

USF Seminar Series Awards 2022

Further Particulars

Completed applications and supporting documents must be submitted by:
1st December 2022 (23:59 UK time)

All prospective applicants, host organisations, and venues should consult this document before applying to this grant funding. The document contains detailed terms and eligibility for the grant, as well as guidance on writing a good proposal.

An FAQ is also available on the Urban Studies Foundation (USF) website.

Please note that some content may be repeated from the public call for this scheme.

Further guidance and clarifications may be addressed directly to the USF:

grants@urbanstudiesfoundation.org

Please note that the content of this document may change during the call, and the last update should be checked prior to application submission.

Last updated: August 2022

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1. Overview and purpose

The USF Seminar Series Awards aim to support the generation of internationally excellent research in all areas of urban studies. The Urban Studies Foundation (USF) seeks to support up to twelve awards in the 2022 round of the scheme, in each case up to a maximum of £15,000 per award (or £20,000 for proposals containing eligible training elements, see terms). Proposals dealing with any topic or sub-field within urban studies will be considered.

All proposals should be capable of generating scholarly debate and dialogue that is compelling and timely, and which can contribute to impactful publications and/or other outputs. The USF welcomes applications from academics, researchers, and educators working in any country or institution worldwide, and expects the proposal to be of international interest in terms of its coverage and scope. Details of funded Seminar Series proposals from previous years may be found on the [USF website](#), and samples of successful proposals are available upon request via [email](#).

Additional funding of £5,000 is available to proposals that incorporate a training element for early career researchers (defined as doctoral students, post-doctoral fellows, and research/teaching associates or lecturers within five years of their PhD). Applicants that wish to be considered for this additional funding should indicate what specific training need(s) they will address, the activities they will incorporate to meet the need(s), and how the funds will be used. The USF encourages proposals for novel and engaging training activities.

The USF particularly welcomes applications from Global South scholars and institutions, and at least half of the awards will be made to support suitable proposals that involve at least one host institution or venue in Global South countries (defined here via the [OECD list of ODA recipients](#)). To support this aim, the prohibition of institutional overheads will be waived for host institutions based in these countries (see terms). Proposals should also demonstrate an active engagement with issues of equality, diversity, and inclusion.

The USF also welcomes applications that seriously engage with the challenges posed by the climate crisis and COVID-19 pandemic (including in terms of event planning logistics, such as the justification of long-haul travel). Value-for-money is an essential component of all successful proposals, and budgets should demonstrate an excellent use of the funding requested (if possible, this might include third-party funding and/or in-kind support).

Whilst the emphasis must still be on the generation of high-quality urban studies research, the publications and other outputs that this grant seeks to encourage may be wide-ranging in format and focus. The USF also looks favourably upon proposals that seek to engage and/or support participation from non-academic partner organisations and audiences.

Candidates must ensure they have read and consulted this document in full before applying.

2. 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.

More detailed guidance on these topics can be found in later sections of this document.

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

2.1 Applicant eligibility

General guidance on applicant eligibility includes:

- Up to three equal co-applicants may be named (e.g. one lead contact plus two co-applicants). 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 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.
- 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 based at a different institution/organisation than the applicants and proposed events.
- Professional/institutional contact email addresses should be provided for referees. However, if this is not possible, publicly verifiable personal email addresses may be used instead.
- 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.

2.2 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’ / ‘host institution’) 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 Sections 2.4-2.5 below).
- 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 (see guidance below).

2.3 Proposal eligibility

General guidance on proposal eligibility includes:

- The connection of proposals 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 to urban studies research. 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 events in one or more host organisations/venues globally. The events may take place in any location worldwide, but each event must have a defined and distinct audience and purpose.
- 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.).

- Eligible types of events may include research seminars, colloquia, round-tables, and public talks. Any of which may have workshop and training components. Events may be in-person, virtual, or a mixture of both.
- Online discussions and workshops for closed audiences (e.g. the project team and/or a small number of pre-selected third parties) do not count towards the minimum programme, but they may be included and detailed in the program as additional events (beyond the minimum three).
- Events must be scheduled to begin within twelve months of the deadline for applications (i.e. start before December 1st 2023) and finish within twenty-four months (i.e. completed by 1st December 2024).
- Virtual events in ‘virtual venues’ must still have at least one host organisation who is capable and willing to support the application proposal.

