

# Collaborating Mentors for 2018 Postdoctoral Fellows

## Deadline:

Oct 27, 2017

## Overview

The National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center (SESYNC) seeks Collaborating Mentors interested in mentoring incoming SESYNC Postdoctoral Fellows and co-developing socio-environmental synthesis research projects with them. The mentor may be affiliated with any organization or institution, and we welcome mentors from universities, NGOs, government agencies, and other research institutions.

SESYNC Postdoctoral Fellows will use [synthesis methods](#) to address a problem arising from, or associated with, the relationship between humans and nature. Priority will be given to projects that have the potential to advance understanding of socio-environmental systems, but the information synthesized may be primarily social or environmental in nature, or some mix.

SESYNC particularly encourages applications from prospective fellows who propose the use of advanced theoretical, computational, and/or mathematical approaches to explore, characterize, and understand the structure and dynamics of socio-environmental systems. In collaboration with the U.S. [Long-Term Ecological Research \(LTER\)](#) [1] program, we also encourage applicants who will take advantage of long-term data sets, ongoing experiments, or modeling results from LTER sites. These may be combined with other sources of long-term data.

This is an ideal opportunity for collaborations across disciplines, as our competitive Postdoctoral Fellowship programs receive applications from scholars across the social, natural, and computational sciences. Many project ideas would benefit from a collaborative team in which the mentor and mentee are from different, but complementary, fields.

## Requirements

All Collaborating Mentors must have:

1. Demonstrated expertise in the social, natural, or computational sciences (PhD required),
2. Sufficient research experience to provide substantive intellectual and methodological mentoring to Postdoctoral Fellows (i.e. should be beyond postdoc career stage), and
3. Ideas suitable for research collaborations using synthesis methods (e.g., data integration, quantitative or qualitative analysis, modeling, etc.).
4. Additionally, Collaborating Mentors working with SESYNC-LTER Postdoctoral Fellowship applicants must have familiarity with LTER research, LTER data, or other long-term environmental data.

Co-Mentors are also permitted provided: 1) co-mentors both agree to contribute to the project and mentor the applicant equally, 2) there are no more than two co-mentors, and 3) co-mentors agree to

share the travel funds and honorarium. The Collaborating Mentor(s) cannot be the prospective Fellow's PhD advisor, PhD mentor, Dissertation committee member, current postdoc advisor (if relevant), or past collaborator with whom the prospective fellow has published.

## What is Socio-Environmental Synthesis?

Synthesis is a research approach that accelerates knowledge production by distilling or integrating existing data, ideas, theories, and methods to draw more reliable or generalizable conclusions and to reveal novel areas of study. Socio-environmental synthesis often involves merging large and/or heterogeneous data sets from multiple sources, researchers, or fields of inquiry, as well as critical analysis in evaluating arguments and interpreting evidence. It can employ a diverse array of theoretical and methodological approaches (e.g., statistical/mathematical, structured case studies comparison, cultural analytics, scenario studies, game theory, ethnographic studies, organizational theory, simulation/computational modeling, etc.). Regardless of approach, fellows' projects take advantage of existing data/information; **SESYNC does not fund fellows to collect new field or survey data.**

## Collaborating Mentor Matching Process

Potential Collaborating Mentors must submit an application (see below). Upon approval, the application for Collaborating Mentors will be added to a Mentor Registry, which will provide access to the Mentors' application materials (short bio/CV, ideas for projects, statement of expectations). The Registry will be shared only with pre-screened potential Postdoctoral Fellowship applicants and is meant to help the applicants find potential Collaborating Mentors. The applicants will then initiate contact with Mentors to discuss the possibility of collaboration in co-developing a synthesis project. At their discretion, Mentors will work with suitable applicants to co-develop final project ideas that will form the basis of the Postdoctoral Fellowship application. This is an opportunity to develop a project of mutual interest together rather than to bring a postdoc onto a project already developed; therefore, the preliminary project idea submitted via the Mentor application should be considered as a starting point, not a fully developed or existing project.

Applicants may also recruit their own Collaborating Mentors outside of the Mentor Registry, but those Mentors must also submit an application (only CV and statement of expectation is required) by Nov. 17, 2017 to formally assume this role. If a Collaborating Mentor has already committed to working with a potential applicant and does not want to be listed in the registry, this can be noted in the application form (see link above). Collaborating Mentors and prospective applicants are encouraged to finalize their commitment to work together on an application no later than Nov. 17, 2017. No formal notification to SESYNC is required of the decision at that time.

