

# USF Trustee Recruitment

## Further Particulars (2023)

The Urban Studies Foundation (USF) seeks to recruit up to three new Trustees to serve on its Board, starting throughout 2024. To ensure that the Board will be in the strongest possible position to meet USF objectives, the USF encourages applications in this round of recruitment from: (a) scholars with expertise in certain quantitative fields of urban studies, and/or (b) scholars with regional expertise in urban studies within either Asia or Latin America.

The USF has increasingly established itself as a major charitable body involved in the support of urban studies research and education. The USF has a global reach for achieving its mission, including knowledge transfer, exchange and mobilisation. Through their active engagement in such activities, and participation in Board meetings, Trustees play a crucial and responsible role in the strategies, policies and financial decisions of the USF. The role requires collegiality and commitment to collectively guide and oversee the USF in delivery of its charitable aims and objectives. Serving as a Trustee provides an opportunity to shape the future of global urban studies.

This document outlines further details regarding the role profile, specification, application and assessment process. All applications should ensure that they have read this document in full prior to applying to the position. Some content from public advertisements may be repeated below for clarity.

Questions regarding the role and application process should be addressed to the USF Managing Director, Joe Shaw, via email: [joe.shaw@urbanstudiesfoundation.org](mailto:joe.shaw@urbanstudiesfoundation.org)

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## 1. About the Urban Studies Foundation

The Urban Studies Foundation (USF) is a charitable private limited company, established under UK company law for the following purposes:

- To advance academic research and education in the field of urban studies;
- To promote knowledge transfer, exchange and mobilisation in the field of urban studies.

The USF achieves its objectives by the provision of grants to individuals, groups, institutions or research projects. The objective of the charity's wholly owned subsidiary *Urban Studies Journal* (USJ) is to generate income by publishing an academic journal in the field of urban studies and to donate any profit to the charitable company to meet its objectives.

Specific activities which the USF runs, manages and financially supports include the following:

- International Fellowships, in particular supporting early-to-mid career scholars from the Global South.
- Seminar Series awards.
- Postdoctoral Research Fellowships held in various institutes of higher education across the world.
- Ad-hoc and/or pilot awards (e.g. Pandemics & Cities, Knowledge Mobilisation Awards, Writing Urban India, etc.)
- Other Events (for promoting Urban Studies theory and practice).

Further details about the organisation and its activities can be obtained from the USF [website](#).

## 2. Governance

The USF is governed by a Board consisting of up to 11 Trustees (also referred to as 'Members'), in accordance with the organisation's Articles of Association and relevant policies determined by the USF Board. The USF also maintains a formal Members Agreement and a separate Independence Agreement between the USF and USJ. Trustees are drawn predominantly from academia, but also potentially from civic society.

Appointment of Trustees is made on an open competition basis, through a selection process agreed by the USF Board. Appointments are for a fixed period of four years, which is renewable for a further two years by mutual consent of Trustee and Board. The Chair of the Board is elected every two years from within the existing USF Membership. Newly appointed Trustees are ineligible for consideration as Chair within the first one year of appointment, but are expected to be prepared to serve as Chair thereafter if called upon. The Chair is responsible for steering the USF Board and its agenda during meetings, and via the various subcommittees and awarding panels of the USF. They should act with collegiality and transparency to ensure consensus amongst the Board on all USF

issues and decisions wherever possible, and are accountable to the Board as such for their performance of this duty.

The USF holds two General Meetings per year, usually in May and December, often in-person (location varies, but recent meetings have been held in Amsterdam, Glasgow, and Manchester). Attendance is expected of all Trustees, but this can occasionally be via videoconferencing if necessary (as has been the case during the recent pandemic). At these meetings, the USF Board discharges a number of responsibilities which include:

- Receiving USF and USJ audited annual accounts.
- Ensuring that already committed USF resources are being used appropriately and to good effect, and determining the disposition of available uncommitted financial resources.
- Assessing USF performance against objectives.
- Evaluating and approving new strategic initiatives.
- Monitoring the activities of the Journal (USJ) (in terms of the Independence Agreement).
- Approving the USJ annual budget and business plan.
- Dealing with other ad hoc matters.

