

Postdoctoral Position on “Tutoring Schoolchildren: Unveiling the Black Box of Effects and Mechanisms”

An interdisciplinary research group composed of Professors Francisco Gallego (Full Professor, Economics and Sustainable Development), Katherine Strasser (Full Professor, Psychology), Paulo Volante (Associate Professor, Education), Susana Claro (Assistant Professor, Government), and María Fernanda Ramírez (Assistant Professor, College and Engineering) is inviting outstanding candidates to apply for a full-time postdoctoral position to study school tutoring, with a particular focus on unveiling the black box of effects and mechanisms. This position is part of the UC-Chile call for 35 postdoctoral positions, described in this [document](#). Our advertised position is among the 50 pre-selected applications (out of 138 applications).

Motivation

The consequences of learning loss and educational lag due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the suspension of in-person classes have been described as an “educational earthquake” worldwide (CEPAL-Unesco, 2020; World Bank, 2021). In Chile, the 2021 Integral Learning Diagnosis revealed that only 47% of sixth-grade students achieved the expected results in mathematics and 59% in language (Del Río et al., 2022). These losses have exacerbated existing socioeconomic gaps, which tend to worsen as students progress to higher grades (Agencia de Calidad de Educación, 2021). The magnitude of the crisis has led to the development of global strategies for learning recovery and the restoration of the right to education. In Chile, one implemented action has been the establishment of school tutoring, recognized as a post-pandemic support mechanism (Cabezas et al., 2022). The national implementation of these initiatives, through the National Tutoring Plan of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), has highlighted the need for a deeper understanding of this strategy.

Although there is evidence on the effects of school tutoring (e.g., Carlana and La Ferrara, 2024; Cabezas et al., 2021), evidence on the mechanisms to understand their effects is still scarce and initial (Gallego et al., 2024). The evidence is limited in studying the tutorial link processes between university students and school-aged children. There is also limited research on the benefits that university students gain from participating in a tutoring experience. This knowledge, which this call aims to address, will generate publishable research and could be extrapolated to other forms of tutoring between civil society actors and schoolchildren, fostering the continuous improvement of these initiatives, which could be sustained beyond the post-pandemic period.

Requirements

Applicants must have earned a Ph.D. degree at the time of the beginning of the appointment in areas related to the topic of the project, including Education, Psychology, Economics, Sociology, Public Policies, Social Science, and Interdisciplinary research, among others. Previous experience in research, having led or participated in research and development projects, will be positively considered.

Methodologically, the candidate is expected to implement research that employs mixed methods, incorporating both quantitative quasi-experimental components and qualitative components. The research proposal should discuss how statistical analyses will be used to evaluate the effect of tutoring on both tutors and tutees. Additionally, the proposal should include a qualitative approach to understand the experiences of university tutors with schoolchildren, utilizing tools such as text analysis and natural language processing to analyze text written by tutors and tutees. This includes characterizing, describing, and identifying key factors in the construction of the tutoring relationship, tutors' motivations, the dynamics of the relationship over time, and emerging obstacles and facilitators. The interdisciplinary research team already has access to both quantitative and qualitative data to support this research.

The candidate is expected to carry out applied projects with public and private entities and to disseminate the results of the activities to agents outside academia.

Deadline for application: August 15th, 2024

APPLICATION MATERIALS (IN ENGLISH)

Applicants should submit the following documents to fgallego@uc.cl (in the email subject line, please indicate: Postdoctoral Position in School Tutoring):

- Cover letter (highlighting the candidate's fit with the call and including publications, grants, undergraduate and graduate teaching, professional service, etc.).
- Curriculum Vitae
- 2 reference letters.
- A research proposal that includes the following:
 - Description of theoretical-conceptual foundations
 - State of the art
 - Research question(s) or hypothesis
 - Objectives
 - Methodology
 - Work plan or Gantt chart
 - Scientific or technological novelty of the proposal
- OPTIONAL: 1 or 2 selected research articles, with a brief indication of the main contribution to the discipline that supports their selection.

Timeline of the process

- Candidates' Applications: until August 15, 2024.
- Interviews with pre-selected candidates: August 16-26, 2024.
- Decision of selection of candidate(s) (at most two): August 28, 2024.
- Application with pre-selected candidate(s) to UC-Chile: September 2, 2024.
- Decision on 35 positions by UC-Chile: September 12, 2024.
- Beginning of work (if selected): October 2024.

If selected for the position, foreigners that apply from abroad must obtain the appropriate visa in their country of residence.