

International Fellowships 2026

Frequently Asked Questions

Please consult the list of frequently asked questions below before enquiring about this award.

Please note that in most cases, the answer to queries can be found in the Further Particulars document for this award, which can be found on the [USF website](#).

Candidates with queries or clarifications not covered in either document are welcome to contact the USF via email: grants@urbanstudiesfoundation.org

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1 Eligibility

Q) I have submitted my PhD but am awaiting my viva. Can I apply?

A) No. Candidates must have fully completed/passed their PhD at the time of application (including viva, post-corrections, etc.). However, please note that this funding scheme typically runs annually, and therefore candidates may be eligible to apply in the following round, and subsequent years.

Q) I completed my PhD more than ten years ago. Can I apply?

A) No. Not unless you can provide a statement and evidence of a justified career break of a length that can bring the total time since your PhD was awarded below ten years. Justified career breaks might include time taken for maternity/paternity leave and/or periods of unemployment. However, any applicant intending to claim a career break to meet eligibility must contact the USF to discuss their case in advance of applying.

Q) I am a national of a country on the qualification list, but I am not currently based in the Global South. Can I apply?

A) No. Candidates must reside and have an affiliation with a university or research institution based in a country on the qualification list. The award is exclusively intended to provide mobility and opportunities for Global South scholars who live and work in Global South countries.

Q) Can International Fellowships be based at institutions in the Global South?

A) Yes, absolutely! There are no geographical limitations on where the host institution must be, and the focus should be on the strength and suitability of the match between the candidate's work and the host institution environment and/or mentor expertise. In many cases, the USF would positively encourage such "South > South" mobility.

Q) Can I apply to be hosted by an institution in the same city or geographical region as my current institution? e.g. my current hometown, another city in my country, etc.

A) Yes, technically this is allowed. However, it is not recommended to apply to another host institution in the same city for various reasons that should be considered in relation to the purpose of the Fellowship. In this first instance, the award is intended to provide fellows with an opportunity to undertake a sabbatical period away from their home institution, where space and time is guaranteed for them to work on their publication(s). Second, applicants should be aiming towards developing new collaborations and networks, which in most cases are unlikely to be in the same city. Therefore, applying to another institution in the same city should only be done where an

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exceptionally strong case exists for remaining in the same location (the USF may be sympathetic to unique cases where there are external factors involved in the choice of Mentor/host, e.g. caring responsibilities or health issues, and prospective candidates should contact the USF in advance to discuss their situation if they wish).

Q) Can a period of my fellowship be remote and/or 'virtual'?

A) No, normally not. With reference to the purpose of the fellowship as a visiting sabbatical away from the home institution, the fellowship must be based elsewhere for 3-9 months. Therefore, the USF will not normally support remote or virtual fellowships. However, where exceptional circumstances arise during the award, the USF might consider some amendments to existing awards on a case-by-case basis (e.g. where a period of virtual/remote work might be practical).

Q) Can I name a USF Trustee as a mentor?

A) No. Candidates cannot, and should not, approach a USF Trustee to act as a mentor (this is not permitted).

Q) Can I name a USF Trustee as a referee?

A) No. The only possible exception to this is where the Trustee in question was a sole PhD supervisor of the candidate, and written permission must be sought in advance from the USF (see contact details above).

Q) Can the USF recommend eligible mentors or institutions for the fellowship? Is there a list of mentors I can choose from?

A) No. The candidate must identify suitable mentor and host institution as part of their proposal. The mentor should be working in a very similar field to the candidate and be well qualified for the role. The mentor's letter should also indicate this, as per the Further Particulars and Guidance for Host Organisations and Mentors (see documents available on the USF website). Prospective candidates may however browse previous recipients to see the names of previous mentors, which can be found on the USF website (see Funding>Grants Awarded, and both 'International Fellowships' and 'Alumni' sections).

Q) Can I include forthcoming publications on my CV?

A) No. Forthcoming publications may only be included if clear evidence of their acceptance and forthcoming publication is appended to the CV (one page per publication), e.g. correspondence from the journal editor or the book publisher. Such forthcoming publications should be listed in a

separate section of the CV (“Forthcoming publications”), rather than together with the existing publications.