2.4 Budget eligibility

General guidance on budget eligibility includes:

- The maximum budget available for this grant is GBP 15,000 per award, or GBP 20,000 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 15,000 should therefore be clear that the additional costs above GBP 15,000 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 20,000 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](#), see Section 2.5 below).
- Host organisations based in a Global South country may charge overheads up to 10% of the total grant value.
- The cost of the primary applicants’ own time may not be included, whether as an hourly rate, per diem, or lump sum.
- Honorariums for speakers or other participants are not eligible under any circumstances.
- Alcohol is not an eligible budget item, whether on its own or under a hospitality category. If applicants wish to include alcohol in the catering for events then they should secure third-party support for this cost.

- 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 depends on the item in question, but should include documents such as quotations, ticket prices, receipts, signed letters from third parties, etc. (as appropriate). The documented evidence should demonstrate sufficient research of costings. The USF will not accept any applications that do not provide adequate evidence that a budget is well-researched and justified. Hospitality quotations should be clear that they do not include alcohol.
- 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 the website Oanda as their source for currency exchange rates, with rates and dates clearly visible.

2.5 Other notes

- For the purposes of USF grant terms, Global South countries are defined as any country on the current [OECD list of ODA recipients \(2022\)](#). For an organisation to be defined as based in the Global South, it must therefore be clear that it is situated and operating in a country on this list.

3. Award terms

The USF will make a commitment of funding to successful applicants on the conditions that:

- Offers of funding are strictly made according to the details in the original application and proposal (dates, activities, funding totals and cost items, etc.).
- Funding will be provided on the basis of 75% up-front before the first event, and the remaining balance (less un-used funds) upon the provision of a satisfactory full post-event report.
- Any remaining unspent funds must be returned to the USF immediately upon request, following the completion or termination of grant activities.
- Funds must be willingly received, held and administered by host organisations (including assuming the risk of the remaining 25% until the successful completion of the events and the provision of a satisfactory post-event report).
- USF grants are only made in GBP currency, and the host organisation may not request additional funds in the event of currency exchange rate fluctuations during the project.
- Applicants must act in good faith to ensure the successful delivery of the proposal according to the precise details and budget outlined in their application.
- Requests for amendments to proposals (including postponements or budget items and 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 does recognise that small adjustments to the original proposals may be required from time to time.
- Applicants 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.
- 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.
- The USF reserves the right to terminate a grant immediately in the event that it believes award terms have not been upheld.
- Successful awardees should be willing for their proposals to be shared with prospective applicants in subsequent rounds of the scheme (upon request via email).

A template for the required post-event reporting will be provided to successful applicants, and this should typically contain (at minimum):

- 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 full and 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.

4. Proposal guidance

The following sections contain additional, more specific, guidance on application information and proposal content. This section should be consulted in conjunction with the grant eligibility terms in Section 2 above (some content may be repeated for clarity).

4.1 Applicant information

This section (page 1 of the online form) should contain all contact information for the applicants, host organisations, and referees. It should also detail any third parties upon whom the application and proposal may depend.

All applicants are responsible for ensuring that these details are eligible for the award (see above, especially Sections 2.1-2.2 above).

Applicants and referees

The application may name up to three equal co-applicants, each of whom will be equally responsible for the project delivery. The lead applicant is the primary point of contact for the application. Each co-applicant must provide a CV (maximum two-pages), collated as one .pdf file and uploaded accordingly (maximum 5mb file size).

Whilst at least one applicant should be an academic, researcher, or educator working within the field of urban studies, the USF welcomes proposals that include any number of non-academic actors in the programme.

For example: an application may come from three co-applicants where one is a Professor of Urban Studies at a university (who might also be the primary host organisation for the grant), but the other applicants are local planning professionals. Or, an application might come from two co-applicants where one is an early-career researcher at a university on a time-limited contact (that nevertheless extends beyond the end date of the proposed events), and the other is a local activist in the region of interest to the proposal.

Applicants may optionally name any relevant third parties ('team members') upon whom the delivery of the proposal might in-part involve somehow. For example, research assistants, support staff, trainers/instructors, and other 'team members', etc. These individuals are not ultimately responsible for the delivery of the project, but can be named if this adds useful context in terms of delivering the proposed activities. CVs are not required for team members, but URLs to online profiles may be added to the field where relevant.

Please note that referees are typically only contacted in the event that a proposal is short-listed. When contacted, the USF will typically ask for a confidential letter of recommendation that details:

- How the referee knows the candidate.
- Their understanding of the candidate's track record in the field.

- Their assessment of whether the candidate will be able to execute the proposal to a high degree of success.

Please do not ask the referees to contact the USF independently, though they should be prepared for the USF to contact them during the period of assessment (see Section 5), i.e. in the following eight weeks after the deadline.

