

# Welcome to STATA!

## Why learn to use STATA?

- widely used (particularly in Europe) – high return to investment!
- programming is friendlier than packages like Gauss.
- backup and resources (like the STATA Journal) from STATA Corp and other users is excellent

## The STATA interface:

You will be working with two main windows/screens. The main one is accessed by simply opening up STATA. The other one is called the do-file editor. Click on the fifth icon from the right on the toolbar (the picture is of an envelope). Maximise the do-file editor. It has all the features of a text editor but is used to run STATA programs.

You will have to get used to switching back and forth between these two parts of STATA.

In the main STATA window there are four smaller windows - you might have to resize them. The STATA results window should be the biggest.

In the main STATA window there is a pull-down menu and a tool bar. You can work with STATA interactively using the menu and tool bar on the main STATA screen or by typing commands individually in the STATA command window (the white window at the bottom of the main screen). Most serious research requires the use of "do-files" but the other methods are useful if you just want to quickly check something in your data or draw a graph. The do-files allow you to keep track and repeat your research.

In the do file-editor you type out commands in sequence on separate lines. Then run the program using the "do current file" button (second from the right on the tool bar). You just switch back and forth between the do-file editor window and the main STATA window to view your results.

The advantage of the do file is that if you write the do-file in a particular way you can run it over and over again instantly!

If you make a mistake (e.g. STATA is case sensitive - commands are lower case) STATA will not be able to run the entire do-file but will tell you where the problem occurred.

In certain circumstances you might decide not to run the complete do-file but instead only up to a particular point. Just highlight the text from the start up until the point you wish to finish at and then hit the "do current file" button (second from the right on the tool bar).

The first tutorial will run through the (very) basics of STATA under the assumption you have never used it before. If you have experience of STATA feel free to skip the tutorial or perhaps use the lab time on working on your own research.