

MIT Job Description

Job Title: Research Policy Manager 3	Position Title: Policy Lead
Reports to: Director Policy and Communications	% Effort or Wkly Hrs: 100%
Department: Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab	Prepared by: Claire Walsh

Position Overview:

The Policy Lead is based at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology campus in Cambridge, MA.

The Policy and Communications Group is a rapidly growing group within J-PAL working to translate research by J-PAL affiliates into actionable poverty alleviation policies around the world. More broadly, we are looking to hire staff who combine a strong understanding of economics and policy with a passion for working with organizations around the world to inform development policy. In this role, we are specifically looking for a senior staff member who can work closely with the Director and Associate Director of Policy & Communications to manage the Policy & Communications group which manages 11 sectors, 10+ funding initiatives, several technical teams, and anchors J-PAL's global policy outreach and partnerships with funders, bilateral and multilateral development institutions, governments, and large international INGOs to advance evidence-informed policy.

Principal Duties and Responsibilities (Essential Functions):**

- Sector leadership and strategy: Lead and/or advise multiple J-PAL sector teams, working under the guidance of J-PAL's Academic Sector Co-Chairs to effectively generate, synthesize, disseminate, communicate, and catalyze the use of evidence from randomized evaluations in real-world policy. Manage the sector team and ensure high quality work and outputs including policy publications, analysis, evidence presentations and reviews, and policy recommendations. Provide advising and leadership to one or more J-PAL initiatives, J-PAL's primary vehicle for funding new research, policy and scale opportunities, and increasing the diversity of our research network
- Policy partnerships: Anchor high level J-PAL partnerships with external funders, bilateral and multilateral development institutions, governments, and large international INGOs within and beyond their sector to advance evidence generation and use in policy. Build new partnerships with policymakers and funders to expand J-PAL's network, generating extensions and new funding opportunities for J-PAL initiatives.
- Fundraising and donor stewardship: Raise funds for their sector and J-PAL as a whole with guidance from the Director of Policy and Communications. Successfully steward J-PAL funders to expand funding opportunities for J-PAL and oversee junior staff to complete high quality donor proposals and reporting.
- Policy and Communications Group Strategy: Work with the Director of Policy to create and execute the strategy to increase the effectiveness and impact of policy work at J-PAL including shaping group wide objectives and priorities, supporting the Director in team innovation, growth, change management.
- Organizational: Manage and directly oversee 4-6 staff members who will support on both strategy and execution. Coach and mentor senior managers, managers, and junior staff, perform performance

reviews of subordinates, carry out recruitment duties including representing J-PAL at job fairs and making presentations at conferences and universities.

- Regional support: Provide senior level advising and policy outreach support to J-PAL regional offices on special projects as requested.
- Functional team advising and management: Provide leadership and advising to one or more functional teams (for example, policy writing and evidence synthesis, strategic planning, OKRs, onboarding, or recruitment)
- J-PAL Leadership support: work with J-PAL Directors, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, and Policy and Communications Director on partnerships, policy outreach, speaking engagements, and fundraising as requested.
- External Communication: Help donors and the broader research and policy community understand J-PAL evidence and use it in policy decisions through writing, presentations, meetings with senior policy partners, and representing J-PAL at major policy events.
- Miscellaneous: Any other tasks assigned by supervisor.

Supervision Received:

The Policy Lead reports to the Director of Policy and Communications. He/she takes ownership of tasks and exercises good judgement in knowing when to seek feedback from the supervisor, and shows initiative in adding value to processes. The Policy Lead is expected to work independently or in groups, but be able to take initiative and grow into further leadership roles.

Supervision Exercised:

Supervision of Senior Managers, Managers, Associates and/or Policy Associates.

Qualifications & Skills:

- *Education:* This position is for people with at least a master's degree in economics, public policy or international development, including significant training in economics, as a strong technical understanding of economics is necessary to ensure that J-PAL's findings are translated into general policy conclusions in a way that is both simple to follow but also accurate and undistorted.
- *Experience:* 8 years minimum work experience including prior experience working in randomized evaluations, economics research, and international development policy. Experience with overseeing research and policy grant funding competitions is strongly preferred.
- Self-motivated and able to work collaboratively with the supervisor (Director of Policy and Communications) to create goals and work towards them while leveraging key staff across various offices. Ability to exercise good judgment on when to secure approval from the supervisor and when to keep him informed.
- Proven ability to multitask and successfully complete projects on tight deadlines with little supervision is required. A willingness to work hard and learn will be essential for doing well in this position.
- Experience in working with teams, including both working with peers and also leading and managing teams. Recruiting and mentoring staff and managing them with good humor and responsibility.
- Excellent writing skills required. Experience writing articles for print and online publications and dealing with the media will be a plus. Attention to detail and advanced writing and presentation skills for communicating policy lessons from academic papers in ways that policymakers understand. This requires clear, precise, non-technical writing, and confident, effective public speaking skills.

- Knowledge of local languages of one or more of the developing countries where J-PAL affiliates have field studies will be a plus.
- Experience, comfort and expertise in public speaking will be required to represent J-PAL at various conferences and other public commitments is also a plus.
- Willingness to undertake domestic and international travel.