Host organisation and venues

The primary host organisation (who are capable and willing to receive the total funds from the USF) should be clearly detailed in the table. This organisation will be primarily responsible for the administration of the grant funding. The organisation may disburse the funding to other organisations involved in the project, but will be the primary point of contact for the grant with the USF. See the supporting documents section for guidance on what the primary host institution's support letter should contain.

Other host organisations and venues involved in the proposal should also be detailed as relevant, along with individual contacts for each. These might include universities, research institutions, public venues, community centres, and other relevant organisations involved in the delivery of the event programme.

The USF welcomes proposals that represent engaging partnership and collaboration between multiple organisations and actors, including organisations and venues outside of the academy.

The contact point for the primary host organisation should ideally be the author of the support letter, but may also be someone from the relevant research office (e.g. sponsored projects, research officer, finance officer, etc.) who can liaise with the USF to setup a grant.

Any third-party funders should also be listed in this table.

The USF strongly welcomes applications from host organisations and event programmes based in the Global South. In this round of the call the USF has taken the decision to waive the condition prohibiting overheads for hosting this grant, and host organisations based in Global South countries may charge up to 10% overheads on the total grant value. Please see Section 2 for country eligibility.

4.2 Proposal information

This section should contain a detailed outline of the proposal.

Each subsection should clearly and succinctly explain why the proposed events will contribute to urban research; why the USF's funds add value; what the event objectives and outputs are; who the intended participants are; and why the applicant(s) is/are suitable and capable of delivering the proposal on time, within budget, and to maximum efficacy. The USF also requires that all applicants should demonstrate their proposal's commitment to values of equality, diversity, and inclusion (a commitment reflected in the USF's [Code of Practice](#)).

All sections must be completed within the word limit, and the USF expects all referenced literature to be detailed in a standard bibliography, using the final section of this page of the form.

All applicants are responsible for ensuring that the details of their proposal are eligible for the award (see above, especially Sections 2.2-2.4 above).

4.2.1 Proposal details

The proposal title should be the name under which the seminar series will be advertised and communicated to the relevant wider scholarly community. It should be clear and succinct for the purposes of advertising the proposed activities (please avoid very long titles if possible).

The proposed events table should itemise all key events in basic terms of their date, the host institution or venue, the country in which the event takes place (if relevant), the event type and the approximate event duration. Free fields should be used as succinctly as possible to indicate the type of event and its duration. i.e. Please only use this table to detail basic ‘top-line’ information about event dates, locations and event types (there is an additional field for example programme information).

Where exact dates, durations or other details are not known, applicants should provide approximate information and indicate this in the notes for each entry. For events which take place over more than one day, the date should indicate the start of the event.

The date of the first and last events will be deemed as the start and end dates of the proposed activities (and therefore of any successful grant funding). These should adhere to the eligibility guidelines in Section 2. The first and last event dates should therefore be as accurate as possible, and requests to revise these dates post-offer are not guaranteed to be accepted.

The minimum requirement for three stand-alone events is essential, as per eligibility terms in Section 2. Some flexibility has been allowed in the definition of ‘events’ in order to allow a wide range of events and activities to qualify, but applicants should interpret this in good faith—a closed online workshop for a couple of hours does not constitute an event in itself. In other words, if an application only proposes three events then the applicants should be very confident that each of the three events constitutes a good level of significant activity according to the defined terms.

Virtual events are permitted and encouraged where they add suitable value to the proposals, and indeed a series could be entirely virtual (which might also be reflected in a more modest budget, or enable a budget to go further in terms of the activities proposed). However, any proposals for a fully virtual series must still nominate a primary host organisation for administration of the funding.

4.2.2 Proposal statements

The individual subsections should cover the following aspects of the seminar series:

Proposal summary (1,000 words maximum)

The proposal summary should be a detailed statement orienting the series theme within contemporary scholarly literature, and that links the proposal theme to current research debates of interest to urban studies. This section should also provide a brief and basic background context explaining how the proposal came about, what types of participants and audiences will be engaged, and how it responds to certain needs in both urban studies research and the wider urban studies community (there will be space later to expand on these matters in more detail).

The statement should provide a clear and succinct scholarly explanation of the topics and themes that will be covered by the proposed events, and provide clear justification as to why this is a novel proposal of international importance to the field of urban studies. The statement should therefore begin to clearly justify the contribution that the proposal will make to the broader fields and communities of urban studies research.

Any bibliographic references used in this section (or subsequent sections) should be placed in the bibliography section at the end (see below), using a suitable and established referencing system.

