

ESRC Leadership Fellowship Call specification

Summary

ESRC wishes to appoint a senior academic as a Leadership Fellow to develop an ambitious vision and strategy for how we can build leadership capability within the social sciences.

Funding of up to £100,000 fEC (full economic costing) can be requested over the duration of the award to cover the fellow's time and associated costs and fund research assistance where appropriate.

The fellowship will be for one year in duration and applicants may request funding for up to 80% of FEC. This is a part-time opportunity and we expect the fellow to spend circa 40% of their time on the fellowship.

The successful applicant will be expected to have a track record in leadership, an understanding of the structural barriers and challenges to developing leadership capability and a clear vision for how they can contribute to the development of this area. They will also need outstanding communication skills, project management knowledge and experience of collaborative working and developing partnerships with people and organisations within and beyond academia. Applications are welcome from any discipline within the social sciences. Further details of additional eligibility criteria are given in the eligibility section.

Applications should be developed on the basis of this specification and associated Je-S guidance document, and will need to be submitted via Je-S by **16:00 on 3 January 2018**.

Background and scope

The ESRC's Strategic Plan 2015 (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-events-and-publications/publications/corporate-publications/strategic-plan/>) contains a commitment to 'develop capability for social science leadership'. This is in recognition that the nature and demands of scientific leadership are changing and we need to ensure we have a cadre of leaders with the capabilities required in this new environment. Over the last decade ESRC investments have become larger and more complex with social science increasingly requiring collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches, and leaders who combine excellent scientific track record (including interdisciplinary experience) with capabilities in communication, project management and collaboration. The creation of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will give added momentum to this trend with more funding available for ambitious, complex and multi-layered interdisciplinary challenge-led research initiatives which straddle traditional professional and disciplinary boundaries and international boundaries. This type of project is best exemplified by those funded under the Global Challenges Research Fund and Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund.

We want to work with research organisations and other organisations with an interest in developing leadership capability in higher education, to develop a strategy for how we can ensure we have a pipeline of leaders within research organisations which includes directors and principal investigators with the skills to lead major complex investments and maximise the opportunities presented by the new funding environment. The strategy will need to take account of the emergent UKRI and the scope for this work to reach beyond the social

sciences. Within the context of Brexit, investment in leadership capabilities will be an important contribution to recruiting and retaining the best research talent in the UK.

During the first part of 2017 the ESRC has undertaken some internal research analysing how we assess leadership as part of the application process and what evaluation reports of major ESRC investments tell us about leadership. We have also sought to more clearly conceptualise what we mean by leadership, drawing on the existing research base and carrying out a self-perception survey amongst members of our Capability Committee and Research Committee.

The key findings from this internal research are that:

- Leadership as a central and discrete set of skills and competencies is an implicit rather than explicit feature of the application process.
- With the exception of the Future Research Leaders scheme there has traditionally been very little emphasis on building explicit and ambitious broad (social) scientific leadership capacity across the ESRC investment portfolio.
- Leadership tends to be an explicit and central variable in the explanation of both highly successful and highly disappointing investments.
- Leadership is multi-dimensional comprising both internal elements (project management, financial planning, risk planning and multidisciplinary awareness) and external elements (partnership management, translational skills, advocacy and discretion, business acumen, entrepreneurial energy, media management experience).
- We have identified seven core leadership characteristics to help conceptualise leadership. Details are provided in Annex I. Members of our Research and Capability Committees were surveyed for their views on the current level of support we provide in these seven areas. While clearly limited in terms of the response base the results suggest there may be significant gaps in leadership training and professional support available.

We are now seeking to appoint a senior academic fellow to build on this work and develop an ambitious vision and strategy for how we can develop and support leadership capability in the social sciences. This will need to explore the role of the ESRC as a funder compared to that of research organisations as employers and set out how we can work in partnership with other organisations concerned with improving leadership capability in higher education. The strategy will need to take account of the emergent UKRI and the scope for this work to reach beyond the social sciences.

Call details

Main purpose and expectations for the fellow

The fellow will be expected to:

- Provide intellectual leadership and vision for ESRC's work in this area
- Lead engagement with research organisations and other organisations concerned with improving leadership capability in higher education, seeking out opportunities to work in partnership, including engagement with administration staff where appropriate

- Build on initial work undertaken by the ESRC by developing a clear conceptualisation of what we mean by leadership, working with the academic community and other key stakeholders to test and refine it
- Review existing support frameworks, identifying gaps in provision and examples of best practice, both nationally and internationally, and from within and beyond academia; providing a report setting out the findings
- Develop an ambitious evidence-based strategy for how we can build leadership capability within the social sciences that will also offer significant value across the remit of the other research councils and Innovate UK. The strategy should, at a minimum:
 - Set a vision for ESRC's role in developing leadership capability
 - Consider leadership at all career points
 - Outline what already exists and gaps
 - Address issues of equality and diversity
 - Set out how we can work in partnership with other organisations interested in developing leadership capability
 - Include a costed implementation plan and criteria to measure the success of the strategy

