



Urban Urgencies

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

This document provides a list of frequently asked questions for those applying to the [Urban Urgencies](#) grant scheme. This document may be updated periodically during the call.

This information must be consulted in conjunction with the call for applications, Application Guidance, Eligibility and Terms, and other documentation available at the [Urban Studies Foundation website](#).

After consulting the [scheme documents](#), enquiries regarding this grant and application process may be addressed to the Urban Studies Foundation (USF) via email: grants@urbanstudiesfoundation.org

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Contact: grants@urbanstudiesfoundation.org

1 Proposal.....	3
1.1 Does my proposal research qualify as ‘urban studies’?.....	3
1.2 Are there geographic priorities or preferred regions?.....	4
1.3 What is meant by “secure contractual positions” for applicants?.....	4
1.4 Can someone who has previously received USF funding apply?.....	4
1.5 Are early career researchers eligible?.....	4
1.6 I work in a business school or design faculty rather than an urban studies department. Am I eligible?.....	5
1.7 How many applicants can be named on an Urban Urgencies proposal, and must a non-academic partner be included as an applicant?.....	5
2 Funding.....	5
2.1 What costs are eligible for this grant?.....	5
3 Assessment and outcomes.....	6
3.1 How should my referees contact the Urban Studies Foundation?.....	6
3.2 When will a decision be made on the outcomes?.....	6
3.3 What is the expected success rate of this grant scheme?.....	6

1 Proposal

These are some frequently asked questions regarding the proposal parameters and content.

1.1 Does my proposal research qualify as ‘urban studies’?

Urban studies research should engage directly with the conditions and processes that shape cities and urban life. Proposals must do much more than simply locating their work in an urban setting. They should show how the research helps explain the dynamics of urbanisation and the ways in which cities are produced, experienced, governed, or transformed. Strong urban research uses particular places to advance wider debates about cities and urban processes and demonstrates how its findings speak beyond a single case or context.

Proposals should therefore offer clear conceptual, analytical, or empirical insight into cities, urbanisation, urban processes, or the urban condition that advances debates in the field and deepens understanding of the dynamics that shape cities and urban change. Work that treats the city only as a setting, without meaningful engagement with urban processes, is not considered urban studies research for the purposes of this funding.

Urban studies research is therefore characterised by:

- Engagement with contemporary and established urban theory or concepts, explicitly relating empirical work to the nature of cities, urban change, or urbanisation.
- Attention to urban processes, including spatial, socio-political, ecological, infrastructural, economic, cultural, or governance dynamics shaping urban life.
- Analytical framing that treats the city/urban as more than context, identifying what is distinctively urban about the phenomena under study.
- Contribution to interdisciplinary conversations across geography, planning, sociology, anthropology, political science, architecture, environmental studies, and related fields that address urban questions.

For the Urban Urgencies grant scheme, proposals should extend this foundation by confronting urgent issues that demand new perspectives, responses, or forms of knowledge. The scheme supports research that brings conceptual and empirical clarity to emerging or intensifying urban challenges, and that contributes ideas capable of guiding action, debate, or policy across different urban settings.

Urban Urgencies proposals should therefore demonstrate how focused empirical work can illuminate broader questions about urgent forms of urban change and offer knowledge that matters for cities facing similar challenges elsewhere.

1.2 Are there geographic priorities or preferred regions?

No. The Urban Studies Foundation welcomes applications from anywhere in the world.

Projects may be:

- Locally grounded case studies
- Comparative or transnational
- Based in the Global North, Global South, or across regions

Applications are assessed on quality, relevance, urgency, and contribution to urban studies, not on geographic location alone.

1.3 What is meant by “secure contractual positions” for applicants?

All applicants (lead and co-applicants) must be in secure contractual positions for the duration of the project. This means they must have a formal, documented affiliation that enables them to undertake and manage the research responsibly.

Eligible arrangements may include:

- Salaried academic or research positions
- Time-limited but formal research, postdoctoral, visiting, or hosted positions
- Formal leadership roles in registered non-profit or NGO organisations

Positions do not need to be full-time or permanent, but they must be supported by written agreements and institutional backing. Purely informal, ad hoc, or undocumented arrangements are not eligible.

1.4 Can someone who has previously received USF funding apply?

It depends on the funding scheme.

Previous recipients of Pandemics and Cities funding (as lead applicants or co-investigators) are not eligible to apply to Urban Urgencies.

Previous recipients of other USF schemes (e.g. Seminar Series Awards, Event Support Funding, International Fellowships) are eligible, provided they meet all other criteria.

1.5 Are early career researchers eligible?

Yes. The Urban Studies Foundation actively welcomes applications from early career researchers, particularly where projects demonstrate strong partnerships and mentoring arrangements.

1.6 I work in a business school or design faculty rather than an urban studies department. Am I eligible?

Yes. Applicants are not required to be based in a department explicitly labelled “urban studies”.

Eligibility is based on:

- The applicants research profiles
- The project’s clear engagement with urban studies debates
- The proposal’s contribution to urban scholarship

Interdisciplinary applicants are welcome, provided the project is convincingly grounded in urban studies.

1.7 How many applicants can be named on an Urban Urgencies proposal, and must a non-academic partner be included as an applicant?

A maximum of three applicants may be named on an Urban Urgencies proposal. Within these three applicants, at least one must be based at a non-academic partner organisation. This requirement is mandatory and not negotiable.

Projects must include at least one urban studies scholar and at least one applicant from a non-academic organisation.

There is no formal limit on the number of collaborating organisations or individuals that may be involved in the project. However, only up to three individuals can be listed as applicants. Any additional academics, practitioners, or collaborators—whether from academic or non-academic organisations—should be listed as team members, not applicants.

2 Funding

These are some frequently asked questions regarding the funding parameters and terms.

2.1 What costs are eligible for this grant?

A full schedule of eligible costs, and guidance around budget parameters, is available in the scheme terms and documents. Please see the ‘Eligibility and Terms’ and ‘Application Guidance’ documents on the [USF website](https://urbanstudiesfoundation.org) to ensure you have understood the requirements.

3 Assessment and outcomes

These are some frequently asked questions regarding the assessment process and timescale.

3.1 How should my referees contact the Urban Studies Foundation?

Referees should not contact the Urban Studies Foundation. If a proposal is shortlisted, and the panel requests this, then we may reach out to the referee to request a letter of recommendation.

Referees should be aware this may happen during the assessment period (twelve weeks following the deadline) and be prepared to make a timely response if a letter is requested.

3.2 When will a decision be made on the outcomes?

Assessment will take up to twelve weeks from the date of the deadline for applications.

The Urban Studies Foundation will contact all applicants with an outcome regardless of whether they have been successful.

3.3 What is the expected success rate of this grant scheme?

Quantifying an expected success rate for the grant scheme is not possible, given the number of applications are unknown, but the USF hopes to make up to six grants at up to £35,000 per grant.