Seminar Series Awards (2024-2025)

Eligibility and Terms

This document outlines the grant eligibility and terms for the USF Seminar Series Awards.

This information should be consulted in conjunction with the call for applications, application guidance, and other documentation available at the Urban Studies Foundation website.

After consulting the further guidance, enquiries regarding this grant and application process may be addressed to the Urban Studies Foundation via email: grants@urbanstudiesfoundation.org

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1   Eligibility

This section outlines the general terms of eligibility for applying to this scheme, including which individuals or organisations may be part of an application and other specifics relating to the proposal and budget.

Any application which does not meet the general terms of eligibility below will not be considered for this award.

1.1   Applicant eligibility

General guidance on applicant eligibility includes:

- Up to three co-applicants may be named (e.g. one Principal Investigator plus two Co-Investigators). These should be the individuals who will be personally responsible for the application and, if successful, for the subsequent delivery of the proposed activities. The first individual listed will be the main point of contact for the application.

- At least one applicant must be an academic, researcher, or educator currently working within the field of urban studies.

- At least one applicant must have a secure position of employment with the primary host organisation for the duration of the proposed activities.

- Applicants may be based in any country worldwide.

- Contact details for two referees should be provided. Referees should be suitable senior colleagues of the at least one of the applicants (e.g. department heads, supervisors, ex-supervisors, etc.) who can vouch for that applicant's professional track record, capacity to deliver the proposal, and suitability for the award. Please indicate in the 'relationship' field which applicant the referee knows, and is therefore prepared to support.

- Referees should be prepared and willing to provide a letter of recommendation upon request, but will typically be contacted by the USF only in the event that the proposal is shortlisted for the award. Referees should not otherwise contact the USF.

- Previous Seminar Series Awards recipients may not apply to this funding, and only one application may be submitted to this round of funding by any co-applicant.

1.2   Partner organisation and venue eligibility

General guidance on institution and venue eligibility includes:

- Proposals must be supported by at least one academic and/or non-profit organisation (the primary host organisation) who are willing and capable to receive and administer the total grant funding, without charging overheads (Global South institutions are exempt from this requirement, see information below regarding budgets).

- The primary host organisation who will administer the grant funding should typically be a university, but other public and/or non-profit research institutions will be considered if they can demonstrate a good track record of administering grant funding.

- The primary host organisation must certify their capable support under the award terms via a letter, authored by an appropriate member of the research finance administration (e.g. sponsored projects office, Dean, director of research, research officer, etc.).

- Events themselves may otherwise be hosted in any venue or organisation (whether public or private) provided there is a clear, relevant, and strong rationale for their involvement (typically this should be a linkage with the proposal topic).

- Host organisations, venues, and activities may be located in any country worldwide.

- Each host organisation and venue must supply a supporting letter indicating their intent, capacity and contribution to support the proposed activities. Supporting letters should not be more than two pages long, and should be authored by an appropriate representative on behalf of the organisation/venue.

- Supporting letters must not be authored by the applicants.

Please note: applicants must carefully assess whether the primary host organisation is capable of administering this funding where payments may be required to third parties who are overseas, outside of academia, or outside of mainstream banking systems (e.g. community groups, indigenous groups, etc).

1.3 Proposal eligibility

General guidance on proposal eligibility includes:

- As detailed in the call for applications, the relevance of proposal topics and themes to the field of **urban studies** should be strongly evident. Applicants should therefore be adequately familiar with the wider urban studies discipline (including through relevant publications and journals such as the *Urban Studies Journal*), and be confident that their proposal can clearly be identified as relevant and timely to urban studies research. When considering the relevance of their proposal to urban studies, applicants may benefit from consulting the Urban Studies Journal's recent thematic call for papers, though other relevant topics within urban studies will be considered. Proposals that are not clearly within the domain of urban studies will not be considered under any circumstances.

- The proposals should be for at least three distinct events in one or more host organisations/venues globally. Each event must have a clearly defined audience and purpose.

- The minimum expected in-person event is one, but many successful past proposals normally consist of at least two or more. Budget requests should reflect the activities planned, and will be assessed in relative terms (e.g. less in-person engagement might be expected to require a smaller total budget).

- Applicants are encouraged to consider a range of hybrid and/or virtual formats for activities, as appropriate to support their proposed outputs and maintain engagement and/or networks throughout the programme.

- Eligible types of events may include research seminars, colloquia, round-tables, and public talks. Any of which may have workshop and training components.

- Each event should in principle be open to participation from anyone, though an application process may be used if appropriate (e.g. if a specific type of participant is sought, a specific type of research contribution or qualification is sought, capacity of the venues is limited, etc.).

- Small online discussions and workshops involving the project team should not be considered towards the minimum programme, but they may be included and detailed in the program for context as additional events.

- Events must be scheduled to begin within twelve months of the deadline for applications, and finish no more than twenty-four months later.

1.4 Budget eligibility

General guidance on budget eligibility includes:

- The maximum budget available for this grant is GBP 20,000 per award, or GBP 25,000 for proposals incorporating up to GBP 5,000 additional funding for training elements for early career researchers (defined as doctoral students, post-doctoral fellows, and research/teaching associates or lecturers within five years of their PhD). Any proposal that requests more than GBP 20,000 should therefore be clear that the additional costs above GBP 20,000 are part of a training element(s).

- Although the additional GBP 5,000 budget is exclusively awarded for training components only, it is also permitted to use more than GBP 5,000 towards training components (e.g. a proposal might request GBP 25,000 total, of which GBP 10,000 covers training components).