2 Budget

Q) Is there a limit on the budget requested, or a template that can be used?

A) No, there is no formal limit and no template provided. Candidates must research and provide a reasonable and justified budget with their application (including evidence for any item above GBP 500; and exchange rate evidence where applicable). Each budget for each global location is likely to vary a lot, and therefore the USF does not set such limits or templates. Please carefully read the Further Particulars document for guidance, and please note that the panel will carefully examine each budget to see if it is reasonable and well-justified in relation to the timeframe and location.

Q) How should I begin to prepare my budget?

A) Preparing a good budget must begin with independent research into the likely costs of a self-managed International Fellowship to the host institution, and it must be clear that candidates have carried out their own assessment of the costs involved in their proposed budget. Each location, trip, and host institution will entail very different budget considerations and there is no ‘one size fits all’ for this exercise. Candidates with specific questions on eligible costs are referred to the Further Particulars for guidance, but may also contact the USF if they remain uncertain around specific costs. A suggested start is to begin with the largest and most essential cost items (e.g. travel, accommodation, subsistence) and then to consider other incidental cost items that may be very different depending on the Fellowship specifics (e.g. visa or health insurance costs).

Q) What constitutes ‘evidence’ for the budget?

A) Candidates should carefully research the costs that will be involved in their Fellowship and document this research. This might include flight ticket prices, university accommodation prices, visa processing costs, local living cost rates from online sources, etc., as relevant. All items of evidence should be collated tidily into a separate pdf document that should be submitted with the application, as instructed.

Q) Can I include computer equipment in the budget?

A) Normally equipment is not permitted as an item in the fellowship budget. However, if there are exceptional needs and these can be justified in the budget with a clear statement and evidence then the panel may consider funding small equipment costs. Candidates should contact the USF to discuss any such budget items prior to applying.

Q) *Can I include a fee/payment for the mentor in the budget?*

A) No.

Q) *Can I include 'bench fees' / enrolment fees in the budget?*

A) Bench fees or host organisation overheads can be included within the guidelines set in the Further Particulars. Candidate and mentors should normally arrange to avoid such fees wherever possible, and/or arrange a substantial discount. The USF will not consider funding Fellowships where the bench fees are outwith the eligible guidelines, and candidates should not risk wasting time submitting applications with high fees in them.

Q) *Can family members travel with me on the fellowship?*

A) Yes, but this is the responsibility of the fellow to arrange and fund. The USF will only consider modest support costs relating to family members where a strong and justified case for dependent care exists, and is not able to cover the costs of relocating multiple family members. If such a case exists then candidates should consult the award Further Particulars to ensure they understand the eligibility and terms of such funding, and **must** contact the USF to discuss their case **prior** to applying. Support for such purposes is very limited and not guaranteed as part of an award offer. Please note that such costs should **not** be included in the main budget (instead, candidates should simply check the box indicating that they wish to apply for such funds in the event of being shortlisted).

3 Proposal specifics

Q) *I am working on research about "x" topic. Is it eligible for the fellowship?*

A) Any research in the broad field of urban studies is eligible. Therefore, candidates should ensure that they are adequately familiar with the wider urban studies discipline (including through relevant publications and journals such as the Urban Studies Journal), and be certain that their proposal can clearly be identified (to a significant degree) as urban studies research.

Q) *Can you read/check my proposal, CV, or sample of work prior to applying?*

A) No. Please do not send any materials to the USF to read prior to applying. Candidates should ensure that they have read all the call materials and Further Particulars to understand what is required of them in order to apply to this scheme.

Q) Can my outputs be written in a language other than English? What about my application?

A) Applications and proposals must be in English, but the output(s) from the fellowship may be in any language as suitable/appropriate.

Q) Is it possible to get a written sample of what the proposal should look like?

A) No. Regardless, all proposals are quite different according to the specific application.

Q) What sort of proposals have been funded in the past?

A) Profiles for previous International Fellows are available on the USF website. Current fellows can be found [here](#) (Grants > Grants Awarded > International Fellows), and past fellows can be found [here](#) (Grants > Grants Awarded > Alumni > International Fellows).