# ‘*Writing for Communication’* Mentorship Scheme

# Guidance Notes

#### Aim

Evidence Synthesis Ireland’s (ESI) mission is to make evidence syntheses more usable in every sense of the word – better designed, conducted and reported, and more usable by the public and within healthcare policy and clinical practice decision-making across the Island of Ireland and beyond.

**Communicating clearly the findings of evidence syntheses** to patients and the public can be challenging, yet possible. It is important to translate research to make it understandable for a variety of reasons. Increased health research literacy means a **better informed public**, who are then more empowered to make informed decisions about healthcare. Improved dissemination of systematic reviews and other evidence syntheses means **the public, clinicians and policymakers can make better decisions** based on an overall body of evidence. For researchers, the importance is in being able to communicate research beyond traditional academic audiences, to make it accessible, ensure wide reach and enhance the impact of work that they do.

The Evidence Synthesis Ireland *‘Writing for Communication’* Mentorship Programme aims to **build capacity in communicating the results of systematic reviews** and other evidence syntheses to **public audiences** through a facilitated mentorship programme.

The mentor, **Dr Muiris Houston**, is an award-winning medical journalist and health analyst with The Irish Times, and Writer-in-Residence with Evidence Synthesis Ireland. The successful applicants will receive individual mentorship in writing for communication to public audiences over a period of six-months from Dr Houston. **Derek Stewart**, OBE, will also provide the public/patient perspective through feedback on the mentee’s writing.

#### Who should apply?

Applicants **must** have evidence synthesis experience, ideally with a review/synthesis they have authored recently and are interested in disseminating to a public audience. The scheme is also open to those who have an understanding of the methodology of evidence synthesis and are interested in communicating the findings of an existing systematic review to the public. This scheme is open to all health and social care professionals and researchers currently resident on the island of Ireland.

#### What’s in it for mentees?

* Develop writing skills, particularly in relation to communicating research to public audiences and engaging with the media
* Individual mentorship and support for the production of two written articles (print or online, including newspaper articles both broadsheet and tabloid style, blogs, press releases etc.).
* The mentor will guide the mentee in finding the most appropriate outlet for submission of their piece (\**publication is not guaranteed*)
* Develop skills to improve dissemination and application of future research

#### What we’d like from you

* Produce and aim to publish two pieces of writing for dissemination to a public audience over the mentorship period of six months
* Acknowledge the assistance received from the Scheme in any publication associated with or arising from the Scheme
* Support the terms outlined in guidance notes/agreement form
* Agree, following editorial review from ESI, to submit articles for publication to target venue
* Be motivated, flexible and open to feedback
* Commit to 2-3 virtual meetings with the mentor
* Be reflective, responsive and give feedback to ESI on the scheme

#### The role of the mentor:

* Provide leadership and facilitation
* Commit to 2-3 virtual meetings with the mentee
* The mentor will read the work in advance of each meeting
* They may also provide information and advice on professional and publishing matters
* Provide guidance and constructive feedback on writing
* Advice selecting venue for submission of piece(s)
* Review 2-3 drafts with a 10 working day turnaround for feedback
* The mentor will liaise with the public partner, who will review one draft of the mentees writing, to give feedback on language, or context from a public/patient perspective.

#### What you can expect from us:

* ESI will support two mentorships in 2020
* ESI will provide guidance notes, agreement forms, review the applications and notify applicants
* We will introduce successful mentees to the mentor via introductory email prompting the initial meeting between mentor and mentee to discuss topics, targets and focus.
* Provide suggested guidance and support during the process if required
* Request informal updates during the scheme and a formal evaluation/report upon completion of the scheme
* Be a point of contact for any issues arising during the scheme
* ESI will reserve editorial review over the final article

#### Important dates

* Scheme will open May 2020
* Close on June 16th at 5pm sharp
* Start times for the two successful applicants will be staggered July 2020 and Dec 2020.

#### How to apply

Complete the **application form**, and send with a 2 page CV as a **single, signed PDF document** to [esi@nuigalway.ie](mailto:esi@nuigalway.ie) with ESI Writing for Communication in the subject line.

[ ] Signed Application Form (PDF)

[ ] 2 Page CV (PDF) listing any previous evidence synthesis, publications, writing experience, awards or recognition, or mentoring experience

**Notes**

* The *Writing for Communication* scheme will be advertised once a year. Two successful applicants will be chosen. One mentee will receive the mentorship for 6 months, following which the second mentee will then start.
* The selected mentees are requested to complete an agreement form, based on the guidance notes. Signed agreement forms must be submitted to ESI before the mentee can commence.
* Following completion of the mentorship, the mentee will be asked to complete a formal Report Form / survey to outline the completed project and capture the main experiences and outputs around communication gained from the mentorship.
* The mentorship will end after the 6 month period.
* Publication is not guaranteed
* The mentor will not write the articles for you, but will provide expert feedback and guidance
* Mentees will avail of the relationship for free. There is no fee for application.
* Only one submission per applicant is permitted