

Economic
and Social
Research Council



ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowship SWDTP Information Event

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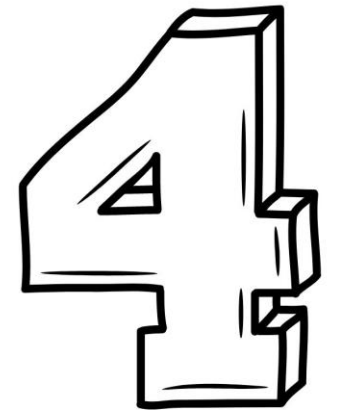
20 November 2024



What is an ESRC postdoctoral fellowship?



The ESRC, SWDTP and postdoctoral fellowships



**Economic
and Social
Research Council**

- SWDTP will award 4 ESRC-funded postdoctoral fellowships
- SWDTP will run the award selection process
- SWDTP is not the funder
- Grant is paid directly to the host institution by the ESRC

SWDTP partnership



Bath
University



University of
West England



University of
Bristol



Bath Spa
University



University of
Exeter



Bournemouth
University



University of
Exeter



Plymouth
Marjon
University

What is a postdoctoral fellowship?



- A research grant but **not** a research project
- The fellow is an employee of the host institution
- Follows on from and consolidates the PhD
- Prepares fellows for the next stage of their research career
- Furthers their research and career aspirations
- Supported by a mentor
- A programme of activities

The fellowship is funded by the Economics & Social Research Council (ESRC) and must fit within its remit

[What is social science? – UKRI](#)

Activities can include but are not limited to:



- Produce publications in order to help establish track record
- Engage with a range of different audiences to communicate research findings
- Build networks to develop impact opportunities and inform and support further development
- Collaborate with users through an internship or placement to help develop professional and transferrable skills and understanding of users' organisations, provided they are an integral part of the fellowship
- Further training to improve research and related skills
- Developing funding proposals (as PI or co-I)
- Carry out further limited research (up to 25% of the programme of work) related to their PhD
- Teaching, if this is aligned with the wider purposes of the fellowship (max. 6 hours per week)
- 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.

But not all of these!

Plan should be realistic and practicable.

Role of the mentor

- Costed for 1-2 hours a week
- Should meet with you regularly
- Has experience and a strong interest in your field of research
- Supports development needs analysis, including career plans
- Provides constructive feedback on draft writing (but not as frequently as a PhD supervisor)
- has skills and experience for mentoring an early career researcher
- Interested in you and your career, 'gets' your career aspirations
- Someone with whom you might collaborate on a research grant

Who can be my mentor?

- ✗ My PhD supervisor
- ✓ Social scientist ([ESRC remit](#))
- ✓ Same pathway as me
- ✓ Same department as me

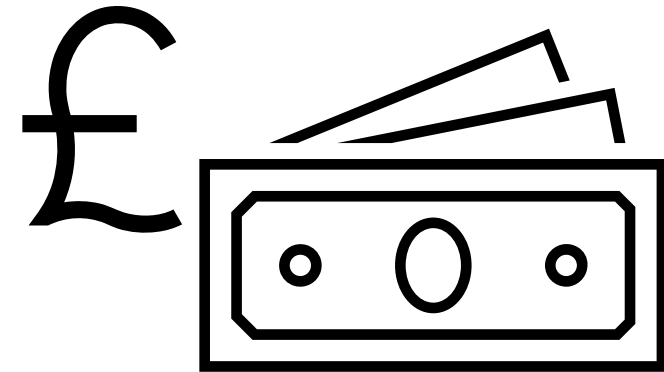
Exceptions

Interdisciplinary pathway –
2 mentors, main mentor
social sciences



Funding includes:

- Fellow's salary costs
- Indirect costs
- Estate costs
- Max. £10,000 for all other costs, e.g.
 - Mentor's time
 - travel and subsistence
 - conference attendance
 - Training
 - Fieldwork
 - Producing outputs for non-academic audiences





Who can be a postdoctoral fellow?

