

Scottish Graduate School of Social Science Associate Director (Supervisor Engagement)

The Scottish Graduate School of Social Science (SGSSS) are looking for an **Associate Director (Supervisor Engagement)** to join our team and contribute to the exciting work of our national Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP).

Funded by the [ESRC](#), [Scottish Funding Council](#) (“SFC”) and 16 partner universities, SGSSS is a cross-Scotland partnership focused on social science excellence, equipping PhD graduates to develop into future research leaders on the national and global stage. This is a fantastic opportunity to contribute significantly to the strategic development of social sciences postgraduate research, the support of supervisor colleagues and the formation of research leaders in Scotland and beyond.

Associate Director Role Details:

Title:	Associate Director (Supervisor Engagement).
FTE:	0.3 FTE (delivered through workmodelled hours within existing contract). Variable working patterns for delivery of this time can be agreed, to help support home university commitments and resourcing.
Grade:	These roles are open to academic applicants at lecturer role/level or above.
Term:	3 years, starting August 2025 (there will be possibilities for involvement in SGSSS activities prior to this, if helpful and timely). A review will take place after 1 and 2 years, to include a check for the home university’s ongoing ability to support the time commitment.
Based at:	The role will be undertaken from the role holder’s home university, but in person presence is expected at relevant meetings, training events, student activities etc. These will be planned in advance with the wider Directorate and Professional Services team.
Role Purpose:	The Associate Director works with the SGSSS Director and supports them and the Deputy Directors in delivering the strategic and operational objectives of SGSSS. The role is part of the team that ensures SGSSS is an inclusive and collaborative consortium, delivering effective and accessible postgraduate funding and training in the social sciences, Scotland-wide.

Main Responsibilities:

A vital part of SGSSS’ work is increasing supervisor support and building a cross-Scotland community. The Supervisor Engagement role is of strategic importance and will have an impact on all SGSSS partner universities. Working with the SGSSS Director and wider team, this role will be focused on leading the strategic development of resources, community and engagement, so that supervisor colleagues are supported as well as possible in their delivery of excellent and effective PGR supervision.

Further information about current supervisor support work is available on [the SGSSS website](#) and in particular [SGSSS Supervisor Development Resources](#). SGSSS is also very pleased to be part of the international “Next Generation Research Supervision Project” ([RSVP](#)), which is investing £4.6 million

with the aim of transforming the culture and practice of research supervision. The Associate Director will have a key role in leading SGSSS participation in this work.

Main responsibilities for the Associate Director will include:

- Building on the current [communities of practice](#) work, strategically develop further opportunities for supervisors across Scotland to connect, share best practice and support PGR development;
- Implement the recently designed “Supervisor Toolkit” across all university partners; this has been developed in conjunction with supervisors across Scotland through consultation work funded by the Scottish Funding Council;
- Lead SGSSS’ participation in the [RSVP](#) project (see above), sharing the outputs and opportunities with all universities in the SGSSS partnership;
- Enhance the resources available to supervisors (e.g. the resource library, training opportunities, networking groups) to support their day to day work with PGRs;
- Design and deliver the cross-Scotland annual supervisor induction and other information sharing events;
- Consider and deliver any UK wide initiatives to share best practice and resources about supervision, using the ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership network;
- Create opportunities to celebrate and encourage our supervisor community (see [Supervisor Recognition](#) as a recent example); and
- Engage with supervisors to receive suggestions and feedback, so that SGSSS processes and support can be continuously improved.

General Responsibilities:

All Associate Directors support the SGSSS studentship competitions through application reviews and panel membership. Additionally, all Associate Directors are asked to be responsible for specific leadership tasks: allocation of these will depend on applicants’ experience and skills. They are likely to be cross-SGSSS initiatives responding to emerging UKRI/ESRC or SFC priorities.

Person Specification – knowledge, experience and skills:

- The post requires a member of academic staff on a continuing contract at an SGSSS [partner university](#).
- The role holder should have experience of and a passion for PhD support and a strong knowledge of the PhD lifecycle.
- The role holder will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the PhD funding and training environment in Scotland.
- Experience should include delivering PGR supervision to completion, ideally including ESRC funded PGRs.
- The role holder should be able to demonstrate an ability to think and act strategically, with a strong ambition to enhance social sciences in Scotland.
- The Associate Directors will contribute creatively to a small and focused team: demonstrable teamworking skills are essential, particularly taking into account the geographical spread of SGSSS colleagues.
- Clear and effective communication skills are essential.
- A strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is required, including the application of practical initiatives to realise this commitment.

- Associate Directors serve as “ambassadors” for SGSSS, therefore relationship and network building skills are important.

Acknowledging resource and financial challenges within universities, this role may be particularly attractive to colleagues whose responsibilities already include supervisor support, engagement or training. Such current responsibilities, however, are **not** a pre-requisite for application.

To apply:

Please send a CV and short covering letter to team@sgsss.ac.uk (email title: “Associate Director Application”) by 17:00 on Monday 19 May 2025.

Your covering letter should explain:

- i) your suitability for this role (see Person Specification); and
- ii) why you wish to be part of the SGSSS Directorate, including what you wish to achieve during your term.

NB: agreement to undertake the role (including commitment that 0.3 FTE workmodelled hours will be available to SGSSS throughout the term of this role) should be sought from home institution **in advance** of application. SGSSS are cognisant of the current economic and financial challenges across our sector and recognise this Associate Director role is a significant workload commitment. Variable working patterns for delivery of this time can be agreed, to help support home university commitments and resourcing. If you or your line manager wishes to discuss this further ahead of application, please feel free to get in touch with the team via team@sgsss.ac.uk or Professor Graeme Nixon, SGSSS Director, via graeme.nixon@ed.ac.uk.

SGSSS Context:

Established in 2011, SGSSS brings together the expertise of 16 universities across Scotland to provide a world-class research environment for social science PhD researchers. SGSSS is led by the Director, supported by the Deputy Director (Training) and Deputy Director (Studentships and Partnerships), alongside a team of seven Associate Directors and a team of Professional Services staff.

In 2016, the SGSSS ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) was established. Funding was renewed in 2023 for a further five cohorts (“DTP 2”), and the first group of DTP 2 PGRs started in October 2024.

SGSSS has a strong commitment to accessibility, equality, diversity and inclusion. We believe a diverse team bring the best range of experience, skills and perspectives. Applications are therefore particularly welcome from groups traditionally underrepresented within Higher Education.

If you believe you would add value to the SGSSS team but do not feel you meet the criteria, please consider getting in touch via team@sgsss.ac.uk or graeme.nixon@ed.ac.uk to talk about the role and your application.

If you would benefit from receiving this document in a different format, please email team@sgsss.ac.uk.