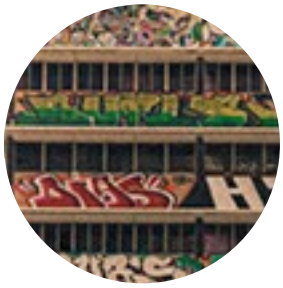
Urban Studies
FOUNDATION







Urban Studies Foundation

Privacy Notice

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About this notice

The Urban Studies Foundation (USF) is a Scottish charity that funds research and education in urban studies. We are the controller of the personal information described here. This notice explains how we use your information, who may receive it, how long we keep it, and the choices you can make.

Find the section for you

Grants and external review

Public awards and the historical record

Staff, Trustees, consultants, and volunteers

Communications and the website

Sharing information and overseas transfers

Your rights and complaints

Contact the Foundation

For a question, request, or complaint, email grants@urbanstudiesfoundation.org

You can also write to Urban Studies Foundation, c/o TC Young, 7 West George Street, Glasgow G2 1BA, United Kingdom. Scottish charity number SC039937.

We publish the current notice on our website and draw significant changes to the attention of the people affected. Version dated November 2026.

Urban Studies
FOUNDATION

Grants and external review

Applying for a grant

We use your contact details, affiliation, experience, proposal, budget, references, and any required eligibility evidence to assess your application. Our legitimate interest is to run fair funding competitions. We also take steps at your request towards an award agreement where applicable. Without the information required for your scheme, we may be unable to assess the application.

Information may come from you, someone who names you as a co-investigator, mentor, or referee, your host institution, or our own assessment records. Assigned staff, Trustees, panel members, and external reviewers see the material they need. Reviewers receive confidential proposals and relevant professional details. Eligibility ID and equality survey answers are kept out of review materials.

Reviewers and referees

We use names, contact details, affiliations, expertise, conflicts of interest, and assessments to select suitable reviewers and manage peer review. We may obtain these details from you, a nomination, a public professional profile, or previous correspondence. We rely on our legitimate interest in informed, impartial decisions and on contract to pay reviewers. We keep your contact details while you remain in our reviewer network. We normally keep a record of your participation for 20 years after your last review or substantive contact with us, and retain your assessments with the relevant grant records.

Equality monitoring

Grant applicants, current grantholders, and candidates for staff or Trustee roles may complete a separate voluntary equality survey. You may skip any question. We use responses to understand whom our schemes reach and improve equality of opportunity. Our basis is legitimate interests and, for sensitive information such as ethnicity or disability, substantial public interest in monitoring equality of opportunity or treatment.

Survey responses have no part in individual decisions. The survey does not ask for your name or record your IP address with your answers. We remove linkable metadata, check comments for identifying details, and combine or suppress small groups. We complete anonymisation within 30 days of quality checks and no later than 90 days after the survey closes. You may write to us to stop us using an identifiable response. Once responses are anonymous, we cannot identify yours. We keep only genuinely anonymous data indefinitely.

Support requests involving health or family circumstances

If you ask for additional support or an adjustment because of disability, health, or caring responsibilities, we ask about the practical need and any extra cost. We ask only for what we need to assess the request, which may include a supporting letter or record from a medical professional. We do not ask for health details about family members. We rely on our legitimate interest in administering this support and, where health information is involved, ask for your explicit consent to use it. Only those handling the request see these details, and requests are considered separately from academic merit.

You may withdraw consent by contacting us. This may prevent us from deciding the request, but it will not affect your main application or award. We delete sensitive explanations, evidence, and email copies within six months of the final decision if the request is unsuccessful, or of settling the support if it is approved, subject to a live complaint or legal hold. We keep ordinary payment evidence separately.

Urban Studies
FOUNDATION

Public awards and the historical record

Administering and publishing awards

We use grant agreements, host contacts, payment instructions, reports, and outputs to deliver awards under contract, meet accounting and reporting obligations, and evaluate our funding in our legitimate interests. Where the host needs confirmation from us, we share only the award or payment details necessary to administer the grant. We keep financial supporting records for ten years after the relevant financial year.

To show how we use charitable funds, we normally publish the grantholder's name and institution, project title and summary, scheme, award amount, and grant reference. We keep this public record while it has continuing public or scholarly value. We rely on our legitimate interest in public accountability. Contact us about a correction, safety concern, or objection to publication.

You choose whether we also publish a photograph, biography, or professional or social links. We keep these materials while your profile is published and you wish them to appear. If you withdraw permission, we normally remove optional material from our live channels within 30 days.

