

Urban Studies Foundation

Postdoctoral Research Fellowships 2019

Further Particulars

Outline

In line with its mission to promote high-quality research in Urban Studies¹ – 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 **up to five** Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Urban Studies. This is the fourth round of a scheme initiated in 2013.

The scheme is designed to enable a successful applicant – the Postdoctoral Research Fellow – to undertake up to three years dedicated Urban Studies research, following a programme of research designed and executed by the Fellow. 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 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 **three 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 of the award. 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 award

The award is worth up to £160,000 (Sterling) in total – up to an *absolute maximum* of £53,334 (Sterling) per year – and will be paid directly to the HEI in three annual distributions. The HEI should 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 these payments, and with an undertaking to use all remaining funds for supporting the research of the Fellow (see below).

The applicant

1. An applicant can come from any part of the world and/or be resident/working in any part of the world.

¹ Successful applications will have a program of work which will advance scholarly knowledge of any element of cities and urbanisation to the highest international standards of peer review, and awards will be considered without any disciplinary preference.

2. 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.
3. An applicant must have been **awarded that PhD within the past five 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.
4. 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/relevant organisations during the intervening years (e.g. industry, research, policy, etc.)**. The intention of this scheme is not to offer a route back into academia for someone who has been ‘away’ from their research field for several years. The USF will however consider applicants who can demonstrate **justified career interruptions** due to circumstances including unemployment, carer responsibilities, illness, parental leave, or other extraordinary circumstances. Applicants should seek eligibility guidance on such matters from the USF Director of Operations (contact info below) prior to applying; and should make their reasons for any career interruption clear in their application.
5. 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 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’.
6. 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 awards, 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.

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.² 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 – e.g. 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 £53,334 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 USF expects Fellows should establish living costs at their host institution's location relative to the wage they will receive (after consideration of other legally required on-costs etc.). The USF also encourages fellows to identify and consider the HEI-specific and/or locally-specific provisions for other additional costs, including but not limited to maternity and carer's leave entitlements, prior to choosing an institution; and may contact the USF Director of Operations confidentially to discuss any concerns they might have.

The anticipation is therefore 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 Studies, and there should be a substantial ‘fit’ between his/her research interests and those of the applicant.

Please note that the proposed mentor cannot be the applicant's former PhD supervisor; and that mentors cannot act as referees for applicants.

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 5 under ‘The applicant’ above**).

Applicants are encouraged to be ambitious in specifying the scope and/or 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 (Section A2.2) to give as strong a sense as possible of this ambition and proposed contribution. Applicants may consider the suggested content in this field (“Statement of your proposed programme of Urban Studies research”) to guide how they present

² 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.

their programme; but exactly how an applicant chooses to balance their commentary should be entirely their choice.

The USF accepts that a successful applicant's programme of research may *change* somewhat during the three 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, the later sections on the application form will need to be completed by the proposed mentor and host HEI.

Please note that each applicant can only submit one application per round of this scheme.

Completed applications must be submitted electronically to Joe Shaw, USF Director of Operations, at joe.shaw@glasgow.ac.uk no later than **21st October 2019**.

The application must include:

1. **Completed application form:** a MS 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.³
2. **Outline of proposed programme of Urban Studies research to be undertaken by the Fellow:** applicants may use section A2 of the application form to elaborate on their contribution/commitment to Urban Studies, and to provide details of their proposed research programme. Please present your programme of research in full, clearly describing your

³ Feel free to convert the completed application form to a pdf for final submission, particularly if it includes electronic signatures.

objective(s) and question(s), relating these to the state of the art in the literature, and explaining your methods. Also explain why your research is innovative, detailing the ground-breaking elements. Describe the envisaged academic outputs. Also address knowledge utilisation/mobilisation; and ethical issues (if any). You may use up to 3,000 words maximum for this proposal (including references and bibliography). Please use 12 point size text, in Arial or equivalent typeface.

3. **Three-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:** referees will be contacted in the event that a candidate is shortlisted for interview, and a blind letter of recommendation will be requested from each referee. It will be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that both referees (at least one of whom should have acted as their PhD supervisor), if requested, are prepared to send their letters of recommendation directly to the USF by the specified deadline of **29th November 2019**. Failure of referees to send references on time will mean that an application cannot be considered.

In addition, all applicants will be requested to voluntarily complete an anonymous **Equality & Diversity Monitoring Form** after they have submitted their application. This form and any information volunteered with it is **not** used in the assessment process and will be separated from individual applications. It is only used for monitoring who applies to USF awards on aggregate, so that the USF may regularly assess and improve how it advertises and administers its grant funding.

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.

Review and assessment of the applications is based on a combination of criteria including the track record of the applicant, innovation and quality of the proposed work, and strength or fit of applicant and research with the proposed mentor and/or HEI.

Following review, a shortlist of applicants will be agreed by **12th November**. Referees will then be contacted for letters of recommendation, which they must provide by **29th November 2019**. Shortlisted candidates will then be invited for an interview via Skype or Zoom. The anticipation is

that these **interviews will be held on either the 4th or 5th December 2019**, and that the successful applicant(s) will be informed as soon as possible thereafter.

Successful applicant(s) 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 by July 2020. Should the Fellowship *not* be commenced by summer 2020, the USF would reserve the right to withdraw the award.

There will be a requirement of 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 the USF is not prepared to enter into discussions about these decisions.

Contact and further information

Candidates or potential mentors wishing to discuss their application informally may contact the USF Director of Operations (joe.shaw@glasgow.ac.uk).

Further details about the Urban Studies Foundation can be found at:

<http://www.urbanstudiesfoundation.org>