

Early Stage Researcher Mentorship Programme

An invitation to senior researchers across NEOLaia partner universities

Across the nine universities of the NEOLAIa Alliance, a generation of doctoral candidates and early post-doctoral researchers are finding its voice. They are excellent. They are committed. They are, very often, navigating the most uncertain stretch of an academic career on their own. The NEOLAIa ESR Mentorship Programme exists to change that, and we are looking for senior researchers willing to walk a small but meaningful part of that path with them.

About the Programme

The NEOLaiA ESR Mentorship Programme is an 18-month structured initiative for Early Stage Researchers (ESRs), doctoral candidates and post-doctoral researchers, from across the Alliance. Each ESR is matched with an experienced mentor at a partner university, takes part in tailored workshops, joins a peer network of mentees from the other partner universities, and carries out a short international mobility at the mentor's institution.

By giving each ESR a senior interlocutor outside their immediate department, it strengthens the inclusive, plurilingual and collaborative research culture that the Alliance was created to build.

Why we need you

A good mentor does not replace a supervisor, a head of department or a career-services office. A good mentor offers something different: an experienced, friendly perspective from outside the institutional hierarchy of the mentee. That perspective opens doors that no formal structure can. It accelerates research, sharpens applications, builds international networks, prevents drop-out, and, sometimes most importantly, gives an early-career researcher the courage to make bold professional choices.

As a mentor, your time, however bounded, makes a tangible difference to a real person at an early and decisive moment in their career.

The programme is generous in spirit but bounded in scope: enough engagement to be transformative for the mentee, not so much that it becomes a second supervision or a burden on you. The full framework is set out in the Manual for Mentors; the essentials are summarised here.

What we ask of you	What you receive in return
› An opening online meeting and a brief joint Mentorship Agreement. › Approximately ten online meetings of about one hour over 18 months (every 4–6 weeks). › Hosting the mentee on site for up to one calendar week at your institution. › Honest, respectful and confidential professional company. › A short feedback form at the end of the programme.	› Connection with one of the brightest ESRs of the Alliance, hand-picked by their home university. › Visibility across nine European universities and their regions. › An official Letter of Recognition usable in promotion files and academic-citizenship portfolios. › Possibility of long-term collaboration (with proper supervisor consultation). › The intrinsic reward of shaping the next generation of European researchers.

The Manual for Mentors is explicit: the programme will not turn into a second supervision, it will not require weekend or evening availability and will not place a financial burden on you.. Mentoring should be a source of energy, not depletion.

We welcome expressions of interest from researchers who are:

- Affiliated with one of the nine NEOLiA partner universities (or an associated partner).
- Senior in academic experience, typically associate or full professors, but also experienced senior lecturers, group leaders or accomplished post-docs with a clear track record.



- Active in research, teaching or academic leadership and willing to engage with an early-career researcher beyond their own group.
- Available for an 18-month engagement and able to host a one-week visit at their institution.
- Committed to the values of NEOLAIa, equality, inclusion, plurilingualism, openness, and to the Code of Conduct of the programme.

Mentors do not need to be subject-matter specialists in the mentee's exact topic. Many of the most valuable matches cross disciplines, methods or career stages.

How to express your interest

- 1. Get in touch:** Send a short e-mail of interest (one to two paragraphs) to your NEOLAIa Office and include the following:
- 2. Include a brief profile:** Attach a one-page CV, or send a link to your institutional profile.
- 3. Tell us where you can help:** Indicate the areas in which you are most willing to mentor: research field and methods, publication strategy, funding (e.g. MSCA, ERC, national schemes), academic-vs-non-academic transitions, leadership, and so on.
- 4. Disclose conflicts (if any):** Mention any potential conflict of interest with researchers at the other NEOLAIa partner universities, so that the matching can take it into account.

Indicative timeline

The exact dates of the current call are confirmed by the Programme Coordination. Use the lines below to record them locally:

Call open from: _____

Expressions of interest by: _____

Confirmation of selection by: _____

Programme starts: _____

Programme ends (18 months): _____

Get involved