Grant DOIs and Crossref

We register grants with Crossref in the United States to give each award a persistent digital object identifier (DOI). We ask each investigator separately for explicit consent before sending their name, affiliation, or ORCID. You may decline, and the grant and its DOI can still go ahead.

Crossref makes the deposited metadata openly available for anyone to download and reuse worldwide. For investigator details we rely on your explicit consent to this US transfer. Without other transfer safeguards, you may have less protection or fewer effective remedies than in the UK. You can withdraw by contacting USF. We will update or remove your details from the Crossref record and our own copies, normally within 30 days. The DOI can remain and we cannot recall copies that others have already obtained.

Applications and the restricted archive

We normally keep substantive applications (including unsuccessful ones), assessments, and decision records for 20 years from the funding decision. Successful award files are kept for 20 years from closure. Grant eligibility ID copies are deleted within 30 days once verification is complete and any immediate query is resolved.

After those periods we select proposals, assessments, reports, and other material of enduring value for our restricted archive. Our legitimate interest is to preserve the history of urban studies funding, including research that was proposed but never funded. Selected records may be kept indefinitely while that value continues. We remove unnecessary identifiers, exclude identity documents, bank details, and health or caring information supplied in support requests, and limit access to authorised historical or research use. We do not use archived files to decide future applications. Where sensitive information is necessary for historical research, we apply the statutory research condition and its safeguards.

Staff, Trustees, consultants, and volunteers

Recruitment and employment

We use applications, CVs, interview notes, references, and relevant checks to appoint staff, Trustees, and volunteers fairly. Details come from you, referees, professional sources, or public registers. We rely on our legitimate interest in fair appointments, steps towards an employment contract, and legal checks where required. We normally keep unsuccessful staff applications for five years after recruitment closes and unsuccessful Trustee applications for ten years after the appointment decision. We keep unsuccessful volunteer applications for one year after selection closes.

For staff, we use contact, contract, hours, leave, bank, and pay details to administer employment. Salary, National Insurance, tax, and contribution details are needed for payroll and pension duties. Our legitimate interests include training, appraisal, and managing access to work systems. We restrict sickness, disability, and adjustment information to those who need it to meet employment obligations or exercise employment rights. Voluntary equality monitoring is described under Grants and external review.

We share the details needed to pay you with our payroll provider, report pay and tax information to the UK tax authority, and give our workplace pension provider the details it needs to manage your enrolment and contributions. Without the required details we may be unable to complete an appointment, operate payroll, or administer the pension.

Our usual periods are ten years after employment or volunteering ends for personnel files, ten years after the relevant tax year for payroll, and ten years after an employer pension record ceases to be current. We retain right-to-work evidence during employment and for two years afterwards. A brief record of your name, role, and dates of employment or volunteering may be kept in our historical archive.

Trustees

We use contact details, eligibility details including a declaration that you are not disqualified from acting as a Trustee, terms of office, declarations of interests, minutes, and expenses for governance and statutory filings. We rely on legal obligations and our legitimate interests in accountable decisions and explaining who governs USF. We publish your name and Board role. A photograph, biography, or professional links on the USF website are optional and you can withdraw permission at any time.

We normally keep Trustee governance records for 20 years after you leave office and delete verification-only identity copies within 30 days of the check. Selected institutional records, such as names, roles, dates of service, and significant decisions, may then remain in the historical archive.

Consultants, suppliers, and advisers

We use professional contact details, terms, deliverables, invoices, and bank details to agree work and pay for it. We rely on contract when engaging you personally, legitimate interests when dealing with you on behalf of an organisation, and legal obligations for accounts and tax. We normally retain engagement records for ten years after the engagement ends or the final substantive transaction, whichever is later. Financial source documents are normally kept for ten years after the relevant financial year.

Communications and the website

Enquiries, professional contacts, and email updates

When you contact us, we use your name, contact details, and message to respond. We keep relevant professional details from correspondence, institutions, and public sources to maintain relationships with researchers and partners. We rely on our legitimate interest in communicating about our charitable work, or contract where the enquiry concerns an agreement. We normally keep routine correspondence for ten years after the matter closes. We keep contact details for grantholders, reviewers, and mentors while they remain in the USF network. We remove them on request, when contact details stop working, or when someone has clearly left the field. We delete other contacts after ten years without meaningful contact.

We send mailing-list updates with your consent. You can unsubscribe using the link in any mailing or by contacting us. When you unsubscribe, we stop sending you mailing-list updates. We remove your active subscription record within 30 days. We keep the minimum information needed to honour your preference for as long as we operate the mailing channel.

