

Summer Research Internship

Patricia Funk and Fabrizio Colella, May 2026

1. The Program

The Summer Research Internship is intended for students of the Master of Science in Economics at USI who wish to strengthen their quantitative and analytical skills through direct exposure to academic research and policy-oriented analysis. During the internship, students work closely with a faculty member and support the faculty member's research activities. Depending on the project, activities may include data collection and management, empirical analysis, literature reviews, preparation of research materials, and support for ongoing research projects. Research areas may include gender economics, labor economics, urban economics, household finance, health economics, and political economy. Students are encouraged to engage actively in discussions, research meetings, and collaborative projects throughout the internship period.

2. Conditions

- Duration: 6 weeks
- Workload: 80%
- Remuneration: CHF 1,800 total for the internship period
- Credits: 6 ECTS
- Positions in 2026: 3 internships
- Eligibility: students enrolled in the first-year USI Master in Economics

3. Selection and assignment

Interested students submit their application through the online form by **May 30th, 2026**. Applications are evaluated based on academic background, motivation, and fit with the proposed research areas. Successful students will be assigned to projects based on stated project preferences and overall fit. Results are communicated to applicants in early June 2026.

4. Projects Offered in 2026

The following research projects are available (full descriptions on the next page):

1. **Gender Economics**
2. **REFLEX** (Swiss company histories from commercial registry data)
3. **Trade and Skill Requirements**

Apply here: https://usi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ePCBNuvPGqILZ12



5. Description of the Projects

Project 1: Gender Economics

Responsible Faculty Member: Patricia Funk

Description

This project studies gender differences in confidence among economics job market candidates from leading departments worldwide. The research team applies text analysis to job market papers—using hedge and booster words and LLM-based methods—and uses survey evidence on peer composition and supervisor characteristics.

The team (Patricia Funk, Alda Marchese, Raffaella Intinghero) is finalizing a first draft and extending the analysis to the 2025/2026 job market cohort.

Tasks

- Using existing Python code to update the project database, including the most recent job market cohort
- Collecting data on faculty rosters and helping analyze the empirical impact of supervisor characteristics on student outcomes
- Producing clear and well-designed graphs in Stata using survey data

Requirements

- Interest in gender economics and/or education economics
- Knowledge of Stata and Python

Period

The internship lasts six weeks and takes place between July and September. The starting date is flexible, and holiday breaks are possible.

Project 2: REFLEX

Responsible Faculty Member: Raphael Parchet

Description

The REFLEX project reconstructs Swiss company histories from the Swiss Gazette of Commerce and commercial registry data. A processing pipeline has converted historical registry material into structured firm-event data covering roughly 11 million entries from 1883 onward.

The project has reconstructed approximately 1.6 million companies. The next step is to link firm histories to trace changes of legal form, takeovers, and business group formation.

Tasks

- Create and refine an LLM prompt for extracting links between companies, people, and related commercial registry events
- Test the prompt on entry texts drawn from the REFLEX data pipeline

- Evaluate extraction quality and document recurring errors, edge cases, and possible improvements
- Contribute reproducible code or scripts in R or Python, depending on the workflow agreed with the project team

Requirements

- Good working knowledge of R or Python
- Interest in text-as-data methods, historical business records, economic history, or applied data science
- Careful attention to validation, data quality, and multilingual text
- Basic knowledge of German, French, or Italian would be a plus, as the raw entry texts appear in these languages

Period

Six-week internship starting in mid-July 2026. The internship may be split into separate periods to accommodate holidays.

Project 3: Trade and Skill Requirements

Responsible Faculty Member: Fabrizio Colella

Description

This project studies how changes in trade conditions affect firms' skill requirements, using evidence from Switzerland around the unexpected appreciation of the Swiss franc in January 2015. The research combines firm-level customs data on imports and exports with firm-specific online job postings to measure how labor demand and task content respond to trade shocks. The project examines whether firms more exposed to offshorability and automation increased imports and shifted hiring toward higher-skilled work, including changes in the routine intensity of advertised tasks.

Tasks

- Replicating the project's empirical analysis using new and updated data on job postings.

Requirements

- Basic knowledge of labor economics
- Knowledge of Stata

Period

Six-week internship starting in early July 2026.