Trustees will also be required to serve on USF awarding panels and committees as requested by the Chair and Managing Director, and may be expected to serve as Chair after their first two years of tenure. These commitments can be intensive at times and should not be underestimated, with online committee meetings and duties occurring at intervals throughout the year.

Please note that as per the USF [Code of Practice](#), USF Trustees cannot themselves apply to USF grant funding schemes. This policy is designed to avoid any conflicts of interest that may arise in the administration of the USF's grant funding schemes. Therefore, individuals may not simultaneously apply to the post of USF Trustee and also apply to, or be a recipient of, USF grant funding. However, individuals who have previously received and completed USF grant funding schemes are eligible and encouraged to apply.

### **3. General duties of a USF Trustee**

The role of a USF Trustee / Board Member is to exercise skill and care in the general management and control of USF affairs and to facilitate the achievement of its charitable purposes. These requirements mean that Trustees' administrative and/or legal duties include:

- Attending twice-yearly Board meetings, preferably in person but can be via video conferencing if necessary.
- Ensuring that USF as a body complies with its Articles of Association, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.

- Complying with personal legal duties as a Board Member under UK company and charity law.
- Ensuring that USF applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects.
- Safeguarding the good name and values of USF.
- Complying with established codes of conduct and all other policy requirements of USF.
- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of USF.
- Ensuring the financial stability of USF.
- Protecting and managing the property of USF and ensuring the proper investment of its funds.
- Taking part in the appointment of the biannual Chair of USF and monitoring subsequent performance.
- Acting as Chair of USF if called upon by the Board to do so.
- Participating in appraisal, recruitment, and disciplinary panels and committees as required by the Chair and Managing Director.
- Using personal skills, knowledge and experience to help the Board reach sound decisions. This involves various tasks including scrutinising Board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on developing new initiatives, or other issues in which the Trustee has particular knowledge or experience.

Applicants should also consult the website of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR, see: <https://www.oscr.org.uk/guidance-and-forms/being-a-charity-in-scotland/charity-trustee-duties>) to better understand the role and duties of a charity Trustee in the United Kingdom.

Other general duties of a more academic nature involve helping identify and accepting responsibility for leading on areas of activity that serve to deliver USF objects (most notably including serving on recruitment panels and scrutinising reports). In particular, Trustees are expected actively to contribute to:

- Setting USF strategic direction.
- Achievement of USF's specified objects.

Trustees are accordingly expected to play a substantial and continuing role in USF academic activities over the full period of their appointment. This includes pro-actively seeking opportunities for promoting awareness of its activities and for enhancing its profile within the academic community (e.g. occasional participation in USF-sponsored events).

#### **4. Personal qualities required of a Trustee**

Prospective Trustees must be able to demonstrate personal commitment to and active involvement in urban research or the application of such research in fields of urban practice, policy and politics.

Beyond this, given USF objectives, governance structures and the above expectations of commitment, prospective Trustees are also required to demonstrate:

- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort.
- Strategic vision.
- Good, independent judgement.
- Ability to think creatively.
- Willingness to speak their mind.
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties and responsibilities involved.
- A commitment to following existing USF policies and guidance.
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team.
- Ability to empathise with members of the global urban studies community, and to creatively think of new initiatives to build a dynamic community of urban studies scholars.

#### **5. Role specification (2023)**

Following a strategic audit and evaluation of the existing Board, the USF especially seeks to recruit Trustees with:

- expertise in quantitative fields of urban studies, including but not limited to: urban economics (and subfields in housing, infrastructure, regional science, and/or development finance), geospatial analysis (and subfields in AI, big data, GIS, modeling, urban data analytics, and/or other geosciences), and urban environmental approaches to global climate crises. Expertise should also extend to engagement with critical perspectives of these fields.
- the established networks and energy to represent academic research and policy debates around cities and urbanisation processes within Asia or Latin America. Candidates based in other regions will be considered provided their research networks and expertise focus on these regions. One space from this round will be considered for a Trustee permanently based in the UK or Europe who have demonstrable networks and scholarly focus in these regions.