Outputs and impact (500 words maximum)

This section should build upon the previous summary explain in detail what the proposal aims to achieve through holding such events, including how the proposed activities respond to the specific needs and research fields identified in the previous section.

Specific and ultimate attention should be given to the proposed outputs of the seminar series, especially including any publication plans (though other credible forms of planned output and impact may be supported by this grant). Proposals must include a credible, timely and well thought through post-event publication and/or dissemination strategy. This may include plans in the form of books, special issues in peer-reviewed journals or other meaningful and substantial academic dissemination plans. Indeed, a concise post-event summary of such dissemination plans will be required prior to final payment being made (see award requirements section). Hence, a summary of outputs should include specific reference to at least one (or more) element(s) of the following:

- Concrete and achievable publication plans that arise directly from the event.
- The generation of research or teaching resources that can provide long-term benefit to communities beyond the immediate participants, including concrete dissemination plans.
- The provision of training elements and activities that respond to specific needs, and which qualify for additional funding (see information below, particularly in Sections 4.2.3 and 4.4). Please note that proposals with outputs that include training elements must still be accompanied by concrete publication and/or dissemination plans.

It is important that any specified outputs listed in this section should be feasible and well-considered. For example, publication plans should be realistic and clearly grounded in the event programming and participation, and other proposals for resource-building and dissemination must include a clear and achievable plan of doing so. Modest support costs for such plans may be

included in the budget if relevant and justified (see budget terms). Applicants should contact the USF if they wish to clarify these terms.

Event programme and format (750 words maximum)

This section should clearly and succinctly explain the proposed format of the seminar series event(s), including its location, duration, and intended participants and audience. This might include key individuals, specific research networks or wider communities of urban studies scholars, including senior academics, early-career researchers, industry professionals, students, etc. It should also detail the roles and responsibilities of any potential partners to the delivery of the event (e.g. co-funders, host institutions, etc.). The Seminar Series must constitute at least three events in one or more different host organisations or venues.

Here it should be noted that the USF welcomes (but does not require) proposals that might incorporate novel formats, regional event programming, and/or virtual events if they are relevant and would have a clear, valuable and productive outcome. This is both in specific reference to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the environmental impact of holding large international events that require significant air travel expenses. Therefore, whilst the USF does not prohibit such ‘traditional’ seminar series events, the USF welcomes proposals that contain pro-active responses to these global challenges. Proposals involving excessive and/or poorly justified international travel will not be successful.

Preference will typically be afforded to proposals for new events. However, the possibility of funding continuing events or series is not excluded provided a very strong case is made. In such cases the USF would typically expect, and indeed generally welcomes, third-party or partnership funding.

This section should also cover feasibility and planning details, including an outline timetable for all event(s) organisation, and which covers the role of other potential partners to the event. It should also provide an overview of how the applicant(s) will effectively advertise, promote and communicate the event to the relevant participant(s) and/or audience(s).

Specific attention should be made here to any challenges posed by COVID-19. This includes what consideration has gone into the present proposal in light of the pandemic, and also how the proposed events could be impacted upon by a resurgence in the outbreak (or indeed other pandemic events); and what sort of mitigating action could be taken.

Overall, the awarding committee expects this section of the application to demonstrate the capacity of the applicant, host institution(s), relevant third party(s) and/or partners to run the event successfully and to assume all remaining risks.

Optional file upload: if they wish, applicants may also upload an outline example programme for the individual events proposed, detailing any additional key information regarding locations, dates, timetables, event type(s), key speakers and their significance to the topic. This outline programme

should be communicated using as few words as possible, ideally in tabulated format, and should not exceed a two pages A4 as a .pdf document (maximum 2mb).

Equality, diversity and inclusion statement (750 words maximum)

The USF's commitment to values of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is detailed in the USF [Code of Practice](#). This commitment reinforces the USF's existing pursuit of equal opportunities for grant applicants with the wider principle that a diversity of perspectives and lived experiences is also fundamental to achieving research and training excellence.

Accordingly, the USF requires that applicants to the Seminar Series Awards grant funding should clearly state how their proposals actively consider and incorporate EDI in the context of the proposed activities.

For applicants seeking a clearer and expanded discussion on EDI, including definitions relevant to its implementation within a research environment, it is recommended to read further sources (e.g. one of which can be found [here](#)). The USF identifies five important areas of EDI: research conceptualisation, study team, study population, data, and knowledge translation. It is suggested that applicants consider their proposal according to these five areas when completing their statement on EDI for this application.

Applicants are, nevertheless, also free to explain their commitment to EDI in other terms, which will be assessed accordingly by the USF (in terms of the arguments and evidence presented within the application).

