

International Fellowships 2024

Further Particulars

The Urban Studies Foundation (USF) is delighted to announce a new round of its International Fellowship grant funding programme. The award is designed to enable early-to-mid career urban scholars from the Global South to pursue an extended sabbatical (3-9 months) at a university or other academically-accredited organisation of their choosing worldwide (either Global South or North).

The Global South is defined here as countries on the OECD's current [ODA recipient list \(2024-2025\)](#).

The deadline for applications to this funding scheme is **5th July 2024** (by 23:59 UTC+0).

All prospective applicants should ensure that they have read this document in detail before applying, and before contacting the USF to discuss, query or clarify any issues relating to this funding.

If the answer to your query cannot be found either below, or in the scheme's Frequently Asked Questions, please contact the USF via email: grants@urbanstudiesfoundation.org

Please note that some information below may be repeated across different sections for clarity.

Document last modified: March 2024

Contact: grants@urbanstudiesfoundation.org

Table of Contents

1 Purpose of the USF International Fellowship.....	2
2 Terms of eligibility and suitability.....	3
2.1 Candidate.....	3
2.2 Proposed Fellowship.....	3
2.3 Host organisation and Mentor.....	4
2.4 Budget.....	5
2.5 Additional support.....	6
3 Award terms.....	8
4 Application process.....	9
5 Research proposal guidance.....	11
6 Assessment criteria.....	12

1 Purpose of the USF International Fellowship

The USF International Fellowship is intended for the purpose of **writing-up the candidate's existing research findings** in the form of publishable articles and/or a book under the guidance of a chosen Mentor in their field of study.

Proposed research outputs should present a clear connection and novel contribution to any topic within urban studies, not limited to: climate, development, ecology, finance, governance, housing, migration, mobility, planning, policy, political economy, public health, social equity, sustainability, transport, and technology. Applicants must be familiar with the wider urban studies discipline (including through relevant publications such as the Urban Studies Journal), and be confident that their scholarship can make a significant contribution to the field.

Additionally, it is intended that such outputs should expand theoretical and empirical understanding of the major social, economic, political, and other issues associated with the specific development trajectories of cities in the Global South. The programme is therefore designed to give scope to the exchange of ideas between urban scholars working in various parts of the globe. To this end, particular importance is attached to the identification and willingness of an established urban scholar working within the host organisation to act as a Mentor to the Fellow.

As part of this, the International Fellowship also intends to:

- Foster collaboration between an emerging researcher from the Global South and a suitable and experienced researcher (located anywhere, worldwide, whether in the Global South or North).
- Build and strengthen institutional-academic networks of urban studies at a truly global scale.
- Strengthen the international profile and career path of the Fellow.
- Develop and publish high-quality research on a topic that makes a significant contribution to the study of urbanization in the Global South and more widely. It is anticipated that the work undertaken might be of a largely theoretical nature or focused on the analysis and conceptual development of empirically-based research **for which the data has already been collected**. Therefore, the Fellowship is not designed to support primary data collection and will not fund such activities.
- Provide a time and space where the above aims can be achieved, and therefore requiring that the Fellow should be able to take a 'break' from their home institution environment during which they can dedicate themselves to pursuing their research proposal objectives.

2 Terms of eligibility and suitability

Please consult this section for the strict terms of eligibility to this scheme in terms of (a) the candidate, (b) the host organisation and Mentor, (c) the proposed budget, and (d) additional award support for extra-ordinary costs (e.g. relating to childcare and/or disability).

Any doubts or clarifications on these terms should be directed to the USF **prior** to applying (see contact information at the start of this document), provided prospective applicants have consulted this document and the relevant Frequently Asked Questions in full.