Essential requirements of candidates include:

- They should have a firm and demonstrable commitment to the core aims and objectives of the Urban Studies Foundation, and to the roles and responsibilities of a Trustee in upholding and delivering upon these aims and objectives (see Further Particulars). Applicants should also consult the website of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) to better understand the role and legal duties of a charity Trustee in the United Kingdom (however, please note that Trustees may be based anywhere globally, and it is not a pre-requisite that individuals have prior experience as a Trustee).
- They should have demonstrable experience, knowledge, expertise and active involvement in urban studies research (e.g. they are either an academic or are otherwise making a clear and sustained contribution to urban discourse and policy).
- This round of recruitment especially seeks candidates with:
  - expertise in quantitative fields of urban studies, including but not limited to: urban economics (and subfields in housing, infrastructure, regional science, and/or development finance), geospatial analysis (and subfields in AI, big data, GIS, modeling, urban data analytics, and/or other geosciences), and urban environmental approaches to global climate crises. Expertise should also extend to engagement with critical perspectives of these fields.
  - the established networks and energy to represent academic research and policy debates around cities and urbanisation processes within Asia or Latin America. Candidates based in other regions will be considered provided their research networks and expertise focus on these regions. One space from this round will be considered for a Trustee permanently based in the UK or Europe who have demonstrable networks and scholarly focus in these regions.
- They should have an ability to work with the USF in the English language (but it is not essential to have an extensive publication record in English).
- They should be readily available for USF Board Meetings, and other roles and responsibilities required of USF Trustees. More information on the roles and responsibilities of a USF Trustee may be found in the Further Particulars, but this includes strategic engagement and oversight in the global advancement and support of urban studies.

Desirable requirements of candidates include:

- Demonstrable experience in academic publishing and/or editorial roles.
- Demonstrable experience in strategic planning for non-profit organisations and research funding, including prior experience as a Trustee or comparative roles with other organisations.

- Demonstrable managerial experience in financial planning and/or administration for similar organisations.

Candidates with any doubts on the requirements above should contact the USF Managing Director via email to discuss further (see contact details above).

Provided they meet the requirements outlined above, all candidates will be assessed with consideration for their local opportunities and resources. Additionally, all applicants should be aware that the USF operates with a firm commitment to equality of opportunity as defined by the UK Equality Act 2010 (as noted in our [Code of Practice](#), and the Further Particulars for this role). This means that the USF Trustee recruitment process recognises a need (a) for the USF Board to collectively represent the diversity of urban research and the global reach of the organisation's activities and objectives, and (b) that the Board Membership secured is respectful of different dimensions of human diversity, and mindful of the existing composition of the Board.

## 6. Remuneration

The role of charity Trustee is unremunerated, but it is USF policy to cover all reasonable expenses incurred as a result of taking-up this position (e.g. travel and accommodation). The USF may also cover some extra-ordinary care costs incurred by Trustees (e.g. childcare), and prospective applicants should contact the USF Managing Director prior to applying to discuss their specific case/needs in relation to USF Expenses Policy.

## 7. Application requirements

Individuals wishing to apply for a position as USF Trustee should submit the following materials electronically via the USF website by **27<sup>th</sup> October 2023** (before 23:59 GMT):

1. A covering letter (.pdf format, no more than two pages, maximum size 5mb) explaining why you wish to be considered for a position as Member on the USF Board of Trustees, and detailing your relevant experience/achievements in the field of 'the urban' (academically and/or in terms of public policy/civic engagement). See below for more details.
2. A CV (.pdf format, no more than five pages, maximum size 5mb), in which it must be easy to pick out the dimensions of your 'urban' experience and achievement, academically or otherwise). See below for more details.
3. Contact details for two suitable referees, who should be prepared to provide letters of recommendation if requested. See below for more details.