In specific reference to the Seminar Series Awards scheme, it is recommended that applicants consider their proposals in EDI terms according to the following suggested bullet points:

- Considerations of research **conceptualisation** might include:
 - How does the background and summary proposal reflect a diversity in research literature? For example: Have the applicants performed a historical review of the relevant field(s) through an EDI lens, and have they considered any relevant research-related harm to marginalised communities within the field(s)? Amongst others, this might include scientific communities (e.g. as marginalised knowledge producers) and/or non-academic communities (e.g. as socially marginalised communities). Here, and below, the term 'marginalised communities' should also be considered as geographically specific—e.g. a proposal from applicants based in one region might interpret this very differently to applicants in another region.
 - How have the key research topics and questions underlying the proposal involved the relevant marginalised communities to inform the approach to the proposed activities? For example: how does the research programme account for the views, positions, interests, and voices of any relevant marginalised communities; and how do the activities avoid perpetuating such marginalisation?
- Considerations of the **study team** might include:

- How diverse and/or representative are the co-applicants and/or research team members?
- How was the team recruited and how was EDI considered when bringing them together?
- If the proposal includes plans to recruit research assistants and/or other paid third parties, what principles of EDI will be involved in the hiring process?
- How will other key selection processes consider EDI as part of the planned activities?
- Does the wider proposal team include community partners relevant to the research topics and themes?
- How else do the proposals represent an active engagement with EDI in terms of the study team collaborations and/or any relevant marginalised communities?
- Considerations of the **study population** and/or study **data** may initially seem less relevant for Seminar Series Awards proposals (since there may not be a singular defined research project at the core of the proposal), but nevertheless applicants are encouraged to consider:
 - How do the research populations, methods, and data employed by invited and/or key participants and/or proposed activities reflect a commitment to values of EDI?
 - How will EDI considerations be reinforced through the selection process that may be part of the participant invitation process?
- Considerations of **knowledge translation** might include:
 - How will the outputs serve the relevant audiences and communities of concern? This should include attention to the accessibility and dissemination of the planned outputs.
 - How might the proposals lead to ‘knowledge mobilisation’ and/or advocacy on behalf of non-academic communities? How will any knowledge mobilisation strategies consider EDI?
- Other considerations of EDI (which could also fall under the criteria above) might include:
 - How does the proposal directly engage with disadvantaged and/or underserved audiences, or have strategies for supporting their participation? Please note that the USF particularly welcomes proposals supporting participation from specific communities or groups (including programmes that include Global South, early-career researcher, and non-academic audiences). Budgets may also be used to address this, for example through the provision of small scholarships and subsidies to cover costs like travel or childcare (as relevant, depending on the case).
 - What role(s) do the host institutions play in this consideration, and how might they add value to the EDI commitments?

All proposals should provide a convincing and carefully constructed statement that clearly explains where EDI values have been considered and implemented as part of the planned activities. The

examples above are not exhaustive, and applicants are also welcome and encouraged to explain their commitments in other terms and/or do not have to cover all of the examples above. However, the statement will be critically assessed as part of the shortlisting process and applicants should ensure that all statements are clearly accountable and evidenced within the wider context of the application. Each statement should provide a clear, relevant, and convincing account of the proposal's EDI considerations.

Applicants are welcome to contact the USF if they have any queries regarding this section of the proposal.

Bibliography

Please list any references from the sections above here, in standard alphabetical bibliography format (maximum 750 words).

4.2.3 Budget information

The budget section should be used to provide a detailed and clearly justified budget for the proposed event(s) that lists all the relevant individual costs for delivering the proposal in GBP (UK Pounds Sterling).

Overall, the budget section (both individual items and the statement) should clearly demonstrate why the proposed event is good value for money (in terms of the measured use of funds available in order to achieve maximum impact).

Budget requirements

Applicants must ensure they have consulted Section 2.4 above regarding basic budget eligibility information.

The budget should not exceed £15,000 total funding requested from the USF, unless applicants wish to make use of the £5,000 top-up for direct support of training elements (see Section 4.4 for further guidance). The absolute maximum budget available from the USF is therefore £20,000 per proposal. Budgets must be submitted in GBP currency (and all USF grants are offered and payable in GBP only).

The budget total field may nevertheless be larger if the applicant is detailing third-party support for the proposal—please list any third-party funding as separate items (if relevant) where necessary in order to reflect the overall cost of the series, i.e. the USF expects details of other costs (if appropriate) to explain the full budget of the proposal if funds being sought from the USF are only to meet part of the overall cost.

Each budget item should be adequately named and detailed, along with its overall cost and whether or not evidence has been included for the cost.