## Collaborating Mentor Responsibilities

Successful Postdoctoral Fellowship applications, which are primarily the responsibility of the prospective Postdoctoral Fellow, will clearly delineate the roles of the Fellow and the Mentor in the proposed project. SESYNC Postdoctoral Fellows are independent researchers, and thus prospective Fellows should take the lead on writing and developing the proposal. In addition to assisting in the development of the research proposal for the fellowship application, **Collaborating Mentors will be required to write a letter of commitment** which describes:

- Your expected role in the project
- Your view of and enthusiasm for the proposed collaboration
- How you envision staying engaged with the prospective fellow and the project

- Your endorsement of the proposed project and perception of the prospective fellow's ability to conduct the proposed research.

Mentors are expected to work closely with the Postdoctoral Fellow on the proposed project for a period of two years beginning August 2018 and to provide mentorship on the synthesis research. **However, the Fellow is expected to take the lead on the proposed project.** Postdoctoral Fellows will be funded by SESYNC and located in Annapolis, Maryland. They are expected to meet in person with their Mentor at least twice per year; funds will be provided for Fellows to visit Mentors at their home institutions and vice versa. SESYNC will provide an honorarium. Co-mentors must agree to share the travel funds and honorarium. The Collaborating Mentor commitment letter is due concurrent with the Fellow's proposal and application materials on December 1, 2017, 5 p.m. Eastern Time (ET). A link to submit the Letter of Commitment will be sent to you once the prospective candidate has send the letter request via the online application system.

A more detailed description of the SESYNC postdoctoral programs and description of the application process for prospective postdocs can be found [here](#) [2].

## Applying to be a Mentor

Potential Mentors should submit:

- For mentors interested in being included in the Mentor Registry, a brief description of areas of interest and potential ideas for collaborative socio-environmental synthesis projects (one-page max. These should be general ideas, not detailed descriptions),
- Link(s) to potential Mentor's professional website and, if relevant, LTER site (LTER affiliation is not a requirement),
- A CV,
- A short bio (around 200 words), and
- A brief statement (500 words) on expectations for the proposed collaboration, including expectations of the Postdoctoral Fellow and thoughts on facilitating a productive mentoring relationship.

## Deadlines

Please submit the required documents as a single PDF using the form [here](#) [3].

Collaborating Mentor application deadline for Mentor Registry: **October 27, 2017, 5 p.m. ET.**

***Please note: collaborating mentor applications are approved on a rolling basis and should be submitted as soon as possible.***

Collaborating Mentor selection and commitment deadline: **November 17, 2017, 5 p.m. ET.**

*Applicant-recruited Collaborating Mentor applications must be submitted by November 17, 2017, 5 p.m. EST. No official communication of the decision to collaborate on the proposal is needed, but all Collaborating Mentor applications must be received by this date.*

Fellowship application (proposal, two letters of recommendation, and Collaborating Mentor commitment letter) deadline: **December 1, 2017, 5 p.m. ET.**

SESYNC encourages applications from groups underrepresented in SESYNC research including scholars from developing countries, participants from underrepresented U.S. minorities (African Americans, American Indians including Native Alaskans, Hispanics, and Native Pacific Islanders), and

persons with disabilities (for more information on such efforts:  
[www.nsf.gov/od/broadeningparticipation/bp\\_portfolio\\_dynamic.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/od/broadeningparticipation/bp_portfolio_dynamic.jsp) [4]).

Questions should be emailed to: [postdoc.application@sesync.org](mailto:postdoc.application@sesync.org) [5]

*The University of Maryland is an Equal Opportunity Employer* □

*Minorities and Women Are Encouraged to Apply*

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**Source URL:**

<https://www.sesync.org/opportunities/research-fellowships-postdoctoral-fellowships/collaborating-mentors-for-2018>

**Links**

[1] <https://lternet.edu/>

[2]  
<https://www.sesync.org/opportunities/research-fellowships-postdoctoral-fellowships/postdoctoral-fellowship-program-2018>

[3] <https://www.sesync.org/forms/collaborating-mentors-for-2018-postdoctoral-fellows>

[4] [http://www.nsf.gov/od/broadeningparticipation/bp\\_portfolio\\_dynamic.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/od/broadeningparticipation/bp_portfolio_dynamic.jsp)

[5] <mailto:postdoc.application@sesync.org>