

Job description

I am looking for a German speaking Research Assistant to assemble a dataset for a research project on how employers balance using technology and employing workers. The project should take between about 80 to 100 hours. I would like to start as soon as possible and I would like someone who can devote about 20 hours per week to the project. The wage rate will depend on the candidate's qualifications, but it should be above the typical wage rate for normal undergrad or graduate RA jobs, since it has a language requirement.

The research project investigates the effects of technology on the labor market. Many people are concerned that firms' use of sophisticated technologies will throw people out of work, particularly people with less than a college education. This project aims to test that hypothesis, using data from firms in Germany to investigate who firms hire as they buy machines to assist in production. I plan to see how corporate tax rates, which create a disincentive to use sophisticated machines, affect who firms hire. Knowing this relationship should give us an idea of who benefits after firms shift to using machines.

The RA will create a database of local business tax (Gewerbesteuer) rates across municipalities (Gemeinden) in Germany. These rates are available via each state's statistical office, along with a number of other statistics. I would like to have English language documentation of where they were located, original versions of the websites and/or documents, and a dataset containing each tax rate, for each municipality, from 1993 to the present. I also would like to check if there are other statistics available that might be useful, like other tax rates, or information about business incentives. If these are available, I also would like to collect them.

The job can be completed remotely. I would, however, like to have periodic contact to help the RA, and to better acquaint myself with the statistics available from each state.

Proficiency in German will be important throughout the process, and institutional knowledge will be very helpful, particularly for influencing the overall direction of the research. Familiarity with statistical software and/or programming languages will help, though much of that can be learned on the job.

This should be an excellent opportunity for someone interested in the underlying economics of technology replacing different types of workers. For example, I think it would be a good fit for a graduate student in economics who is interested in co-authoring research. Even if the candidate is less interested in economic research, the project should be an opportunity to develop statistical, data science, and programming skills.

Applicants should include a Resume/CV and a cover letter in an email to me at zabek@umich.edu. In the cover letter, they should emphasize their level of experience with the German language, with Germany in general, and with economics, statistics and/or data science. The deadline is Friday, July 28th. I should interview candidates starting on July 31st.