2.1 Candidate

- The candidate's PhD must have been awarded in a relevant social science or humanities discipline within the last ten years (by the exact application deadline date). Relevant disciplines might include: anthropology, architecture, data science, demography, development, economics, geography, planning, political science, public policy, sociology, spatial science/modelling, sustainability, urbanism (though this list is not exhaustive). Candidates who have not received their PhD are not eligible.
- Career breaks with supporting statement and evidence may be considered as reasons extend this ten year period in some cases (e.g. documented maternity/paternity leave, unemployment, military service, illness, etc.). However, in this case prospective applicants must contact the USF **prior** to applying to discuss and confirm their situation (and the USF reserves the right not to consider applicants whose PhDs were awarded more than ten years ago).
- Candidates must be a national of a Global South country, defined here as countries present on the OECD's current [ODA recipient list \(2024-2025\)](#). Preference may be given to candidates from least or low income countries, but middle income developing countries are not excluded if the need for support is justified.
- Candidates must also reside within a country in the Global South, and have a formal affiliation with a university or other higher education and/or research institution in the Global South.

2.2 Proposed Fellowship

- The Fellowship is intended to support writing-up **existing** research for publication outputs (i.e. where the primary data collection and analysis has already been completed). It is not designed to fund new research projects, and such proposals will not be considered for funding.
- The Fellowship must begin within fourteen months of the closing deadline, i.e. by September 2025 (though applicants should be aware that the review process can take up to twelve weeks).

- The Fellow must be based at the proposed host organisation for the duration of the Fellowship (to benefit from and engage with the relevant scholarly community and resources). Remote Fellowships will not be considered.
- Proposed research outputs should present a clear connection and novel contribution within the field of urban studies, and be aimed towards publication for relevant audiences.

2.3 Host organisation and Mentor

- The Fellowship must be taken up at a different institution to the candidate's current position.
- The Fellowship may be proposed at a host organisation in any country worldwide, and the applicant must explain the rationale for the chosen institution. Fellowships in Global South regions are also encouraged, to promote South-South mobility.
- Host organisations should typically be universities, but public research institutes that are dedicated to scientific research and who operate on a non-profit basis are also eligible. If in doubt, candidates are encouraged to check eligibility for their host organisation in advance of applying.
- There should be a suitable research environment in the host organisation to stimulate and support the Fellow's research.
- The Mentor should ideally be a scholar with a strong track record of research excellence in urban studies and relevant Mentoring experience, and should be based permanently at the host organisation for the period of the Fellowship.
- There should be a match or a clear compatibility of research interests between the Fellow and Mentor.
- It is anticipated that the Mentor will be willing to assist the progress of the Fellow to ensure that they are able to fully realise their writing ambitions during the sabbatical period, possibly followed by jointly authored publications.
- A visit of the Mentor to the Fellow's country is also permitted to enhance the Mentor's understanding of the Fellow's research context and for the Mentor to provide effective advice for the Fellow's research. This is optional rather than compulsory, and can be included in the budget of the Fellowship proposal if appropriate and justified (see below).
- All Mentors should consult the **Guidance for Host Organisations and Mentors** document to ensure they are able to provide the support expected, available on the USF website.
- Fellows cannot be Mentored by existing Trustees of the Urban Studies Foundation, and Trustees should **not** be named as referees for applications (except in certain strict circumstances, see below under application process).

2.4 Budget

- The requested budget must be reasonable, justified, and include all primary costs relating to the Fellowship (e.g. travel, accommodation, food, visa costs, insurance, and resource costs, etc).
- Budgets must be applied for in GBP currency, and grants are only payable in GBP currency. All conversions should be made using [Oanda](#) currency rates, and evidence for the rates of exchange at the time of applying should be attached to the budget evidence document.
- Applicants should therefore ensure that they have carefully researched all likely expenses, and of any size (e.g. travel to and from visa appointments, additional travel documents required, insurance costs, etc.).
- Living costs should be budgeted at a modest rate relative to the local cost of living. All travel must be economy class.
- Budgets must be well-documented, with all budget items over GBP 500 clearly documented with supporting evidence (e.g. flight prices, quotes for accommodation, local cost of living rates, etc.). Evidence supporting the budget costs, and exchange rates, should be collated and attached as a single pdf documents (maximum 2mb filesize), and should clearly demonstrate that the applicant has carefully researched a realistic and reasonable budget for the Fellowship.
- Suitable forms of evidence might include flight ticket prices, quotes, university accommodation prices, visa processing costs, local living cost rates from online sources, etc., as relevant.
- A small budget may be included in the application for the Mentor to assist the Fellow to reach their intended research programme aims should this be appropriate (e.g. to attend a suitable conference with the Fellow, or to visit the Fellow's home institution).
- There is an additional amount of limited funds available to support extra-ordinary costs incurred during the Fellowship due to either: (a) caring responsibilities for dependent persons, or (b) disability. Please see below for more details.
- The USF strongly expects host organisations and Mentors to explore a full waiver or significant discount for any overhead charges (e.g. bench fees, affiliation fees, general overheads, etc). This is considered a reflection on the strength of the proposed partnership between USF, Fellow, host organisation, and Mentor. However, where a full waiver is not possible:
 - Global South organisations may charge up to GBP 100 per calendar month in overheads (bench fees, affiliation fees, etc).
 - Global North organisations may charge up to GBP 100 per calendar month provided that evidence is presented to demonstrate this represents a discount on the normal overheads charged for visiting scholars.