And for how long?

Who is eligible?

- PhD from a UK university (as a home or international student)
- May or may not be a member of the university where you are applying
- PhD may or may not have been ESRC-funded
- Must not be a permanent member of staff in academic position with a research component

- Award a PhD or passed viva with minor corrections by 25 March 2025.
- Be awarded PhD by 1 October 2025
- No more than 12 months (fte) active postdoctoral experience excluding career breaks up to 25 March 2025.

Further information:

ESRC PDF [Call specification](#)

[ESRC PDF Call FAQs](#)



Terms and Conditions

- Only employment. 100% of working time (whether full or part-time).
- Subject to normal UK employment law and University regulations.
- This usually means you must be resident in UK for the duration of the fellowship. Read the contract!





How do I apply for a postdoctoral fellowship?



Finding a university, a pathway and a department

Interdisciplinary Pathways	Institutions
AQM	Bath, Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth
Climate Change, Sustainability & Society	Bath, Bristol, Exeter, UWE, Bournemouth, Plymouth Marjon
Global Challenges & Transformations: Geopolitics, Inequalities & Mobilities	Bath, Bristol, Exeter
Health, Wellbeing & Society	Bath, Bristol, Exeter, UWE, Bournemouth, Plymouth Marjon
Sociotechnical Futures & Digital Methods	Bath, Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth, UWE, Bath Spa

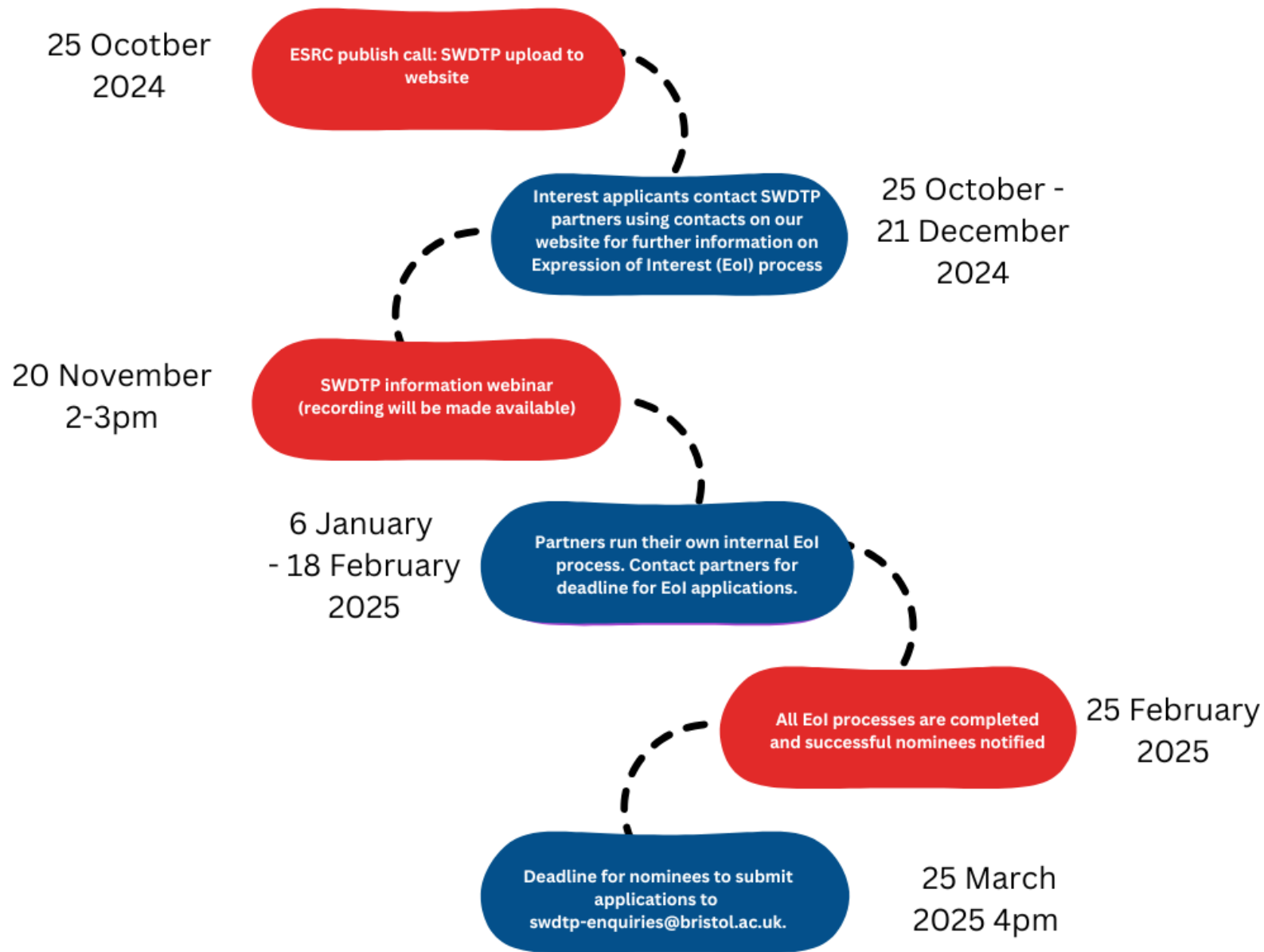
Disciplinary Pathways	Institutions
Area & Development Studies	Bath, Exeter
Economic & Social History	Bristol, Exeter
Economics	Bath, Bristol, Exeter
Education	Bath, Bristol, Exeter, UWE, Bath Spa, Plymouth Marjon
Human Geography	Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth
Management & Business Studies	Bath, Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth, UWE, Bath Spa
Politics & International Relations	Bath, Bristol, Exeter
Psychology	Bath, Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth, Bournemouth
Social Anthropology	Bristol, Exeter
Social Policy	Bath, Bristol, Plymouth, UWE
Social Work	Bath, Bristol
Socio-Legal Studies	Bristol, Exeter
Sociology	Bath, Bristol, Exeter

