

Urban Studies Foundation (USF)

Postdoctoral Research Fellowships 2018 (external to the University of Glasgow)

Further Particulars

Outline

In line with its mission to promote high-quality research in Urban Studies (broadly defined) – and particularly in order to nurture a new generation of early-career researchers in the field – the **Urban Studies Foundation** (USF) is running a competitive scheme to fund a number of Postdoctoral Research Fellows (up to maybe **4** awards) in Urban Studies. This is the third running of a scheme initiated in 2013. Applicants can only apply *once* to the scheme, whether successful or unsuccessful, so that repeat applications to different rounds of the scheme are *not* permitted (unless specifically invited by the USF).

The scheme is designed to enable a successful applicant – the Postdoctoral Research Fellow – to undertake up **3** years dedicated Urban Studies research, following a programme of research designed and executed by the Fellow. The maximum period that we will fund is 3 years, with no option for extending the funding beyond this period. The Fellow's research programme would normally be expected to involve original empirical inquiry, methodological rigour and conceptual innovation, all set within a detailed knowledge of relevant existing research and scholarship. The expectation is that a Fellow will publish outputs from this research in the international Urban Studies (and cognate) literature, as well as seeking additional research grant funding, and taking seriously possibilities for developing the 'impact' of their research beyond the academy.

Each Fellowship will be held by an eligible applicant for up to a maximum of **3** years duration, through an award that will be paid to an **eligible institute of higher education** (HEI) where the Fellowship is to be held for the duration. A successful applicant should have a **mentor** based in that HEI, with whom s/he should work closely for the duration of the Fellowship. The intention is normally to promote *movement* of early-career Urban Studies scholars from their current HEI to *another* HEI, thus offering an opportunity for broadening their intellectual contacts, networks and horizons. This movement can be international or intra-national.

The applicant

1. An applicant can come from any part of the world and/or be resident/working in any part of the world, provided that they meet Criteria 6 below.
2. The only specific exception is that an applicant *cannot* either be currently an employee of the University of Glasgow or applying to be based as a Fellow at the University of Glasgow.¹
3. The applicant must be applying to *move* their place of employment from their current HEI to another HEI, internationally or within the same nation-state.² The scheme is *not* a 'visiting fellow'-type scheme where an individual maintains their present HEI base and merely spends periods of time 'visiting' another HEI to undertake research.³
4. An applicant must have *been awarded* a PhD (or equivalent higher degree) in a demonstrably Urban Studies-relevant field of inquiry, with any disciplinary orientation within the broadly conceived social sciences or arts and humanities.
5. An applicant must have *been awarded* that PhD *within* 5 years of the date upon which their application is received by the Urban Studies Foundation (where date of 'completion' equates with the date of issue of a formal PhD award letter from the relevant HEI). Applications will *not* be accepted from individuals who are finishing/awaiting examination/undertaking corrections of their PhDs.
6. Unless applying *directly* after the award of their PhD, the expectation is that an applicant must have had formal association as an employee (lecturer, postdoctoral fellow, research assistant, etc.) of one or more HEIs during the intervening years. The intention of this scheme is not to offer a route back into academia for someone who has been 'away' from academia for several years, albeit the USF is prepared to consider 'special cases' if fully argued.
7. As indicated, the applicant must demonstrably be an Urban Studies scholar, and the onus will be on applicants to demonstrate that their research fits the description of being relevant to Urban Studies. It will not be sufficient for an applicant simply to state that their research is based *in* urban areas: it will have to be

¹ This is because the USF, which has a partial basis within the University of Glasgow, is seeking to ensure that funding for this particular scheme is disbursed *beyond* Glasgow and its current cohort of salaried staff members. The *one* exception is that the USF might consider an application from someone who has completed their PhD at the University of Glasgow, provided that they are not currently a salaried employee of this University. Someone who has been a salaried employee at the University of Glasgow at some past time, but is not currently an employee, would *not* be debarred from making an application.

² Exceptions to this stipulation could perhaps be envisaged, but an extremely good case would need to be made to the USF (whose permission would be needed *before* an application was formally submitted).

