

ISI Side Event at the 50th Session of the UN Statistical Commission
PREPARATION AND SKILLING FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS
CAREERS

Wednesday, 6 March, 8:15-9:30 am

Although backgrounds for official statistics careers vary, most enter national statistical offices (NSO's) as graduates of some suitable undergraduate program, including statistics. There has been significant development of training for official statistics at the postgraduate level. More than 20 European universities participate in the European Master in Official Statistics. The wide variety of training of NSO staff by global and regional institutions to strengthen statistical capacities was a key motivator in establishing GIST, the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training. Participants in this type of training and training at the postgraduate level, are usually working, or have worked, mostly in NSO's or closely associated government departments or agencies.

There has been increasing collaboration between NSO's and those involved in school education, most notably through competitions such as the ISI's ISLP (International Statistical Literacy Project) Poster competition (http://iase-web.org/islp/Poster_Competition_2018-2019.php). There is also increasing emphasis on school statistics teaching that enables students to engage with current social issues, such as ProCivicStat (<http://iase-web.org/islp/pcs/>), funded with support from the European Commission.

Hence we see considerable inservice and postgraduate training developments, and emerging linkages at school level to increase awareness of official statistics, but what of the undergraduate level? Many NSO's put considerable effort into attracting graduates from suitable quantitative degree programs, including statistics, finance, economics, and mathematics, and some have established significant ongoing research and/or staff links with selected university departments or faculties. But official statistics is just one of innumerable destinations for such graduates, and is very different to many, not just in content but also in type of workplace. This session considers what type of generic skills and workplace preparation at the undergraduate level are of assistance for official statistics workplaces, whether and how these fit in university undergraduate programs, how to increase undergraduate understanding of what is involved in official statistics careers, and awareness of the longer-term career possibilities. The panel of speakers, chair and discussant will contribute from a variety of backgrounds and current experiences, and the session will allow for questions and comments from the audience.

The International Statistical Institute (ISI, <http://www.isi-web.org/>) is an international professional society whose mission is to lead, support and promote the understanding, development and good practice of statistics worldwide, by providing the core global network for statistics. This is reflected in its slogan 'Statistical Science for a Better World'. The ISI was established in 1885, and is one of the oldest scientific associations still active throughout the world today. ISI, including its seven Associations, has over 4,000 individual members and more than 140 statistical agencies, central banks, universities, societies and research institutes as organisational members. It supports statisticians and statistical organisations worldwide, and collaborates with a diversity of societies and organisations through memoranda of understanding and affiliations.

Panel (TBC):

Chair: John Pullinger

Head of the Government Statistical Service and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority

Panellists:

Gabriella Vukovich

President, Hungarian Central Statistical Office
Co-chair of the UN High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for post-2015 monitoring

Steve McFeely

Head of Statistics & Information, UNCTD
Adjunct Professor, Centre for Policy Studies, University College Cork
Deputy Director ISLP

Alex Shimuafeni

Statistician General, Namibia

Helen MacGillivray

President ISI
Principal Fellow, Higher Education Academy
Australian Senior Learning and Teaching Fellow
Editor, Teaching Statistics

Discussant: Haishan Fu

Director, Development Data Group, The World Bank Group