

# **ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowships**

# **SWDTP Expression of Interest Form**

**Before preparing your Expression of Interest read the call specification and FAQs carefully. They are available here:** <https://www.swdtp.ac.uk/prospective-students-and-fellows-nw/esrc-postdoctoral-fellowships/>

The SWDTP is a partnership of 8 universities. Each university sets its own deadline for receiving the EoI forms for the ESRC postdoctoral fellowship. Contact the university where you wish to apply as soon as possible and **before** completing this form, to find out their deadline. If you have not already found a suitable mentor, then you can also ask for advice on how to do this. Partner university contacts are available at: <https://www.swdtp.ac.uk/prospective-students-and-fellows/esrc-postdoctoral-fellowships/> .

The SWDTP has 19 disciplinary and interdisciplinary pathways. You should identify the pathway that is most relevant to your research and apply to hold the fellowship at a university department that belongs to that pathway. A list of all the SWDTP pathways is here: <https://www.swdtp.ac.uk/prospective-students-and-fellows-nw/esrc-funded-studentships/> .

**N.B.** The ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowship can only be awarded if the proposal is very clearly over 50% based in social sciences (i.e. within the [ESRC remit](https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/esrc/what-is-social-science/)).

The criteria against which your application will be assessed are set out at the end of this form.

**Applicant**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Organisation where PhD completed | Department: |
|  |  |  |

**Organisation where the Fellowship will be held** (mandatory)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| University |  | Department: |  |
| SWDTP Pathway\* |  | | |

**Project title** (mandatory) [up to 150 characters *including spaces*]

**Eligibility check**

Before preparing the EoI, please read eligibility criteria carefully on page 3 of the Call specification page 3 of the FAQs document.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Institution where you completed or are currently completing your PhD |  |
| Expected or actual PhD submission date |  |
| Expected or actual date of the viva voce |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I will have no more than 12 months of active postdoctoral research experience between my viva voce pass date up to the 25 March 2025, not including career-breaks. |  |

**Duration**

The fellowship will start on 1st October 2025. Please indicate which you are interesting in applying for:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 12 months (fulltime) | 24 months (half-time) | |
| I am aware that I am expected to spend 100% of my working time  (whether full-time or part-time) on the fellowship | |  |

**Objectives**

List the main objectives of the fellowship (*Maximum 500 words*)

Please specify concisely the aims and objectives that should be achieved by the end of the fellowship. These could include, but are not limited to:

* Produce publications in order to help establish track record
* Engage with a range of different audiences to communicate their research findings
* Build networks to develop impact opportunities and inform and support their further development
* Collaborate with users through an internship or placement to help develop their professional and transferrable skills and understanding of users’ organisations
* Further training to improve their research and related skills
* Developing funding proposals
* Carry out further limited research (up to 25%) based on their PhD
* Teaching, if in alignment with the wider purposes of the fellowship (up to a maximum of six hours per week)
* Internships or placements, providing they are an integral part of the fellowship
* Research visits to internationally leading research organisations – either in the UK or abroad – for the purposes of research collaboration, training, and/or access to data or other resources not available at the applicant’s host organisation.

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**Proposed Mentor**

The mentor should be in the Department where the fellowship will be held and should be based primarily in the social sciences. If you have not yet identified a mentor, leave this section blank.

You may use the [SWDTP potential supervisor database](https://www.swdtp.ac.uk/prospective-students-and-fellows-nw/supervisor-database/) to identify academics with relevant research expertise.

See further guidance on the role of the mentor on page 4 of the Call Specification and pages & of the FAQs.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name |  | Department\*: |  |
| Position |  | | |
| Explain why the proposed mentor is well placed to support you in achieving the main objectives  (*maximum 100 words*) | | | |
|  | | | |

# Case for Support

Minimum font size: 11

|  |
| --- |
| **Abstract/summary of progress**  Summary or abstract of in-progress or completed PhD thesis. *(maximum 300 words)* |
| *Applicants should provide either a summary or abstract of their in-progress or completed thesis. This should be no more than one page and should include its main claims to originality and excellence, methodology used and significant findings. (you may delete this instruction. It is for guidance on completing this section ony)* |
| **Impacts of your research**  (*Maximum 300 words*) |
| *It is vital that the economic and social impact of all projects funded by the ESRC is maximised. This section should describe the impacts your research has had or that you expect it to have. Explain what steps you will take to provide opportunities for users to benefit from your research and to ensure that your research has maximum societal impact. Impacts include the impact of completed research and any planned further limited research, the dissemination of its results and the building up of a publication track record, the development of the research field and the behaviour or understanding of users and policy-makers. We are also interested in the impact the applicant's training to date has had on their skills development and on their prospects for a successful academic career. (you may delete this instruction. It is for guidance on completing this section only)* |
| **Research-related achievements**  (*Maximum 300 words*) |
| *This section requires a well-structured summary of 'where you are now' in your training and personal development. This will help reviewers decide whether an applicant is at a stage in their career development where a fellowship will have an important and lasting impact on their ability to work as a professional researcher. (you may delete this instruction. It is for guidance on completing this section only)* |
| **Planned programme of activities**  (*Maximum 500 words*) |
| *This section should detail your planned programme of activities and the key milestones for these activities. Please note that the programme of activities should be tailored to support your longer term career aspirations, whether you are aiming for a career in academia or a research career in the broader economy.*  *The focus of the programme of activities is for fellows to consolidate their PhD. Fellows should not undertake major new research during a grant. However, limited additional research (up to 25% of the programme of work) directly linked to the PhD can be undertaken. In this case, the time commitment for new research should be clearly shown in the Work Plan (see below).*  *The fellowship does not have to be directly building on the work of the PhD; however, it does need to follow on or be related to it.*  *The programme of activities should provide the fellows with time to maximise the impact of their PhD, which could include communicating the research findings arising from their doctoral work, building international networks to develop impact and further research, collaborating with users, learning the skills of writing for publication, and further improving their research and related skills. (you may delete this instruction. It is for guidance on completing this section only)* |