³ Exceptionally, the USF might envisage a *secondment* situation, where an individual is formally seconded from one HEI to another for the full duration of the Fellowship; but, to underline, this is not really the model envisaged here for this scheme.

substantially concerned with dynamics/processes (environmental, demographic, economic, political, social, cultural, historical, etc.) that in one way or another serve to shape and change 'the urban'.

8. Even if applying directly after the award of their PhD, the expectation is that an applicant will already have *some* profile in Urban Studies research – more developed with greater time period since the award of their PhD – and applicants should expect to provide evidence of relevant achievements (publications, grant award, presentations, prizes, etc.).

The 'host' institution (HEI) and mentor

The **HEI** where a Fellowship is to be hosted – it should be the *same* HEI throughout the duration of the Fellowship – must be one with a recognised base in Urban Studies research, but in principle it can be located anywhere in the world other than at the University of Glasgow (see 2. above). The award – up to an *absolute maximum* of **£50,000 (Sterling)** a year⁴ – will be paid directly to the HEI, which should then agree an annual salary for the Fellow at an appropriate regional rate (with appropriate 'on-costs' [pension, national insurance, etc.] also met) to be paid from this £50,000, and with an undertaking to use all remaining funds for supporting the research of the Fellow (see below).

The contractual agreement will be between the USF and the HEI, *not* between the USF and the Fellow, and the USF cannot undertake to intervene in salary or other negotiations between the HEI and the Fellow.⁵ As a charitable foundation, it should be underlined that the USF does *not* pay 'full economic costs' (fECs), but *is* providing an award that is likely to be higher than the agreed basic salary of the Fellow.

The HEI must undertake to meet the expenses of the Fellowship – eg. for field research, conference attendance, publication costs, etc. – as well as the Fellow's salary. Should these expenses lead the overall cost of the Fellowship to exceed £50,000 a year, then it is the responsibility of the HEI, not the USF, to meet such additional costs. There is *no* scope for HEIs to request additional funding from the USF.

The anticipation is that the Fellow will have sought a host HEI, and will have entered into detailed negotiations about precisely what arrangements the HEI will put in place to support the Fellowship – office space, access to facilities, membership of research clusters, etc. – and, more specifically, will have developed a relationship with an identified **mentor** (a senior staff member) who will undertake such a role for the duration of the Fellowship. The mentor should be an established scholar with a strong track record of international research excellence in Urban

⁴ This stated amount may be subject to change by the time of appointment to stay in line with inflation.

⁵ Nonetheless, in the event of a Fellow having strong grounds for complaining about the conduct of the HEI, the USF would reserve the right to withdraw the award (with a month's notice). The same would apply were the HEI to have a serious complaint about the conduct of the Fellow.

Studies, and there should be a substantial 'fit' between his/her research interests and those of the applicant.

The programme of research

It is essential that **the programme of research** is clear from the application in all of its proposed aspects, and that this programme is demonstrably embedded within the broad trans-disciplinary frame of Urban Studies (see Point 7 under **The applicant** above)

Applicants are encouraged to be ambitious in specifying the scope/scale of the programme, and in terms of the kinds of contributions envisaged (both to the academy and potentially to beneficiaries [maybe collaborators] and audiences *beyond* the academy). Applicants should use the 'free field' in the application form to give as strong a sense as possible of this ambition and proposed contribution. Applicants should then use the headings in the 'Statement' of research that follows to guide how they present their programme: exactly how an applicant chooses to balance their commentary between these headings should be entirely their choice.

The USF accepts that a successful applicant's programme of research may *change* somewhat during the 3 years of the Fellowship, reflecting fieldwork practicalities, other research or 'impact' opportunities that arise, new conceptual-methodological challenges becoming apparent during this period, etc. Crucially, though, all such changes should be negotiated *with* the USF, the broader intention being that the USF will be an active (but never directive) presence throughout an individual's Fellowship.