Applicants should avoid listing budget items smaller than GBP 50, and instead aggregate smaller items together into relevant categories (where possible).

Supplementary evidence in an attached .pdf document must be provided for all individual budget items exceeding GBP 1,000. As stated above, eligible budget evidence depends on the item in question, but should include documents like quotations, ticket prices, receipts, signed letters from third parties, etc. The USF will not accept any applications that do not provide adequate evidence that a budget is well-researched and justified with evidence. Third part funding over GBP 1,000 should also include evidence (e.g. letter from third party funder).

For consistency, all exchange rate calculations should use the rates available from the website [Oanda](#), and the budget should detail the currency conversion rate where necessary (with date of exchange), and upload .pdf evidence of these rates collated with the evidence noted above.

The budget statement (maximum 400 words) must clearly explain the rationale for the overall cost of the event, and detail any third-party funding the proposal may be reliant upon.

Organisational overheads are not be considered as eligible cost items for this grant (see Section 2.4), unless they are requested for institutions based in the Global South (defined as the countries on the OECD ODA recipient list, see above Sections 2.5). In this case, the USF is willing to cover overheads at a rate of up to 10% of the total grant value. This exception has been made to support participation of Global South organisations, who may not have the same levels of resources and infrastructure to support a proposal without charging overheads.

Budget guidance

Please note that the USF:

- Welcomes budgets that do not request the full maximum support available, e.g. where a proposal can achieve maximum impact with less funds. Applicants should be aware that the USF has funded proposals for Seminar Series in the past which have asked for just 25% of the available funding.
- Encourages an international exchange of ideas and will support a limited amount of overseas travel, but all overseas travel needs to be very well justified and should demonstrably add value (i.e. it should be clear why such events require attendance in-person, and how they add value to the proposed activities).
- Expects to support reasonable travel and subsistence expenses, set up and running costs of events (room hire, secretarial support, consumables, a conference dinner and other valid conference seminar expenses, plus support for post-publication administration) including language support for those from non-English speaking backgrounds. The USF also welcomes applications that may require the hire of special equipment and/or IT support (e.g. platform subscription, etc.) in order to deliver some elements of the proposal.
- Acknowledges that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, that novel proposals for distributed and/or remote or virtual events may not require the same level of hospitality costs, but that they may nevertheless wish to support speakers and participants in other ways.

- Does not normally expect to cover speaker fees or the direct costs of the co-applicants themselves (including daily rates), but will consider funding support for other staff if this is well justified (e.g. research assistants, training staff, translators, etc.).
- Expects any event to charge (at most) only minimal or nominal fees for attendees, given the level of support offered. If fees are charged then these should be detailed and explained in the budget calculations. The event should absolutely not be regarded as a money-making enterprise for any individual or establishment. It is not recommended to charge fees unless exceptional reasons and justification are provided.
- The USF welcomes co-funding and/or third-party sponsorship of events, but this support needs to be confirmed in principle via additional supporting evidence.
- Welcomes budgets that allocate a reasonable and modest element of extra-ordinary support for those who may require this in order to participate in the event. For example, this might include: travel scholarships; extra-ordinary care support costs for those with dependent children/persons; and/or initiatives to support participation from the Global South.

Additionally, applicants should note:

- Budgets will be considered and scrutinised with attention to the fact that event costs are likely to vary significantly between locations (and proposals should therefore also be good value for money relative to local costs). Or, in other words, budget details are not compared “like for like” but must always be good value relative to their location(s).
- The USF reserves the right to revise elements of budgets contained in applications. Payment is typically offered in two stages: 75% on approval at the start of the event organisation, and the remaining balance after the submission of a report on the successful completion of the event and evidenced publication plans for the academic output from the event. The final amount being sought must not exceed the total budget offered by the USF, but the overall event(s) budget might be larger if other third-party funding is forthcoming.
- The USF cannot cover the cost of significant currency fluctuations (post-offer of GBP funding), and applicants would be expected to adjust their budget downwards if a significant revaluation occurs between the award and the event.

Applicants and host institutions should contact the USF (see contact details above) if they wish to discuss these terms or the eligibility of particular budget items in advance of submitting their proposal.

4.3 Supporting documents

All applicants must submit the following documentation along with a completed application form:

- CVs of the project lead and (if listed) up to two additional co-applicants (maximum two pages per CV).

- A letter of support from each host organisation(s) or venue(s) named on page one (maximum two pages per letter). These must be completed/signed by the named contacts, who must be an individual with the authority to express such support (e.g. research officers, finance officers, heads of department, directors, and other such parties).
- Budget evidence documentation (e.g. in relation to budget items over GBP 1000, currency exchange rates, and other relevant evidence – please use the website Oanda for exchange rates).