- Equipment costs (e.g. laptops) will not normally be considered eligible budget items unless the request is an exceptional case from a candidate based in a least/low income country. Applicants who wish to include equipment in their budget should clarify this with the USF **prior** to applying.
- Funding is not available for other research costs associated with primary data collection, for which this award is not intended.
- Mentor fees or payments are not eligible budget items for this scheme, and will not be considered under any circumstances.
- Open access publication fees should not be included in the budget, but Fellows are encouraged to contact the USF at a later date to discuss any case for support (e.g. after the Fellowship has finished and outputs have been accepted for publication).

2.5 Additional support

The USF is committed to supporting scholars who may incur extra-ordinary costs during their Fellowship due to either: (a) caring responsibilities for dependent persons, or (b) disability. As a result, all short-listed candidates may apply to an additional limited source of support funding for these reasons.

Extra-ordinary care costs are defined here as additional care costs for dependent person(s) (e.g. children, elderly family members, etc.) that may be incurred as a result of taking up the International Fellowship. For example, this may include but is not limited to: additional hours of care provided to dependent person(s) whilst the awardee is away on sabbatical, or additional travel costs if a dependent person(s) must travel with the awardee to the sabbatical destination. In all cases, the need for such support should be very clear, and where no reasonable alternative is possible. Such costs do not include normal costs already associated with the care of dependent person(s), e.g. normal provision of food, accommodation, daily transport for dependent person(s). Applicants wishing to apply for support to cover such costs should contact the USF in advance to explain their case and ensure eligibility, and will only be invited to submit an application for additional support in the event that the candidate is short-listed for the award. Therefore, the budget submitted with the proposal should **not** include such costs.

Extra-ordinary disability costs are defined here as additional costs which might be incurred as a result of taking-up the International Fellowship for disabled persons, where disability is defined in UK law, via the Equality Act 2010, as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Such costs may include but are not limited to: small purchases of additional equipment, slightly increased accommodation costs, or slightly increased travel costs, etc. Applicants wishing to apply for support to cover such costs should contact the USF in advance to explain their case and ensure eligibility, and will only be invited to submit an application for additional support in the event that the candidate is short-listed for the award. Therefore, the budget submitted with the proposal should **not** include such costs.

Applying for additional support

To apply for additional support for the reasons above, applicants should contact the USF in advance of applying to explain their case and ensure eligibility, and will only be invited to submit an application for additional support funding in the event that the candidate is short-listed for the award. In this event, candidates will be required to submit a supporting statement, budget, and evidence for their case.

Therefore, the budget submitted with the proposal should **not** include such costs, and simply represent the primary costs for the individual to take up the Fellowship. Candidates should however indicate (via a check-box) whether they intend or need to apply for these funds at the time of submitting their application.

A candidate's intention to apply for these funds by checking the relevant box on the application is not considered during the initial assessment of the proposal, and is not conveyed to the assessment panel. Therefore, do not include any mention of such additional costs in the main application budget.

