

South and East Network for Social Sciences (SENSS)

Post-Doctoral Fellowship Competition:

Guidance Notes for Primary Mentors: February 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

SENSS offers four ESRC-funded Post-Doctoral Fellowships (PDF) each academic year.

There are two stages to the PDF competition application phase: first, applicants must submit an expression of interest, by **12.00pm on Friday 8 March 2024**. These expressions will be used by your home university to conduct an initial sift with those expressions deemed to be of sufficient quality and meeting the competition's eligibility criteria leading to the applicant being invited to put in a full application for the second phase of the competition.

As part of this second phase, as the primary mentor for a PDF applicant, you will be asked to complete a form, using HEIapply, the online application management platform SENSS uses to run its competitions. The deadline for doing so is **4.00pm GMT on 16 May 2024**, otherwise your applicant will not be considered for a PDF award.

Further information on this competition is available on the [SENSS website](#).

2. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO BE A PRIMARY MENTOR?

As a primary mentor to a PDF, you should:

- Be a senior colleague within a [SENSS partner institution](#);
- Ideally have research experience in the same field as the PDF, but should not, wherever possible, be supervising or have supervised the PDF during their PhD;
- Have skills and experience relevant to the aims of the Fellowship and should be able to assist the Fellow in achieving their goals and activities; and,
- Come within one of the six SENSS interdisciplinary Themes that your institution belongs to.

3. WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A PRIMARY MENTOR?

You will be required to:

- Mentor the PDF throughout the period of their award which, ordinarily, is 12 months in duration when taken full-time; and,
- Meet the PDF for approximately one to two hours once every week (this can be in-person or virtually).

Please note that the applicant can apply for **costs for their mentors' time** as part of their Fellowship grant.

4. SECOND MENTORS

The SENSS PDF scheme is based on each PDF having **two mentors**:

- A primary mentor based at the PDF's home institution; and
- A second mentor based in one of the following
 - Another SENSS partner institution; or,
 - A non-HEI partner, where having a such a mentor directly supports the Fellow's career aims in a non-HEI setting; or,
 - An overseas partner institution, where the Fellow plans to spend time overseas.

5. WHAT IS A PRIMARY MENTOR REQUIRED TO PROVIDE FOR THIS APPLICATION?

Those reviewing the PDF application forms will look for strong evidence of support from that mentor. As the proposed mentor for a PDF, you are required to submit a **mentor statement and summary CV combined into a single document**, which must be a **maximum of two sides of A4**, in a **minimum of font size 11**, and should be **uploaded as a pdf file**.

The combined statement and CV that you, as the proposed primary mentor, are asked to provide should therefore demonstrate that you:

- Have carefully considered the individual applicant's needs, and have tailored their proposed programme of support to those needs;
- Will ensure the Fellow is kept properly active and focussed; and,
- Will keep the Fellow's long-term career prospects clearly in mind.

You will also be asked to address the following points in your statement:

- How you would guide the Fellow in achieving the goals and activities they have set out to achieve;
- How your contacts and expertise will assist the Fellow in achieving their goals;
- That you are able to commit to having 1-2 hours contact time with the Fellow each week; and,
- How the second mentor will support the applicant, and what input they will have into this project. You will also need to upload separately **a summary cv for the second mentor, which must be no more than one side of A4 in a minimum of font size 11** and should be uploaded as a **pdf file**.

6. HOW DO PRIMARY MENTORS PROVIDE THE REQUIRED SUPPORT FOR A PDF APPLICATION?

- You will receive an automated email from HEIapply asking you to provide a supporting statement for the candidate. If you don't receive an email in your inbox, please check your junk/spam box, as it may be delivered there.
- Please click on the link provided in the email and fill out the form as instructed.

7. WHO TO CONTACT IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE

If you experience any difficulties accessing or using HEIapply, please contact the SENSS Co-ordinator for advice at admin@SENSS-dtp.ac.uk.