MIT Job Description

Job Title: Research Policy Associate 1	**Position Title: Policy Associate**
Reports to: Senior Manager – P&C	**% Effort or Wkly Hrs: 100%**
Department: Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab	**Prepared by: Anu Dathan**

Position Overview:
The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) is a global research center working to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is informed by scientific evidence. Anchored by a network of more than a thousand affiliated researchers at universities around the world, J-PAL conducts randomized impact evaluations to answer critical questions in the fight against poverty.

The Policy & Communications Group plays a key role in translating research by J-PAL affiliated research into actionable recommendations for poverty alleviation policies around the world. J-PAL is recruiting a **Policy Associate** to contribute to this mission of promoting evidence-informed policy through its Cost-Effectiveness and Welfare Analysis team. This is a hybrid position based in Cambridge, MA, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Staff are expected to be in the office at least two days per week. Visa sponsorship is not available for this position.

J-PAL values diversity, equity, and inclusion in our work, and we value the perspectives our staff bring to their roles and to the broader J-PAL community. We encourage people of color, first generation college graduates, and those identifying as LGBTQIA+ and/or members of other groups underrepresented in the field of economics to apply to this role. In your cover letter, please consider sharing how your racial, gender, socioeconomic, and/or other identity has influenced your drive and desire to work at J-PAL (this is entirely optional, just an opportunity for us to get to know you a bit better). Learn more about J-PAL's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Principal Duties and Responsibilities (Essential Functions):

Data Analysis (55%): You will develop cost-effectiveness analyses (CEAs) of programs of policy-relevant programs to inform the work of decision-makers such as governments, donors,

NGOs, bilateral agencies, and others. This will involve identifying programs that are particularly promising based on evidence and then constructing estimates of their impact per dollar spent. Programs that you analyze may include those highlighted in the Evidence Effect, identified by J-PAL sector teams and regional offices, flagged by partners, and more. To develop estimates of program cost-effectiveness, you will read academic papers that evaluate the impact of individual programs, develop program cost models using Excel or Stata, and iterate with researchers to refine key assumptions.

Communication and Dissemination (25%): Your work is intended to directly inform policy decisions. To support dissemination efforts, you will develop slide decks and write policy briefs that summarize the results of your analysis and help to inform partners including governments, donors, NGO representatives, multilaterals, and others of the cost-effectiveness of key programs. You may also have the opportunity to help organize events and further your policy and communication skills by joining meetings with these partner organizations.

Other (20%): You will have the opportunity to support J-PAL's overall mission in a number of ways. These can include performing internal tasks such as knowledge management, supporting recruitment and hiring, internal training and onboarding, supporting work on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and undertaking professional development opportunities. Associates may also serve as liaisons between J-PAL Global and one of J-PAL's regional offices covering Africa, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and North Africa, North America, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, or assist with other J-PAL projects.

Qualifications & skills:
Your technical expertise, strong communication and organizational skills, passion for translating research into action, and interest in international development make you an ideal candidate for the Policy Associate role.

Education: You hold at least a bachelor's degree (master's preferred) with significant training in economics, including intermediate-level economics and econometrics. Do you have a demonstrated academic interest in international development and public policy and/or international experience? Even better.

Experience: Experience: 0-2 years of relevant full- or part-time work experience. Full-time work experience includes a relevant job or a master's degree. Part-time experience includes related internships in research and/or policy work. You may be a recent or soon-to-be graduate with related internships, or you may have previous experience in research and/or development work. J-PAL strongly prefers candidates who have some experience using AI

tools in their academic or professional work, training in economics, including intermediate-level economics and econometrics; some experience using Stata or another coding language preferred.

Skills: Proficiency in Excel, with experience in Stata or another coding language preferred; ability to read and interpret economics research papers; write succinctly for policymakers; clear oral communication; and attention to detail are all critical for success in this role. You should be comfortable with intermediate-level economics and econometrics, especially randomized evaluation methodology, as well as working in or learning computer applications, including Google Suite. English language fluency is required. Knowledge of Arabic, Bahasa Indonesia, French, Portuguese, Spanish, or other languages spoken in our regions of work are a plus.

Organization: You are a strategic thinker and love project management. You can handle multiple projects at once, meet deadlines, and effectively manage your time. You have a clear and strong vision and appreciation for how your work improves the productivity of J-PAL's leadership and thereby contributes to the mission of the entire organization itself.

Communication: You are detail-oriented and have advanced writing skills. You understand how to communicate policy lessons from technical academic research in ways that policymakers and practitioners understand. You are precise, clear, and creative.

Experience with AI: You have experience applying AI to improve workflows. You have the ability to determine where and how AI tool use is responsible and ethical in your own work. Having working knowledge of a coding language sufficient to be able to describe a project to an LLM, execute the generated code, and iteratively de-bug with the AI tool's help is a plus.

Cultural competencies: You are comfortable and adept at working in a diverse and multicultural work environment, with colleagues, partners and policymakers from around the world. You display sensitivity, adaptability, and inclusivity in your engagement with people from diverse backgrounds including age, ability, culture, gender, nationality, race and ethnicity, religion, sexuality, socioeconomic status, and other identities. We appreciate candidates who have familiarity with concepts and frameworks such as racial equity or gender analyses.

Attitude: You love learning. You are passionate about international development policy and the rigorous research that informs it. You are agile, adaptable, self-motivated, hardworking, and collaborative.

Compensation:

Salaries for most new employees are set at the starting point / lower end of this range.

Starting salary for this position based on minimum years of experience is:

Pay Range Minimum: $69,294