There is no guarantee that shortlisted candidates who apply for this additional support will be offered the requested funding, and each application for this funding will be assessed based on (a) the funds available and (b) the individual case for support. In some cases the USF may only be prepared to offer a portion of the requested funds, and reserves the right to make such a reduced offer. Any decision made on such funding is final, and the USF will not enter into any discussion surrounding decisions on such supplementary funding.

The USF strongly recommends that all interested applicants contact the USF well in advance of making an application, to clarify and ensure eligibility.

3 Award terms

- Fellows must clearly acknowledge USF funding in all publications emerging from their grant, as instructed via USF communications guidelines which are issued to all successful candidates along with their offer letter.
- All International Fellows and Mentors must submit a final report on the grant within one month of their Fellowship end date. A pro forma award report is provided to all successful candidates along with their offer letter.
- All International Fellows must write a short blog post on their Fellowship work (e.g. synopsis of research outputs and activities), of at least 750 words, for the USF website. This should be submitted with the final report.
- Funding is paid directly to the Fellow, with 50% payable upon commencement of the Fellowship and a further 50% half-way through the award. Initial up-front costs may be covered by the USF before the Fellowship begins, provided evidence is submitted (e.g. receipts and quotes), and this will be deducted from the balance of the first funding payment.
- Fellows must be able to receive the funds to a bank account in their name via international bank transfer (e.g. SWIFT).
- The Fellowship is entirely self-managed, and the USF cannot assist with issues surrounding negotiations between candidates and prospective Mentors or host organisations. Candidates should be ready, willing and capable to manage their funding, apply for the necessary visas, and other necessary arrangements for the Fellowship.
- The award will be offered strictly accordingly to the original application, in terms of the proposed research, host organisation, Mentor, duration and budget. Amendments to these terms may only be made with the explicit written permission of the USF. This includes requests to delay or defer the Fellowship dates.
- Fellows must agree that they will act independently and according to all relevant local legal and ethical regulations, standards, and guidelines during the course of the Fellowship.
- The USF reserves the right to withdraw offers of funding at any point, and may do so if the terms of the award are not upheld by the Fellow, host organisation, or Mentor.
- Previous International Fellows are not eligible to apply for a second Fellowship.
- Only one application per candidate is permitted in each call.

4 Application process

Candidates must complete the online application form prior to 23:59 UK time (GMT / UTC+0) on the date of the advertised deadline.

The application must include:

- **Applicant information** including:
 - The candidate’s contact details, recent education, and recent academic positions.
 - Career stage statement (250 words maximum) that (a) summarises any international/visiting Fellowships the candidate may have benefited from in the past (if any), and (b) explains how an award from the USF could help the candidate further advance their career.
 - The names and contact details of two academic referees. Both referees should be prepared to submit letters of recommendation to the USF upon request. Referees should be suitably senior supervisors, Mentors or colleagues of the applicant (e.g. PhD supervisor, line manager, etc.) who can comment on the applicant’s suitability and qualification for the Fellowship. Referees must **not** be Trustees of the USF unless they were the candidate’s sole PhD supervisor, **and** permission for this has been sought from the USF **prior** to submitting the application.
- **Proposed Fellowship information** including dates, Mentorship and host organisation arrangements.
- A **budget** in GBP with main cost items, including documentary evidence for all cost items above GBP 500 uploaded in a pdf document(e.g. flight prices, quotes for accommodation, local cost of living rates, etc.). See Section 2.3 above for details.
- A **research proposal** (in English language) that includes (see section 5 for guidelines):
 - A research statement (1200 words maximum), and bibliographical references (750 words maximum).
 - Summary of planned research outputs (300 words maximum).
 - Background and suitability of proposed host organisation (300 words maximum).
 - Background and suitability of proposed Mentor (300 words maximum).
- Proof of applicant’s **nationality**, and therefore eligibility for the award (pdf document upload). This can be provided as a scan/photograph of the applicant’s passport or other relevant ID document.
- **Applicant CV** listing academic achievements and publications (3 pages maximum, pdf document upload). Applicants must **not** list “Submitted” or “Forthcoming” publications on their CV unless listed separately on the CV (e.g. under “Forthcoming publications”) **and**

they append evidence of the publication's acceptance to their CV (maximum one page per publication).