[Additional guidance on application materials \(contains advice specific to the 2023 call\):](#)

Candidates should additionally ensure that **cover letters** clearly detail:

- Their commitment to academic research into urban studies, including a clear indication of which field(s) their own work is located. This should pay reference to the candidate's expertise in quantitative fields of urban studies, with reference to the call specifics.
- Their connections to urban studies research, networks, and communities in Asia and/or Latin America.
- If applicable, their experience and/or connection to other relevant Asian and/or Latin American organisations outside of academia, for example in the realms of policy, practice, and industry.
- What they can bring to the USF Board of Trustees in terms of connections to local networks and research institutions in Asia and/or Latin America, and any other wider benefits or skills that the existing Board may be lacking.
- If applicable, their experience and/or knowledge of research funding and charitable bodies. e.g. Any other Board memberships and/or similar positions in an academic and/or research context (not mandatory).

The candidate's **CV** should present a clear track-record that provides context and background for the content of the cover letter. The CV should be formatted appropriately for each individual, which might include either formatting as a standard academic CV (e.g. including relevant positions, publications, and research outputs) or an industry-specific CV that details relevant positions and experience in their field. Under publications, applicants must not list "Forthcoming" publications unless they append evidence of the publication's acceptance to their CV (e.g., correspondence from the journal editor or book publisher). Manuscripts under review with journals or book editors can be listed separately in the CV, but not under publications.

Contact details should be provided for **two referees** who are willing to be contacted by the USF in order to supply a letter of reference for the candidate. The referees must be suitably senior colleagues of the candidate (e.g. a former supervisor, line-manager, department head, or other senior colleague) who can comment impartially on their suitability for the role (and who work in the same relevant field). Referees should be either senior academics in the field of urban studies, or individuals working in other areas of urban policy, practice and industry (as relevant to the candidate). The relationship between candidate and referee should be clearly declared and without conflict of interest in relation to the role. Current USF Trustees may not act as referees. The primary contact point for the referee should be their professional email address at their present place of employment, or a verifiable personal address.

Please note:

Candidates who exceed the page count for either their cover letter or CV will not be considered.



Applicants to USF funding, employment and voluntary positions will also be invited to complete an anonymous Equality and Diversity survey, which will be automatically sent to all candidates following the application deadline. Further details about the USF can be obtained from our website.

## **8. Assessment and selection**

Assessment for the vacant positions will be carried out by the current Board of Trustees, mindful of fulfilling the role profile and specification above. However, the USF also reserves the right to make no appointment from the pool of eligible candidates should the Board decide that suitably qualified candidates are not forthcoming.

In determining both candidate short-listing and the procedure for subsequent Board voting, the principal criteria overseeing recruitment and selection of Trustees is as follows:

- To ensure that the Board will be in the strongest possible position to meet USF objectives.
- To ensure that subsequent to the recruitment process, USF Trustees collectively represent the diversity of urban research and the global reach of the organisation's activities and objectives.
- To ensure that the Board Membership secured is respectful of different dimensions of human diversity, and mindful of the existing composition of the Board, a 'positive action' approach (as per specifications in the UK Equality Act 2010) will be shown towards candidates from under-represented gender, racial, regional and other relevant backgrounds who are regarded as of equal merit to others.

The recruitment short-listing process will take up to six weeks, following the deadline for applications. Candidates may be requested to attend an online interview with a subcommittee of the current USF Board. All applicants will be informed of the outcome within two months of the closing deadline.

Applicants to all USF funding, employment and voluntary positions will also be invited to complete an anonymous Equality and Diversity survey, which will be automatically sent to all candidates following the application deadline. Further details about the USF can be obtained from our website.

Candidates who exceed the page count for either their cover letter or CV will not be considered. The USF regrets that it cannot offer any feedback on individual applications, and the decision of the USF Board of Trustees in relation to this appointment must be regarded as final.

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Further questions regarding the role of USF Trustee and application process should be addressed to the USF Managing Director, Joe Shaw: [joe.shaw@urbanstudiesfoundation.org](mailto:joe.shaw@urbanstudiesfoundation.org)