Social media

If you follow, message, or interact with USF on social media, we may see your public profile, message, interactions, and audience statistics. We use these to respond and communicate about our work in our legitimate interests. Public posts are visible to others. The platforms also process information under their own privacy notices. USF and a platform may share responsibility for certain page insights.

Website, cookies, and analytics

We use necessary cookies or session information to operate and secure our website. Our website host normally keeps access and error logs, which may include your IP address, for seven days. We rely on our legitimate interests in keeping the website secure and working properly and in understanding how visitors use it.

We run our own analytics software to understand how visitors find and use our funding information. It records limited browser and device information, approximate location, pages viewed, referrals, and downloads. We anonymise IP addresses, use no tracking cookies or user IDs for analytics, and delete raw visitor data after two days. We may keep anonymous reports indefinitely. You can switch off analytics using the opt-out on our website's Privacy Notice page. We ask for consent before using any technology that requires it.

Some pages include videos or other content from third-party services. We use privacy-enhanced or click-to-load settings, so the provider receives at most basic technical information, such as your IP address, until you choose to play or view the content, and may set its own cookies when you do.

Sharing information and overseas transfers

Who receives information

USF limits access to the people who need the information for their work. We use service providers for email, file storage, account access, and collaboration, and to administer grants, surveys, contact records, and mailings. Providers acting for us process information under contract. External reviewers receive assigned material under confidentiality and security terms. A host institution generally acts as a separate controller when administering its grant.

We share payment details with our bank, financial records with our accountants, auditors, and tax advisers, and proof of identity and authority with our investment provider when needed. Our solicitors receive information needed for Trustee registrations and legal matters. We also provide information to tax authorities and company and charity regulators where the law requires it. Some statutory filings are public.

Where information goes

An assigned reviewer outside the UK may receive the parts of an application needed for assessment. Overseas hosts generally already have the details they need or obtain them directly from the grantholder. Where no UK adequacy decision applies, we may occasionally send a host the grantholder's own award or payment details if this is necessary to perform our contract with that grantholder. Our grant administration provider stores our account data in the European Economic Area. Our email and file-storage provider stores core data in the UK. Our website is hosted in the US. Providers and their support teams may also process information in other countries, including the US.

For a restricted transfer, we rely on UK adequacy regulations where they cover the recipient and destination. Otherwise we assess the transfer and use appropriate contractual safeguards, such as the UK International Data Transfer Agreement or the UK Addendum to EU Standard Contractual Clauses, unless a specific legal exception applies. The separate consent arrangement for Crossref is explained under Grant DOIs and Crossref. Contact us for details or a copy of the safeguards relevant to your information.

Security and retention

We protect information with access controls, multi-factor authentication, and secure storage and transfer. We keep account and security records only as long as needed for system support and security.

We may keep material longer while an audit, complaint, investigation, or legal claim is live, then apply the usual retention period. Core accounts and institutional records may be kept while they have lasting governance or historical value.

Urban Studies
FOUNDATION

Your rights and complaints

Access, correction, and other requests

You can ask for a copy of your personal information or ask us to correct it. Depending on the circumstances, you can also ask us to erase it, restrict its use, or provide a portable copy. Where we rely on consent, you may withdraw it at any time. Withdrawal does not affect earlier lawful use. USF makes decisions about individuals with human involvement and does not use solely automated decisions with legal or similarly significant effects.

Your right to object

You can object to our use of your information on grounds relating to your circumstances when we rely on legitimate interests, including for public award records. You can object to direct marketing at any time and we will stop using your information for that purpose.

How to contact us

Make a request or raise a concern verbally or in writing. Email grants@urbanstudiesfoundation.org or write to Urban Studies Foundation, c/o TC Young, 7 West George Street, Glasgow G2 1BA, UK.

We may ask for information to verify your identity or authority. We normally respond to rights requests within one calendar month. If we need up to two further months for a complex request or multiple requests, we will explain why within the first month. If we cannot grant your request in full, we will explain our decision.

Complaints

You can complain directly to USF about how we have used your information. We acknowledge complaints within 30 days, investigate without undue delay, keep you informed, and explain the outcome and any action we take.

You also have the right to complain to the UK Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Make a complaint to the ICO.

We use case information to meet our legal duties and retain the necessary record in our legitimate interests for follow-up or claims. We normally keep rights and complaint records for ten years after closure and incident records for ten years after closure and remedial action. We normally delete identity evidence within 30 days once verification and the request are complete.