**Attachments:**

Attach the following to your EoI:

1. Reference list for any citations in the Case for Support
2. 2-page CV, including a list of your publications, minimum font size 11.

When submitting your EoI application, please complete the EDI data form on this link <https://forms.office.com/e/sqDYRt68xj> Data will be collated and sent to to the ESRC in an aggegated and anonymised form as part of a monitoring request by ESRC. The forms will be held confidentially by the SWDTP and not be part of any EoI or full application decision making process. Forms will be deleted by September 2025 when reporting to the ESRC has been completed.

# Assessment Criteria

**Progress so far, originality of doctoral research, excellence and ambition of research-related achievements:** Does the previous research demonstrate originality and research excellence? Does the applicant demonstrate that they are at a career stage where the awarding of an ESRC postdoctoral fellowship is likely to have an important and lasting impact on their ability to work as a professional researcher?

**Objectives and planned programme (Quality of work programme)**; Has the applicant described a clearly defined programme of work that appropriately follows on from PhD? Are the specified objectives achievable and realistic within the period of the fellowship? Is planned new research limited to no more than 25% of the total fellowship time? Are the proposed activities clearly justified in terms of supporting the applicant’s longer term career aspirations? For interdisciplinary pathways, is it clear that the planned programme is based mainly in social sciences?

**Impacts and Outputs:** Has the applicant demonstrated previous impacts of their work? Are the planned outputs of the fellowship appropriate and attainable? Are there adequate plans to share the results, and to engage with academic and non-academic audiences?

# Scoring Descriptors

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Score** | **Description** | **Definition** |
| 6 | **Exceptional**  Should be funded as a matter of the very highest priority | Excels against all the criteria. Clear how the fellowship follows on from outstanding doctoral research and research-related achievements. A convincing case is made, with full and consistent justification, that the fellowship will further the applicant’s longer term career aspirations. Exceptional and innovative plans, highly likely to lead to significant impact.  Very clearly sits mainly in the [social sciences](https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/esrc/what-is-social-science/) (including for applications to interdisciplinary pathways).  **A proposal will only be scored at this level if the career building, impact, and research elements of the proposal are considered to be at this level.** |
| 5 | **Excellent**  Should be funded as a matter of priority | All criteria are met. Clear how the fellowship follows on from excellent doctoral research and research-related achievements. A convincing case is made, with full and consistent justification, that the fellowship will further the applicant’s longer term career aspirations. Exceptional and innovative plans, highly likely to lead to significant impact.  Very clearly sits mainly in the social sciences (including for applications to interdisciplinary pathways).  **A proposal will only be scored at this level if the career building, impact, and research elements of the proposal are considered to be at this level.** |
| 4 | **Very Good**  Worthy of consideration for funding | All criteria are met. Clear how the fellowship follows on from doctoral research and research-related achievements that are of a high standard. A convincing case is made, with good justification, that the fellowship will further the applicant’s longer term career aspirations. Good plans, likely to lead to significant impact.  Very clearly sits mainly in the social sciences (including for applications to interdisciplinary pathways).  **A proposal will only be scored at this level if the career building, impact, and research elements of the proposal are considered to be at this level.** |
| 3 | **Satisfactory**  Not recommended for funding | All criteria are met. Clear how the fellowship follows on from doctoral research and research-related achievements. Does not make a fully convincing case that the fellowship will further the applicant’s longer term career aspirations. Satisfactory plans, likely to lead to impact.  Sits mainly in the social sciences (including for applications to interdisciplinary pathways). |
| 2 | **Not Competitive**  Not suitable for funding | Does not meet all the criteria. Has some strengths with respect to furthering the applicant’s longer term career aspirations but also has major weaknesses. Inconsistent plans, unlikely to lead to any significant impact.  Sits mainly in the social sciences (including for applications to interdisciplinary pathways). |
| 1 | **Unsatisfactory**  Not suitable for funding | **Either**, does not meet the criteria. Does not make a convincing case that the fellowship will further the applicant’s longer term career aspirations. Unsatisfactory plans, unlikely to lead to significant impact.  **Or**, does not sit mainly in the social sciences. |