Finding a mentor

1. Find a pathway, a university and a department
2. Search the SWDTP's supervisor database
3. Go to departmental websites and find a research group, browse members
4. Use University 'find an expert' search functions
5. Ask for help using contact emails
6. If you can't find a suitable mentor in the SWDTP (unlikely), consider applying to another DTP.



Application process



Expression of interest



Sections

- Name etc
- Eligibility check
- Objectives
- Proposed mentor (leave blank if you don't have one)
- Case for support
 - Abstract/summary of progress
 - Impacts of your research
 - Research related achievements
 - Planned programme of activities

Attachments

- Reference list for any citations in case for support
- 2-page CV

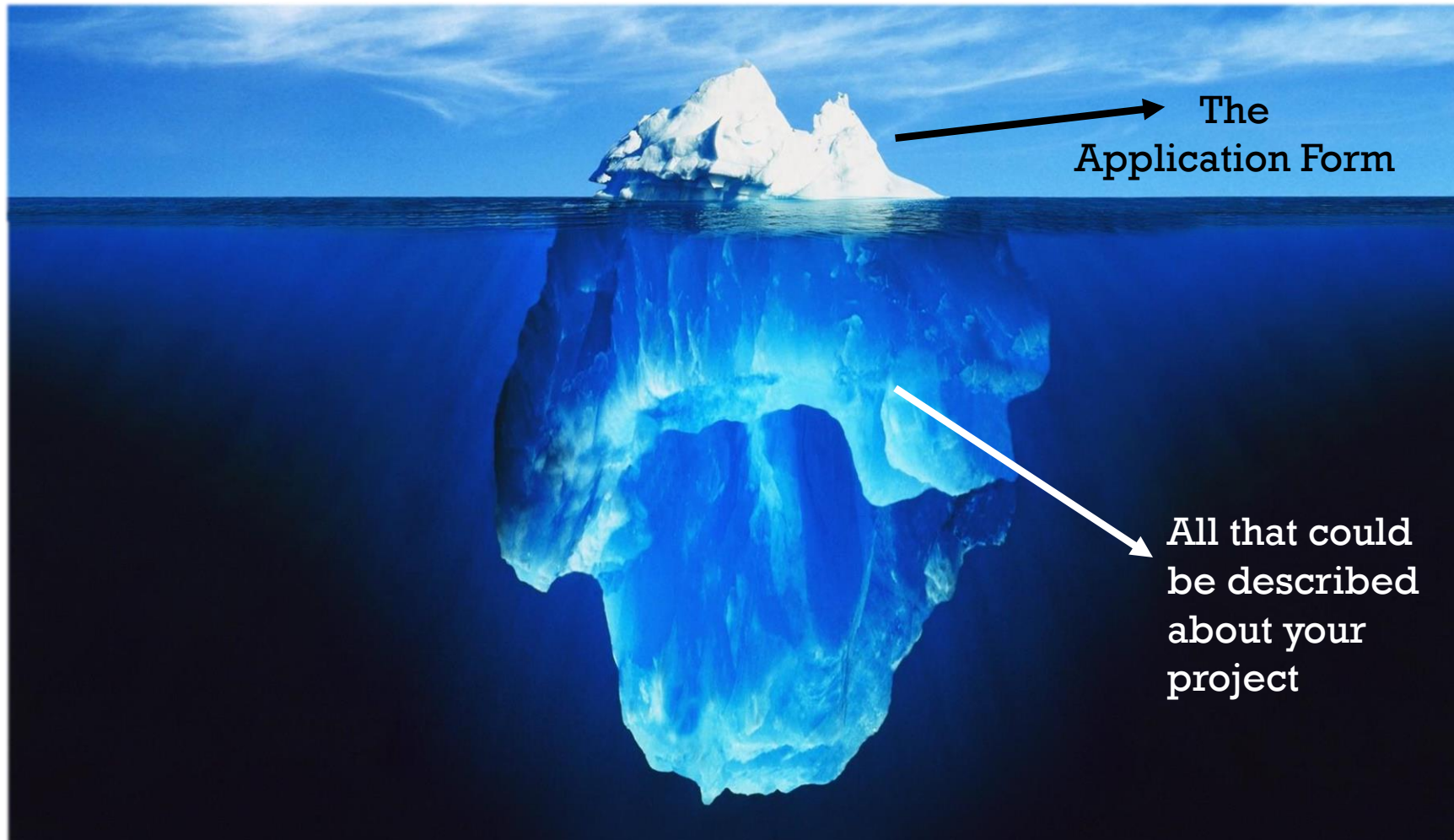
Assessment criteria

1. Progress so far, originality of doctoral research, excellence and ambition of research-related achievements
 - Clear how the fellowship follows on from outstanding doctoral research and research-related achievements.
2. Objectives and planned programme (Quality of work programme)
 - A convincing case is made, with full and consistent justification, that the fellowship will further the applicant's longer term career aspirations.
 - Objectives achievable and realistic within 1 year
3. Impacts and Outputs
 - Exceptional and innovative plans, highly likely to lead to significant impact.
 - Attainable
 - Demonstrated previous impacts



Read assessment criteria in full and carefully in the [Call Specification](#)

Your grant application is shorthand for your entire project



The
Application Form

All that could
be described
about your
project

So... focus on what you really need to say

Tips for a strong application



General tips

Write for different perspectives – yours, the subject expert and the experienced generalist

Be kind to reviewers and panellists!