- Host organisations may **not** charge any overheads or management fees for hosting and administering this grant funding, unless they are based in a Global South country (defined as any country listed on the OECD list of ODA recipients).

- Host organisations based in a Global South country may charge overheads in line with their financial regulations, but no more than 10% of the total grant value. Applicants requesting this should include it in the budget, and the maximum funding available is exclusive of these overheads (i.e. the maximum inclusive funding of 10% overhead would be GBP 27,500).

- All reasonable budget requests to support the event programme, activities, outputs, dissemination, and training elements will be considered, including but not limited to: travel, subsistence, communications, IT and AV services/infrastructure, other costs relating to the

set up and running of events, equipment, training, research assistance, publication and post-publication support, translation and other language services, research services, hospitality, other subscriptions, other consumables, etc.

- The cost of the primary applicants' own time may not be included, whether as an hourly rate, per diem, or lump sum. However, research assistance and other third-party personnel costs are eligible, provided they are well justified and the hiring process is fair and transparent.

- Honorariums for speakers or other participants are not eligible under any circumstances.

- It is not permitted to charge fees for participation in the proposed events and activities, unless there are exceptional reasons and justifications provided in the application proposal.

- All budget items over GBP 1,000 must be accompanied by appropriate and detailed budget evidence, collated in a .pdf document (maximum 5mb size).

- Eligible budget evidence should be relevant to the item in question, but might include documents such as quotations, ticket prices, receipts, signed letters from third parties, etc. (as appropriate).

- All budget items must be costed in GBP (Pounds Sterling), and evidence for the conversions must be uploaded as a pdf with the budget evidence file. Conversions should use currency exchange rates from the website Oanda, with rates and dates clearly visible.

2 Grant terms

This section outlines the normal minimum terms associated with receiving a Seminar Series Award from the Urban Studies Foundation.

2.1 Funding

The USF will make offers of funding to successful applicants on the following conditions:

- Funding will be payable up-front in two instalments. Seventy-five percent of the funding will be payable at commencement of the grant activities. The remaining balance, less any expected underspend, will be payable upon the provision of a satisfactory interim expenditure report once at least half of the initial transfer has been utilised (see reporting terms below).

- Funds must be willingly and capably received and administered by the primary host organisation (see eligibility above).

- Any unspent funds must be returned to the USF immediately following the completion or termination of grant activities.

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- Grants are only offered in GBP currency, and cannot be adjusted upwards in the event of currency exchange fluctuations. Grantholders should inform the USF if exchange rates significantly impact the budget.

- Offers of funding are made strictly according to the details in the original application and proposal (dates, activities, funding totals and cost items, etc.), and applicants must act in good faith to ensure the successful delivery of the proposal according to the details and budget outlined in their application.

- Requests for amendments to proposals (e.g. postponements or significant amendments to budget costs) must be submitted formally in writing to the USF as a condition of this award. Such requests are not guaranteed to be granted, but the USF recognises that small adjustments to the original proposals may be required from time to time.

- The USF reserves the right to terminate a grant immediately in the event that it believes award terms have not been upheld.

- Any offer may also be contingent on specific and/or conditional offers of reduced funding, funding contingent upon third-party support, etc. Such terms will be clearly communicated to successful applicants as part of any formal offer of funds.

- All successful awardees should be willing for their proposals to be shared with prospective applicants in subsequent rounds of the scheme (upon request via email).

2.2 Communications

The USF expects all grantholders to uphold the following minimum terms around communication:

- The USF expects that grant holders should communicate ongoing progress and activities to the USF at all times, including logistical challenges and opportunities to promote the individual events that are part of the programming.

- All grant holders must clearly communicate the support of the USF for the event(s), including with any outputs e.g. publications, online resources, etc. Precise terms for this communication and acknowledgement will be provided along with any offer.

- The USF requires that each successful grantholder team should submit two short blog posts at the beginning and end of the activities, in order to disseminate news around the event programme and outputs on the USF website and social media.

2.3 Reporting

Grant holders must provide the following reporting materials to the USF, in two stages as follows:

2.3.1 Interim report

Grant holders should provide a small interim report to the USF once at least 50% of the total funding has been expended on project activities.

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It is intended that this interim report should communicate overall progress towards the proposed activities, outputs, and outcomes. It should also provide an opportunity to review emergent challenges and opportunities arising around the grant activities in dialogue with the USF.

The interim reporting should include:

- A statement of expenditure, indicating the total grant balance, provided by the primary host organisation.

- A short statement of progress, reflecting on any challenges that have been encountered during the initial activities, and the progress made towards the proposed outputs and outcomes.

- Any supplementary documents or materials (optional and/or if requested).

Once the USF has reviewed the interim reporting, the second and final transfer of funding will be released to the primary host organisation.

2.3.2 Final report

A template for the required post-event reporting will be provided to successful applicants as part of their offer pack, and this should typically contain:

- A retrospective summary report, along with photographs and/or video, in a "blog-post" format that can be used to publicly report on the event via the USF website.

- Event programme documents in .pdf format which can be linked for download as part of the public report above.

- A separate (internal only) document for review by the USF awarding panel that provides a detailed retrospective account of the events, including their format and implementation, a list of participants, and a summary of outcomes and outputs (e.g. publications) along with future outcomes/outputs (as relevant).

- A budget summary and financial breakdown that clearly details and evidences how funds have been spent (per event). This should include a summary of any unspent funding or remaining balance required.

- Final remarks and reflections on the successes of the events, and an honest reflection on any challenges faced.

- Any further details of resources, web-links, photographs and other media.