The proposed programme should normally specify original empirical inquiry, methodological rigour and conceptual innovation, all set within a detailed knowledge of relevant existing research and scholarship. The programme should be ambitious but plausible, and should rest on clear foundations established through the applicant's scholarly and research work to date (at PhD and maybe post-PhD level). It is acknowledged that Fellows will likely already have commitments to further research directions, publishing and networking, and such ongoing commitments should be factored into the proposed programme (or at least acknowledged as part of the applicant's 'academic context').

Submission

Applications must be completed by the individual applying for the Fellowship, but it is expected that they will have worked closely on this application with staff, and particularly the mentor, from the proposed host HEI. Indeed, some sections on the application form will need to be completed by the proposed host HEI and the mentor.

Completed applications must be sent electronically to Ruth Harkin (ruth.harkin@glasgow.ac.uk), cc-ed to Professor Donald McNeill (d.mcneill@westernsydney.edu.au), by **8 October 2017**.

The application must include the following:

1. **Completed application form:** a WORD version of this application form will be available on the USF website, containing a number of fields to be completed by the applicant, by the mentor and by the proposed host HEI. Note that here the mentor will need to provide a statement, and the HEI will need to confirm the arrangements that it would put in place.⁶
2. **Outline of proposed programme of Urban Studies research to be undertaken by the Fellow:** the last part of the application form is given over to up to 5 pages for the applicant to elaborate on their contribution/commitment to Urban Studies, and to provide details of their proposed research programme (covering: 'academic context'; 'research questions'; 'conceptual issues'; 'methodological issues'; 'ethical issues'; 'outputs' (academic)⁷; 'impact' (outreach activities based on the research); and anything else thought relevant.
3. **3-page CV listing academic achievements and publications.**
4. **Copy of PhD award letter** or some equivalent document that can confirm the veracity and date of the applicant's PhD award.
5. **Two academic references:** it will be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their two referees (at least one of whom should have acted as their PhD supervisor) send their references directly to the above e-mail address (only to Ruth Harkin) by the specified deadline of **8 October 2017**. Failure of referees to send references on time will mean that an application cannot be considered.

Evaluation and decisions

The completed applications will be subject to a preliminary assessment, and those that are incomplete or from applicants/mentors/HEIs deemed ineligible or inappropriate will be discarded (and these applicants will be informed by e-mail of this outcome). Those applications that remain 'live' will be subjected to critical review by members of the USF, if necessary with assistance from invited external assessors (senior Urban Studies scholars with relevant expertise). It may be that the USF will request further clarification or information from applicants, mentors and/or HEIs.

⁶ Feel free to convert the completed application form to a pdf for final submission, particularly if it includes electronic signatures.

⁷ Successful applicants are encouraged to submit a paper to the journal *Urban Studies*, which will then be refereed in the normal fashion (there being no necessary expectation that the paper will be accepted for publication).

A shortlist of circa **5** applicants will be agreed and they will be invited for interview at the University of Glasgow or, if not possible, arrangements will be made for an interview via Skype (but the strong preference is for face-to-face interviews). The USF will pay second-class rail travel within the UK, and is prepared to enter into negotiations about additional financial support for travel and accommodation. The anticipation is that these interviews will be held on **30 November 2017**, and that the successful applicant(s) will be informed as soon as possible thereafter.

For the successful applicant(s), they will then be expected to accept or reject the offer of a Fellowship within 14 days of the offer being sent out. A formal contract will then be drawn up between the USF and the HEI, with the expectation that the funded period of the Fellowship will commence in 2018/2019 (starting before June 2018): should the Fellowship *not* be commenced by summer 2018, the USF would reserve the right to withdraw the award.

There will be an expectation on successful applicants (the Fellows) to make Annual and Final reports to be sent to the USF by specified deadlines, and to respond, where possible, to any other requests for information or participation from the USF.

The decisions made by the USF must be regarded as *final*, and we are not prepared to enter into discussions about our decisions.

Candidates or potential mentors wishing to discuss their application informally may contact Professor Donald McNeill (d.mcneill@westernsydney.edu.au).

Further details about the Urban Studies Foundation can be found at:
<http://www.urbanstudiesfoundation.org/>