Each item above should be collated into one single .pdf for each attachment to the application (i.e. four files maximum). Each .pdf file should not exceed 10mb in size (applicants should reduce the file size via compression where necessary).

4.4 Other guidance notes

Please consult the additional notes below regarding training elements and supporting letters.

Terms and requirements for training elements

The USF will make up to £5,000 additional funding available to proposals that incorporate a training element for early career researchers (defined as doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows, and research/teaching associates or lecturers within five years of their PhD). Including this provision, the absolute maximum budget available per proposal is therefore £20,000. Applicants that wish to be considered for this additional funding should indicate what specific training need(s) they will address, the activities they will incorporate to meet the need(s), and how the funds will be used. These details should be clearly explained in the ‘outputs’ section of the proposal (see Section 4.2.2 above for guidance), but should also be evident from the context provided by the rest of the application, including the proposal summary, programme information, budget, and other supporting materials.

The USF encourages proposals for novel and engaging training activities. Examples of training needs may include, but are not limited to: opportunities to present and get feedback on research from experts in the field, developing book proposals, responding to reviewer comments, navigating the academic job market, developing your scholarly network, understanding the hidden curriculum of the PhD, introducing a particular research method or approach to analysis, developing impact beyond the academy, and developing or practising feminism or anti-racism in your teaching, research or working groups.

Examples of activities to fulfil training needs may include, but are not limited to: matching early career researchers with experts for feedback on work in progress, themed lunch or tea discussions focusing on training needs, circulating examples of relevant documents such as book proposals, or training sessions provided by experts.

The funds available for training elements might be used (as appropriate and evidenced) to: support travel and accommodation costs for early career researchers to participate in the seminar series;

purchase relevant books or other materials and equipment; the hiring of experts to deliver training sessions in specific methods or topics; or any other suitable and clearly justified training expense arising from the activities.

Please note, that whilst this £5,000 top-up must be used for training elements, that a proposal could nevertheless use more than £5,000 for training elements overall. For example, a proposal may request the full amount of funding (£20,000) where £10,000 of this budget is allocated for training elements. Indeed, a proposal may also request less than the maximum funding where some portion is still used for training elements.

Any questions on the suitability or eligibility of a particular proposed training element may be directed to the USF, at the address listed above.

Supporting letters

Supporting letters from both the primary host organisation (i.e. the organisation hosting and administering the grant funds) and other organisations or venues are crucial for the USF to assess the willingness, capability, and contributions of these third parties.

The support letters should be written by individual contacts at each organisation who have the authority and responsibility to express such support (e.g. research officers, finance officers, heads of department, directors, and other such parties).

Each letter must not exceed two pages.

Each letter should clearly express the willing and capable contribution of the organisation in a manner that engages directly with the proposal details—it should be clear that the author is familiar with the proposal details, and is writing in specific terms about the host organisation's support (i.e. generic letters of support which might be used for any grant will not fulfil these requirements).

Supporting letters may cover details including, but not limited to:

- The primary host organisation's willingness and capability to host and administer the funds (e.g. referencing specific experience and suitability to perform this role).
- The primary host organisation's familiarity and acceptance of the grant award terms (e.g. budget conditions), including confirmation that they are eligible to perform this role.
- The host organisation's/venue's specific research experience and suitability to support the grant activities (e.g. ongoing complementary projects, relevant staff/community experience and expertise present, relevant networks/audiences present, etc).
- The organisation's/venue's specific event experience and suitability to support the grant activities.
- The organisation's/venue's specific contribution(s) to the grant activities, for example: space, time, resources, networks, staff, in-kind support, monetary support, logistical or communication support, etc.

- Explanation of the connection between applicant(s) and host organisation(s), including details of past collaborations and the host organisation's/venue's connection(s) to the proposal topics and themes.
- Other commitments, sentiment, and evidence for the support of the proposed activities, and relevant contextual information as to why the organisation(s) are committed to the project being a success.

