

id: 1870133

id2:102290576

## **Job Title: Welder**

**Location:** Edinburgh (EH31DT)

**Skills requirements:**

**Salary:**

**min:** £8.50 (Per Hour)

**max:** £9.00

**Contract:** Full time

Position available for an experienced fabricator/ welders.

Candidates applying for this role must have experience of MIG/TIG welding, and be able to set up and run machines in a fabrication environment. A good level of English and the ability to read drawings and instructions is also necessary.

Successful candidates must have an engineering background. (This is a temporary assignment, with immediate start)