
Changing Perceptions Challenge

Competition: How can we communicate the positive economic impacts of immigration to the UK public?

Opinion polls in recent years have consistently found that the UK public believes immigration has a negative impact on the economy, their job opportunities and their wages. Economic research, on the other hand, shows that, if anything, immigration tends to have a positive impact on local economies. How can we help change public attitudes by communicating these findings in an exciting and engaging way?

I'm Ben Brindle, a PhD student using data from the [UK Data Service](https://ukdataservice.ac.uk) to analyse how immigration affects UK workers and the economy. I've worked with the UK Data Service to create this competition, open to all sixth form and college students aged 16-19 in the UK.

This competition is all about communicating the latest research findings to the public as a way of improving their understanding of how immigration actually impacts workers and the economy. The competition has two parts:

1. Undertake a short piece of analysis of between 500 and 750 words which examines the public and media attitudes to immigration and compares them with the findings of academic research.
2. Develop a campaign to clearly communicate the findings of academic research. It should communicate that immigration has little impact on wages and employment, and explain the reasons why in a way that your target audience will understand.

Why should you enter?

The competition gives you a chance to engage with research that is happening right now without needing to be an expert – you don't need any previous knowledge of the topic, only a desire to think creatively to tackle a real-world question being asked by researchers today. It's also a fantastic opportunity to gain critical thinking and communication skills that will look great on your CV or UCAS form, even if you don't win a prize!

Entries will be judged by experts in the field, and we plan to publish the winning entry on the UK Data Service's [Data Impact blog](#).

Prizes

The winner will receive a prize of £200 in book tokens, to be split equally between you and your school or college, and the runners up will receive a prize of £100 in book tokens, which again will be shared between you and your school or college.

For further details about the competition, including how to enter, please visit the [UK Data Service website \(ukdataservice.ac.uk/impact/competition\)](https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/impact/competition).

Deadline for entries: 23:59 on Sunday 9 January 2022

What we would like you to do

1. In your analysis (500 to 750 words), try to answer the following questions:

- How do you think media articles in recent years have presented the economic impact of immigration; to what extent do these articles use data to support their argument? Use the supplied resources and your own research.
- Opinion polling has shown that around half of the UK public think immigration is bad for workers' wages and employment. How do you think the media articles you have read influence that?
- How does academic research challenge this view; what reasons have researchers given to explain why immigration has little impact on wages and employment in the UK?

2. Develop a campaign that bridges the gap you have found between the findings of academic research and the negative perceptions of immigration held by parts of the UK public.

You do not have to produce the actual campaign, but we do want you to produce a clear plan of its aims, audience, and objectives. Be as imaginative as you like – your idea could be a social media page, posters, an advert, or even a dance show! What the judges will be looking for is evidence that you have thought about the following:

- **Campaign format:** What medium are you using and why? How will this enable you to communicate your key messages?
- **Target audience:** Who are you looking to target with your campaign, and why did you choose that audience? Some potential ideas for a target audience are younger people, your friends or family, or your local MP, but you can target anybody!
- **Success:** What does a successful campaign look like to you? That could mean changing the world, or changing one person's view – it completely depends on the aim of your campaign and your audience!

Remember that this is an emotive issue, so try to draw your audience in by making your campaign something they can relate to and empathise with. Simply presenting “cold hard facts” will not be enough to engage them!

If you're after some ideas, take a look at this article from [The Economist](https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2018/07/27/the-economist-value-of-migration) (tinyurl.com/Economist-value-of-migration), which gives a number of suggestions to change attitudes towards immigration.

Resources

Visit the [UK Data Service website](https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/impact/competition) (ukdataservice.ac.uk/impact/competition) for some resources we have picked to help you explore this topic.