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Press Release

Data Expert – Profession of the Future

The University of Mannheim will train survey and big data experts in the "International Program in Survey and Data Science" starting in Spring 2016

In our digital age, we are amassing large amounts of data, generated not only by surveys but also as a by-product of everyday life activities such as online shopping, use of social networks, or even remotely controlling a washing machine via a smartphone. Advanced techniques for analyzing these data allow us to gain insights more quickly, uncover previously unknown relationships, and foster innovation. While exciting, these new types of data come with challenges that require multidisciplinary training in their collection, integration, analysis, and presentation. The "International Program in Survey and Data Science" at the University of Mannheim aims to equip data experts with the right tools to successfully work in this new environment.

"We developed an educational program that prepares participants to face the challenges of working with survey and big data," explains Frauke Kreuter, Program Chair and Professor for Statistics and Methodology. The modular program permits students to shape the curriculum according to their personal and professional needs. A flexible, web-based learning environment allows students to take courses from anywhere in the world. Real-time online sessions with world-class faculty from leading universities and organizations allow students to learn from experts with academic and practical experience. Employees from market and social research organizations, statistical agencies, and other public and private organizations that work with survey data will all benefit from this educational program.

The first courses in the "International Program in Survey and Data Science" will be offered in Spring 2016. The program is designed to lead to a Master's degree, following the pilot phase, with courses offered through a cooperation between the University of Mannheim in Germany and the Joint Program in Survey Methodology at the University of Maryland, USA. Additional faculty is located at GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) in Nurnberg, the German Record Linkage Center, the Department of Statistics of the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, the University of Michigan, and Westat. The program is funded by a grant from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research as part of the initiative "Aufstieg durch Bildung: offene Hochschulen".

Registration will open in November for prospective students who fulfill the admission requirements. For the first cohort of students, participation in the program will be tuition-free during the funded project period. Additional information about the curriculum and admission criteria can be found at http://survey-data-science.net.

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