**Head of Research & Data – Job Description**

**Background**

The Independent Schools Council (ISC) is the umbrella body of seven member

Associations\* representing over 1,400 independent schools, educating more than 500,000

children. ISC schools are diverse, ranging from well-known boarding schools to non-selective day schools serving local communities. The great majority of children in UK independent schools are in ISC Association schools: ISC therefore speaks for the sector as a whole. ISC is strictly independent of all political parties and acts in the interests of all children.

This is an exciting opportunity for a senior research professional to lead a small team delivering big results, enabling ISC to provide evidence-based policy advice, to disseminate accurate information about independent education and to better tell the story about what independent schools look like and what they deliver for students, families and communities.

For over 50 years, ISC has taken a yearly Census of its members, providing detailed, trusted, accurate data that provides a snapshot of the current state of independent education. This data is used by the press, by policymakers, independent researchers and by the public, and depends on the output of a high-quality, proactive research and data analysis team.

The Census is supplemented by other research and data such as ISC’s annual analysis of exam results, and ad-hoc projects based on the priorities and interests of independent schools each year. Recent examples include a parent survey, VAT-readiness survey and a pupil recruitment survey.

**Main purpose of job**

To deliver and be accountable for all projects in the research and data department with support from a team of three research analysts Further, to liaise internally with other ISC departments (Media and Communications, Web and Policy and Public Affairs in particular) and the member Associations, and externally with other stakeholders in the education sector supporting the full range of ISC’s work.

The Head of Research & Data reports to the Chief Executive.

**Person specification**

A confident, proactive and established research and analysis professional who either has experience in the education sector, or who is able to gain a quick understanding of relevant information and issues. They will be sympathetic to the independent education sector and independent schools and must be able to line manage a team of three and work within budgetary constraints in order to deliver the research agenda.

This includes regular ISC research outputs such as the [annual Census](https://www.isc.co.uk/research/annual-census/) of ISC schools, [exam results surveys](https://www.isc.co.uk/research/exam-results/) and also ad hoc research at ISC’s own initiative or at the request of the

member associations. A good communicator, the post holder will be expected to present results at conferences and meetings including the ISC Board. He or she must be thorough and methodical, and show sound judgment under pressure with an ability to meet deadlines.

We are looking for someone who:

* has a research-related qualification and a sound understanding of both qualitative and quantitative research methods with a particular focus on survey research
* is highly numerate and literate with excellent attention to detail
* can demonstrate excellent data analysis skills
* has a working knowledge of data protection issues and data security
* has experience of project management, managing competing priorities (individually and across a team) and delivering accurate, quality-assured data and analysis to challenging timescales.
* will plan the team’s work schedule, balancing short- and long-term priorities, and to implement the plan, tracking progress and re-planning as necessary.
* has advanced Excel and PowerPoint skills
* is able to demonstrate an understanding of the need for research to have actionable outputs and experience of applying research results to organisational needs
* is able to produce clear and accurate analyses of existing research and produce new ideas for ground-breaking research
* has strong communication skills, including the ability to produce sharp, focused, easily digestible outputs in writing and orally
* has excellent presentation skills
* can lead and work well in a small team and who values their input and ideas
* can work well under pressure
* has intellectual curiosity, openness to learning and ability to innovate to achieve results
* is comfortable supporting independent education
* is willing to contribute enthusiastically and positively to the ISC’s overarching mission to support children, educational standards and the parental right to choose independent education by promulgating credible data, contributing to the policy agenda and supporting communications around independent schools to stakeholders, the media and other interested groups

**Specific responsibilities**

* leading and planning each year’s research activity with ISC’s senior management team
* delivering and being accountable for ISC’s core research projects and producing high quality outputs for additional ad hoc research products at ISC’s initiative or at the request of member Associations
* managing the research team, including delegation of work as required
* working closely with the Chief Executive and the Chairman as well as the Head of Media and Communications and the Head of Policy
* presenting research findings and recommending future research projects to the ISC Board and other ISC committees, member associations and their committees and stakeholders in the education sector
* coordinating and liaising with staff across the entire ISC team, including other departments at ISC, in particular media and communications, web and policy and public affairs staff
* liaising with members of the media to answer any specific questions on data or analysis provided by ISC
* working with other relevant bodies and developing links with independent schools councils in other countries
* playing an active role in supporting ISC’s communications outputs such as press releases and publications by contributing and checking the accuracy and credibility of relevant data analysis
* oversight of ISC’s IT requirements and use of AI as appropriate

**Additional information**

**Salary:** £60-65k per annum depending on experience

**Other Benefits:** 25 days holiday per annum (plus bank holidays) rising to 30 days after one year’s service (and at the commencement of the next holiday year); in addition to the annual allowance the office is closed between Christmas Day and New Year’s Day; 10% employer pension contribution; hybrid working with a minimum of two days per week in the office.

ISC is an Equal Opportunity Employer and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified people.

*\* The member Associations comprise The Girls' Schools Association (GSA),HMC (The Heads’ Conference),*

*Independent Association of Prep Schools (IAPS), Independent Schools Association (ISA), The Society of Heads, Association of*

*Governing Bodies of Independent Schools (AGBIS), Independent Schools' Bursars Association (ISBA).*

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