5. Assessment

All applications will be assessed across the following four criteria:

- Academic quality of the **proposal** and outputs. Including, but not limited to:
 - novelty, presentation and suitability of urban studies theme(s)/topic(s); and
 - the quality and/or impact of planned outputs (e.g. publication plans, resource generation, quality of training elements, and broader utility of the series to the relevant participants and urban studies community).
- **Planning** and feasibility of the activities. Including, but not limited to:
 - positioning and suitability of host organisation and event format(s);
 - evidence of organisational detail and awareness;
 - track record of organisers/hosts; and
 - planning for contingencies (including strategies and responses to dealing with any challenges presented by the pandemic and/or other potential risks).
- Commitments to **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** (EDI) according to the guidance above. Including but not limited to:
 - The strength of the EDI statement in terms of its active commitment and detailed consideration of EDI within the specifics of the proposed activities.
 - The contextual evidence supporting the EDI statement (i.e. any other application materials considered relevant during evaluation, e.g. co-applicant CVs, team member details, proposed participants, etc.).
- **Budgeting**. Including, but not limited to:
 - whether the budget represents value for money (measured use of funds to achieve maximum impact);
 - whether it represents a reasonable and/or novel use of resources;
 - how well evidenced it is; and
 - how well it reflects the scale of the proposal.

All of the above criteria will be judged with reference to the guidance available in this document and the USF's Code of Practice.

What does a good proposal look like?

The aim is to encourage research that is significant and innovative in its approach to urban agendas. The proposal should therefore clearly set out what its distinctive intellectual or academic contribution consists of and how the proposed speakers and themes contribute to the event's well-specified academic objectives. In other words, a good proposal should clearly answer the following questions:

- How does the proposal speak to contemporary national, regional and global academic developments in urban studies? For example, how innovative and original is the proposal in terms of the current state of the art of the relevant literature?
- How credible is it in terms of its ability to meet its own objectives stated in the proposal?
- Is the budget value for money and demonstrably justified? Is it clear that the applicant(s) have considered this carefully and provided a proposal that makes good use of the resources available?
- How innovative and original is the proposal in terms of the format of the event(s) and the particular needs they support within the urban studies community?
- To what extent has the application taken into account the terms of eligibility and guidance available in this document?
- To what extent does the proposal clearly demonstrate a strong and active commitment to values of EDI?

Applicants are welcomed to browse past successful project details on the USF website, in order to gauge an idea of what sort of activities have been supported in the past (please also see Section 7 below).

6. Application process

The following guidance should be checked carefully prior to submitting a final application to this grant scheme.

6.1 Application requirements

Please note that the following requirements apply to every applications.

- Do not use BLOCK CAPITALS in any application field, including applicant names or proposal titles.
- Unless indicated otherwise or ‘optional’, the USF expects every field in the application form to be fully completed and all supporting documents to be provided.
- No extension to the deadline can be granted under any circumstances.
- Applications that have exceeded the maximum word count, or maximum page limit for supplementary documents, will automatically be considered ineligible and discarded. There are no grounds for appeal in such cases. Therefore, under no circumstances should applicants risk exceeding these limits.
- The application should be completed in English language (as should award administration, post-event reporting, and general communication with the USF). However, the proposed series itself, including outputs, may be conducted in any language (as relevant).
- Applicants should pay special attention to budget guidance, to ensure that the amount of funding they are requesting is both eligible and all items are properly evidenced.
- Please note that successful applicants from previous rounds of this scheme are not eligible to apply for further funding in this round of the scheme.
- Candidates who wish to clarify any details on eligibility should contact the USF for guidance well in advance of submitting their application (see contact details above).

6.2 Application submission and assessment

Applications should be made via the USF website, using the automated form provided. Applicants are encouraged to first complete their application offline using a word file template (along with gathering together their supporting documents as .pdf files), before pasting their responses into the form when ready to submit the application (with care and attention to remove any formatting issues). Supporting documents should be uploaded as single collated .pdf files, each of maximum 5mb in size (i.e. no more than four additional uploads for supporting documents).

Candidates should ensure they have read this document in full to understand the guidelines for different sections of the application form, and therefore how the assessment criteria can be best fulfilled.

Assessment of applications will typically take around eight weeks, and all candidates will be informed of an outcome when the process is complete.

Please note that the USF may also make conditional offers based on application proposals, including for reduced budgets and/or offers subject to proposal revisions. All USF funding awards are conducted and assessed according to the Code of Practice available on the USF website, and the decision of the awarding committee is final. The USF regrets that it cannot offer any feedback on individual applications.

Any further questions about the application process should be addressed to the USF at the address above.

7. Past successful proposals

Profiles for all past successful Seminar Series Awards are available on the Urban Studies Foundation's website.

Active awards may be found via '[About > People & Grants > Seminar Series Awards](#)' and past awards may be found via '[About > People & Grants > Alumni](#).'

A limited sample of past successful proposals may be requested from the USF via email at:

grants@urbanstudiesfoundation.org

Please use the email subject: "SSA Past Proposals"