- They may be reading a number of these in one go
- Panellists may not be subject experts
- Make it as easy as possible for them

Tips for Case for Support

- Explain what and why you will do something before how.
- Don't make the reader wait to see the significance
- Read guidance in the Case for Support section carefully
- Use headings and formatting for clarity where possible



Expression of interest: further information

University	Webpage	Contact
Bath	https://www.bath.ac.uk/	jn837@bath.ac.uk
Bath Spa	https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/	a.parfitt@bathspa.ac.uk
Bristol	https://www.bristol.ac.uk/	rda-alss@bristol.ac.uk
Bournemouth	https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/	msilk@bournemouth.ac.uk
Exeter	https://www.exeter.ac.uk/	HASS-Researchcluster@exeter.ac.uk
Plymouth	https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/	patricia.kanngiesser@plymouth.ac.uk
Plymouth Marjon	https://www.marjon.ac.uk/	DCotton@marjon.ac.uk
UWE	https://www.uwe.ac.uk/	research@uwe.ac.uk

Start early. Seek support.

Full application



The form

- Pathway – do tell us!
- Title
- Objectives (max. 4000 characters, incl. spaces)
- Summary (max. ditto)
- Beneficiaries (max. ditto)
- Ethical information (max. ditto)
- Summary of resources

Attachments

- Case for support (*max 6 sides of A4*)
- Justification of resources (*max 2 sides A4*)
- CV (*max 2 sides A4*)
- Head of Department statement (*max 1 sides A4*)
- Mentor statement and summary CV (*max 2 sides A4*)
- Referee statement (*max 2 sides A4*)
- Workplan (*max 2 sides A4*)
- List of publications (where cited in the proposal)
- Data management plan – mandatory where new datasets (of any size) will be generated as part of the fellowship (*max 3 sides A4*)
- If plan includes visit to an overseas institution, a letter of support

Assessment criteria

Same as Eol plus:



Value for money

- Have all costs requested been broken down?
- *Is there are clear and adequate justification of the costs being requested?*

Mentoring arrangements

- *Has the fellow's choice of mentor(s) been clearly justified?*
- *Has the mentor(s) adequately demonstrated that they have considered the individual applicant's needs, and how they would seek to address them?*

Consideration of ethical issues

- *Does the proposal show sufficient awareness of any ethical issues that may be raised by the proposed fellowship, including the impact plans and user engagement?*
- *Has the applicant described how these will be addressed?*

- **Data management plans**

- *Where the applicant is required to submit a Data Management Plan (DMP), does their Plan clearly show how the data will be managed throughout the lifecycle of the award including specific plans for archiving with UK Data Service?*

What support will you need?

- Mentor to give feedback on one or two drafts and write a letter of support
- Head of Department to write a letter of support
- Doctoral supervisor to write a reference letter
- Accountant to draw up the budget
- ‘Critical friends’ and formal reviewers to give feedback on your writing
 - Ask a lay person to read the lay summary
 - Ask someone from another discipline for feedback
- Do you have to find all these people yourself? Or is there a research manager, who will facilitate the process? (Ask your mentor about the support available).



Questions to ask and ask early!

- What support for grant applications is available in the department and university you are applying through?
- What institutional approvals do you need? What are the deadlines to get these ahead of 25 March?



Angeline Barrett, SWDTP Deputy Director

Joanna Williams, SWDTP Coordinator

Jackson Paterson, SWDTP Collaboration Facilitator

Questions



Key dates and contact information



University	Webpage	Contact
Bath	https://www.bath.ac.uk/	in837@bath.ac.uk
Bath Spa	https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/	a.parfitt@bathspa.ac.uk
Bristol	https://www.bristol.ac.uk/	rda-alss@bristol.ac.uk
Bournemouth	https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/	msilk@bournemouth.ac.uk
Exeter	https://www.exeter.ac.uk/	HASS-Researchcluster@exeter.ac.uk
Plymouth	https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/	patricia.kanngiesser@plymouth.ac.uk
Plymouth Marjon	https://www.marjon.ac.uk/	DCotton@marjon.ac.uk
UWE	https://www.uwe.ac.uk/	research@uwe.ac.uk

If you are invited to prepare a full application, the deadline is 4 pm 25 March 2025

