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**MIT PLACEMENT OFFICER**

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**MIT PLACEMENT ADMINISTRATOR**

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**DOCTORAL STUDIES**

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)  
 PhD, Economics, Expected completion February 2023  
 DISSERTATION: Essays in Labor Economics

## DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AND REFERENCES

Professor David Autor  
 MIT Department of Economics  
 77 Massachusetts Avenue, E52-438  
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 617-258-7698  
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Professor Amy Finkelstein  
 MIT Department of Economics  
 77 Massachusetts Avenue, E52-442  
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 617-253-4149  
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Professor Simon Jäger  
 MIT Department of Economics  
 77 Massachusetts Avenue, E52-454  
 Cambridge, MA 02139  
 617-253-9299  
[sjaeger@mit.edu](mailto:sjaeger@mit.edu)

**PRIOR EDUCATION**

Northwestern University 2015  
 B.A., Economics and Mathematics  
*Summa Cum Laude*

**FIELDS**

Primary Fields: Labor, Public Finance  
 Secondary Fields: Econometrics

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

Public Finance (PhD)	2019-2021
TA to Professors Amy Finkelstein and Peter Ganong Course evaluation: 7.0/7, 6.3/7, 6.1/7	
Research and Communication (undergraduate)	2020, 2022
TA to Professors Simon Jäger and Martin Beraja Course evaluations: 6.7/7, 6.3/7	
Microeconomic Theory and Public Policy (undergraduate)	2019, 2022
TA to Professors David Autor and Tobias Salz	

# MIT Economics

JONATHAN COHEN

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Course evaluations: In progress, 5.8/7

<b>RELEVANT POSITIONS</b>	Research Assistant to Professor Simon Jäger (MIT)	2019
	Research Assistant to Professor James Poterba (MIT)	2018
	Research Assistant to Professors David Laibson, Brigitte Madrian, James Choi, and John Beshears (NBER)	2015-2017

**FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS**

- NBER Retirement and Disability Research Center Fellow
- 3 US economics Ph.D. candidates annually
- George and Obie Shultz Fund
  - Awarded funding for original data collection
- Bradley Foundation Fellow
  - 1 MIT economics Ph.D. candidate annually
- MIT Presidential Fellow
  - ~10% of MIT entering graduate students annually
- Phi Beta Kappa

**RESEARCH PAPERS**

**“No-Fault Job Loss? Less Moral Hazard” (Job Market Paper)**  
(with Geoffrey Schnorr)

Unemployment insurance (UI) eligibility requires a claimant to have lost their job through no fault of their own. Approximately 10% of claims are deemed ineligible solely on these grounds. Using the systematic variation in approval leniency rates across UI claims examiners in California from 2002 to 2019, we show that receiving any UI benefits causes 2-9 additional weeks of nonemployment. By comparing the fiscal externality due to the marginal claimant's behavioral response with the mechanical transfer to approved claimants, we find that our context's extensive margin disincentive effect is lower than nearly every published disincentive effect estimate based on intensive margin variation in replacement rate and potential benefit duration. Heterogeneity analysis shows these effects are smallest for lower income claimants. We discuss implications for UI policy reforms depending on plausible values of consumption-smoothing benefits, administrative costs, and redistributive preferences.

**“Skill Stability During Unemployment”**  
(with Andrew Johnston and Attila Lindner)

We document the evolution of earnings and skills for unemployed workers using a multi-year panel survey of newly unemployed German workers linked to administrative employment records. Both the reemployment hazard rate and reemployment earnings steadily fall with unemployment duration. Despite this, we find no decline in a wide range of cognitive and non-cognitive skills while workers remain unemployed. We replicate these patterns around unemployment onset for older workers in the United States using the Health and Retirement Survey. The results imply that skill depreciation is unlikely to be a major explanation for duration dependence.

**RESEARCH IN PROGRESS**

**“Federal Government Pay Policies”**  
(with Martina Uccioli)

We scrape and digitize data on the usage of broad pay flexibility in the US federal government. Difference-in-differences analyses around either the introduction of broad location-based pay in the early 1990s or granular special pay rates for specific agency-location-occupation categories yield no effect on employee quits.

## **“Employment Effects of Unemployment Insurance: A Meta-Analysis”**

(with Peter Ganong)

The empirical literature on unemployment insurance (UI) robustly finds significant effects of UI benefit generosity on unemployment duration. We systematically collect estimates and contextual factors from over 70 studies to generate a consensus estimate and document important drivers of heterogeneity.

## **“The Degree-Attainment and Labor-Market Effects of Reverse Transfer”**

(with Aaron Goodman and Vod Vilfort)

We use linked administrative education and employment data from Colorado since 2010 to study the impact of reverse transfer, which allows students who did not complete a 4-year college degree to apply their credits towards a 2-year degree. Our selection on observables identification strategy leverages idiosyncratic variation in the transferability of courses across schools.

### **REFeree EXPERIENCE**

AER: Insights (x4, 2021 Excellence in Refereeing Award)  
Journal of Public Economics

### **VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

Application Assistance and Mentoring matchmaker and mentor	2021-Present
Undergraduate research outreach coordinator	2018-Present
Cambridge Public Schools weekly math tutor	2021-Present
Graduate Economics Association	2018-2019
City of Boston Volunteer Income Tax Assistance financial guide	2016-2017
Project SOAR weekly mentor for middle school student	2014-2015