



Q-Step

**A step-change in
quantitative social
science skills**

Funded by the
Nuffield Foundation,
ESRC and HEFCE

Why Q-Step? Hopes for wider change

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Context of concern

- ESRC demographic review & ESRC “MacInnes report” on QM skills in social sciences
- ‘Market failure’ to produce QM skills at school (*Is the UK an outlier?* and *Mathematics in A level assessments*)
- Shared sense that many emerging problems require quantitative skills and that different disciplines bring different perspectives
- NOT anti-qualitative: not epistemological statement



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Examples

- Marriage: over- and under- selection of 'marriage effect'
- Social mobility – does early intervention matter?
- Models of behavioural change
- Gene environment interplay

Do we want social scientists in various disciplines to have the skills to address such questions?



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Model of change

- Life course perspective: not 'one-off training'
- One way into cycle at undergraduate level, but wider changes needed
- Methods embedded in real social science questions
- Practical experience useful in itself and to aid in career choices
- Active stimulation of student demand



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- Strategic response to shortage of quantitatively-skilled social science graduates.
- £19.5 million programme
- Developed and funded by the Nuffield Foundation, the ESRC and HEFCE
- 15 universities, 5 years, 58 departments, 53 new posts
- Resources to be shared across the higher education sector through an accompanying support programme, which will also forge links with schools and employers.



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Additionality

- Additional teaching posts – up to 4 per centre
- Other additionality:
 - New courses, some leading to badged degrees
 - Labs, hands on, ‘learning by doing’.
 - Bursaries for summer schools or courses elsewhere (incl. after 3rd year)
 - Bursaries for work placements/internships
 - In independent research institutes, Government departments, etc.
- **TO YIELD ADDITIONAL:** recruitment of secondary students, more students with basic skills, more students doing quantitative secondary analysis for third year projects, more with advanced skills



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Universities with Q-Step Centres

- University of Bristol
- Cardiff University
- City University London
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Exeter
- University of Glasgow
- University of Kent
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- University of Manchester
- University of Oxford
- Queen's University Belfast
- University of Sheffield
- University of St Andrews
- University College London
- University of Warwick



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Wider change? How to multiply?

- Q-Step is based on a diagnosis
 - Maths in primary and secondary level
 - Social sciences at university level
 - Maths and statistics are not just 'STEM' skills
- School curriculum and qualifications
- Employers and work placements
- General signalling to students and schools



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What can you do?

- Learned societies:
 - A level subject content
 - Discussions with students and HEIs
- Awarding bodies and assessment
- Schools – long term staffing needs and signalling
- Employers: signalling and help



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Q-Step Affiliates

- Keen to spread to other universities
- Start small: unfunded applicants
- Commitment to review and strengthen curriculum in participating departments
- Consider signals to secondary students
- Consider university staffing
- Hope to expand over time

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<http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/q-step>

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