Person specification

The successful candidate will need to demonstrate:

- A clear vision for how they can contribute to the development of this area
- Experience and track record of leadership in the social sciences, for example through leading major research initiatives or fulfilling a relevant strategic role in a research-focused organisation; exceptional candidates will also be able to demonstrate experience of leadership in an interdisciplinary environment
- An understanding of the structural barriers and challenges to building leadership capability
- Outstanding communication skills suitable for engagement with a range of different audiences
- Experience of collaborative working and developing partnerships with people and organisations within and beyond academia
- Strong project management experience
- An awareness of the key stakeholders with an interest in developing leadership capability in the social sciences
- Understanding of the research councils' mission, the vision for UKRI and the broader funding and policy landscape

Reporting requirements/working arrangements

It is expected that the fellow will be based at their home research organisation and will maintain close contact with the ESRC staff involved in the development of this area. They will be expected to meet with ESRC staff (usually in Swindon) in person or via teleconference at least once a month to discuss progress and future plans. Significant changes to the fellow's programme of work will need to be agreed with the ESRC. Although primary contact with the ESRC will be via the Strategic Lead for Skills and Methods, there may also be the need to develop links with specialist staff within ESRC and relevant colleagues in other research councils and UKRI.

The strategy will need to be approved by ESRC Directors and Council, and the fellow will be expected to attend meetings of these groups when required to discuss progress of the work. The fellow should cost their proposal on the basis that they will need to attend one meeting of Council in London and can meet with ESRC Directors as part of their planned monthly visits to Swindon. In addition the fellow will be expected to attend meetings of the Council's Advisory Committees and should therefore budget to attend five London-based meetings.

The fellow will be expected to establish an advisory group to support and inform development of the strategy. The membership of the group will be agreed with the ESRC and should include representatives from the ESRC's Capability and Research Committees. We will provide secretariat support for the group, and the travel and subsistence for members does not need to be costed into the proposal.

Eligibility

The fellow must be employed at a UK research organisation eligible for ESRC funding for the duration of the fellowship. For further details please see the eligibility requirements in the Research Funding Guide (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-funding-guide/>)

Fellowship funding

Funding of up to £100,000 (full economic costing) can be requested over the duration of the award to cover the fellow's time and associated costs, and fund research assistance where appropriate.

The fellowship will be for one year in duration and applicants may request funding for up to 80% of FEC. This is a part-time opportunity and we expect the fellow to spend circa 40% of their time on the fellowship.

Assessment criteria

The criteria used to assess proposals will be:

- Track record of applicant
- Initial vision for the strategy
- Proposed programme of work
- Value for money

Applications will be assessed by a specially convened assessment panel, with members from the panel comprising the interview panel that will make the final recommendation on the appointment of the fellow.

How to apply

Applications should be submitted via the joint electronic system (Je-S <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk>) by **16:00 on 3 January 2018** at the latest and will need to go through the appropriate institutional submission approval process.

Please note the call will not open in Je-S until 5 December 2017 and this is the earliest point at which applications can be submitted to the ESRC. The detailed requirements of the application can be found in the Je-S Guidance notes for applicants.

Applications should address the aims of the calls as listed in the call details and person specification.

Commissioning timetable

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| • Call for proposals issued | 16 November 2017 |
| • Je-S open for applications | 5 December 2017 |
| • Deadline for submissions | 16:00 on 3 January 2018 |
| • Shortlisting meeting | w/c 8 January 2018 |
| • Interviews | w/c 22 January 2018 |
| • Notification of outcomes | End of January 2018 |
| • Start date of grant | February/March 2018 |

Contacts

For any queries please email:

- Frances Burstow, ESRC Strategic Lead Skills and Methods
Email: tdbpolicy@esrc.ac.uk

Annex I: Core leadership characteristics derived from existing research base

Leadership	Meaning
Disciplinary leadership	Provide foresight, vision and direction to advance and transform knowledge and methods within research disciplines, through both individual and collective efforts.
Inter-disciplinary leadership	Engage across disciplinary boundaries with both confidence and humility to develop new ways of thinking and working, often to address major societal challenges.
Complex project leadership	Manage large, complex projects, programmes and research infrastructures effectively, including some element of financial management and oversight.
Leading generational change	Provide inspiration and guidance to the next generation of social scientists.
Leadership in impact generation	Spur innovation in the delivery of impact from social science research, including building close relationships with senior figures among potential research users. High-profile advocacy and promotion of the social sciences.
Leadership in public engagement	Engage the wider public in understanding and appreciating the value of social science to their lives and communities. High-profile advocacy and promotion of the social sciences.
International leadership	Work internationally to raise the profile of UK social science and strengthen international collaborations.