- Short **Mentor CV**, which should include any previous Mentoring experience (3 pages maximum, pdf document upload).
- **Mentor support letter** stating their willingness to act as a Mentor to the Fellow, and detailing the suitability of the host organisation for the proposed Fellowship in reference to the **Guidance for Host Organisations and Mentors** (2 pages maximum, pdf document upload).

All supporting documents should be uploaded in .pdf format and not exceed 2mb in filesize.

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

Decisions will normally be made within twelve weeks of the closing deadline for this award, and all applicants will be contacted regarding their application outcome. The USF regrets that it cannot offer any feedback on applications, and all decisions are final.

Further general terms regarding applications to USF funding may be found in the [USF Code of Practice](#).

Candidates wishing to discuss their application informally, or with questions regarding the online application process, should contact the USF via email: grants@urbanstudiesfoundation.org

5 Research proposal guidance

The candidate's **research statement** (1200 words maximum) should provide a summary outline of the candidate's research, including clear explanation of the originality and value it will contribute to the field of urban studies, and its current stage of development.

This section should explicitly describe what data has already been collected and analysed (i.e. existing research), and how this will be transformed into the research outputs detailed in the outputs section below.

It must be very clear that the research is at a state where it can be successfully written-up (i.e. data collection and analysis has been largely completed). Brief discussion of research methods, data collection, and wider methodological considerations are welcome, but the section must ensure it has adequately explained how the existing work will be transformed into high-quality outputs.

The **bibliography** (750 words maximum) provided should detail any references used in standard bibliographical format.

The **outputs statement** summarising the intended form of research outputs (300 words maximum) should focus on detailing the format of the planned outputs (e.g. articles and specific target journals, chapters, monographs, book, etc.) and their expected impact. It should be clear that the programme of work is achievable and reasonable within the duration of the Fellowship (timelines and other project details may be uploaded using the supplemental document, but are entirely optional, and excessive additional words on supplemental documents will be discarded by the reviewers).

The final sections should focus on how the chosen **host organisation** (300 words maximum) and proposed **Mentor** (300 words maximum) will benefit the Fellow's programme of work.

A strong scholarly connection and contribution to urban studies should be clear throughout the proposal, output, host organisation, and Mentor statements. This should include explaining the proposals contribution to building collaborative research networks at a global scale

6 Assessment criteria

The USF International Fellowship applications are assessed according to the [USF Code of Practice](#), and the awarding panel takes great care to review all applications in detail.

Applications to this scheme are primarily assessed on three key criteria:

1. The quality of the research **proposal**, including:
 - Originality and suitability of the proposed research within the stated purpose of the International Fellowship scheme.
 - Clearly defined research outputs with scope for adding value to the field of urban studies.
 - Feasibility of the outputs (e.g. in relation to the existing research and within the time period of the Fellowship, which should be carefully chosen to suit the planned outputs).
2. The **profile** of the candidate, including:
 - Previous academic achievements. Applicants will need to provide evidence in their CV of achievements to date, e.g. publications, papers at international conferences, etc.
 - The benefits of the proposed Fellowship to the candidate's current career stage. The applicant should clearly explain how the Fellowship will strengthen their research profile and advance their career path in urban studies (see career stage statement, Section 4).
3. The quality of the Fellowship **placement**, including:
 - The match between Fellow, research and the environment of the host organisation. The host organisation be a suitable environment for supporting the Fellow and their proposed work.
 - The match between the Fellow, research proposal and Mentor. The Mentor should ideally be a scholar with a strong track record of research excellence in urban studies and relevant Mentoring experience, and should be based permanently at the host organisation for the period of the Fellowship. There should be a clear compatibility of research interests between the Fellow and Mentor, and the Mentor's supporting letter should indicate their engagement with the proposed research.
 - The detail of the budget, including the evidence provided for costed items, and its value for money in terms of the overall planned Fellowship. It should be clear the budget is both reasonable and well-researched.