



John Fell Fund Guidance Notes (Social Sciences Division)

For any questions, please contact the SSD Fell Fund Inbox by emailing: fellfund@socsci.ox.ac.uk

Introduction

Each year, the John Fell OUP Research Fund receives £5 million from Oxford University Press. The Fund is named after the seventeenth-century 'father' of the modern Press, Dean of Christ Church, Vice-Chancellor and Bishop of Oxford.

Part of the £5m is granted directly to the four academic divisions of the University for strategic projects. However, most of the money is allocated through termly open calls which Oxford University academic staff can participate in. These calls aim to foster creativity and a proactive approach to research opportunities in all subject areas, and particularly interdisciplinary fields. The Fund makes seed-corn and start-up grants, and provides (direct) staffing costs and research expenses to stimulate applications to external agencies.

Reports on completed projects indicate that awards made from the John Fell Fund are successfully fulfilling its purpose, leveraging additional funding at a ratio of up to 1:7.

The Fund is managed by a team based in Research Services, and by teams based in each academic division. The information provided below applies for the Fell Fund in general but some aspects of it are only relevant for applicants based in the Social Sciences Division. For more information about the Fund, please see the University's [Fell Fund Website](#).

NOTE: all applications must be made via the online application system IRAMS, and **must receive departmental approval before the application deadline**. Applications are then reviewed by a divisional panel before they are forwarded to the John Fell OUP Research Fund Committee ('the Fell Committee') which makes all funding decisions. Please check internal deadlines with your departmental research facilitators, and make sure you allow enough time for any departmental approval processes.

When preparing your application, please follow the checklist provided in annex 1. This can be found [here](#).

Deadline

The Fell Fund has three open termly rounds of Main and Small Award applications. **The deadline is 12 noon on Wednesday of Week 2 every term.** All applications should be submitted through [IRAMS](#).

Budget

Small Awards: for projects up to £10,000.

Main Awards: for projects from £10,001. While there is no limit to how much money you can apply for, the Fell Committee rarely approves projects over £65,000.

Cross-Divisional applications

The Fell Committee aims to strengthen support for major interdisciplinary research initiatives at the University by prioritising projects that build strategic collaborations between academic divisions.

Cross-divisional projects must meet two criteria: academics from more than one division are involved **and** all the divisions involved must consider the project strategic. If a project is indeed cross-divisional, its



chances of being funded are slightly higher than for non-cross divisional proposals. Projects which involve collaboration between co-applicants in different divisions but are not considered to be strategically important by all divisions involved would normally not be considered 'cross-divisional'.

If you are planning to submit a proposal that could be considered cross-divisional as per the paragraph above, please approach the division well in advance of the application submission deadline so that we can advise you as to how to proceed.

Eligibility

All subject areas are encouraged to apply, and interdisciplinary and/or cross-divisional projects are especially welcome.

Whilst the eligibility criteria for main award applications and small award applications are not exactly the same (please see below), overall the applicant should be a current salaried employee of the collegiate university holding an academic post, or a research Fellowship awarded competitively (e.g. Royal Society, University Research Fellow, Junior Research Fellow, British Academy Fellowship, Leverhulme Trust Fellowship). If you are a college-only employee, you can still apply as PI but you need a department to host your application and, if successful, administer your award.

The same eligibility rules apply to both the principal applicant and any co-applicants.

Retired and emeritus Fellows, and DPhil and other students, are not eligible to apply to the John Fell Fund (including as co-applicant).

Main awards

For main award applications (more than £10,000), you must hold a post that includes responsibility for developing your own research agenda (for example, Associate Professor, Professor, Senior Research Fellow, Fellowship awarded competitively). If you do not hold such a post but your department would support a research funding application to an external body in your name as principal investigator, then you will normally be eligible to apply for Fell Fund main award funding. However, **a letter from your Head of Department must be attached to your application** explaining why holding the Fell award is consistent with your work/duties, and confirming it is not in conflict with any requirements from external funders that may be paying for your salary/part of your salary.

Small awards

For small award applications (up to £10,000), the same rules apply as for main awards except that the committee will also consider applications from an early career researcher employed by the collegiate University who aspires to a post that would enable them to develop their own research agenda but does not yet hold such a post, **provided that the applicant has the support of their line manager**. The line manager should supply a statement of support including confirmation that holding the John Fell award would be consistent with the applicant's work and duties, as well as with any commitments with external funders that may be paying for the applicant's salary/part of their salary.

Researcher Co-Investigators

The status of Researcher Co-Investigator (RCo-I) allows for named researchers working on JFF projects who are providing significant intellectual input to the development of the research proposal and management of the project to have their contribution recognised. Researcher Co-Investigators are typically early-career research staff at the University who might not be eligible to apply to JFF in their own right.



The RCo-I's details should be included in the 'Researcher Co-Investigator' field on the Investigators section of the online application form. Also, any salary costs requested for the Researcher Co-Investigator's time working on the project should be included as a Directly Incurred cost within the Financial Details section of the application. Please also indicate in the description field of the costing table that the staff costs requested are for a RCo-I.

As RCo-Is are meant to be early-career staff, applications involving a proposed RCo-I must include a supporting statement from the PI/department providing details of the contribution by the RCo-I to the design and management of the project, as well as any mentoring arrangements that will be set in place for the RCo-I. The statement should also clarify the expected next steps following the JFF project. This statement should be attached to the Part 2 Case for Support section of the application (additional to the usual page limit). A 1-page CV for the RCo-I should also be included.

NOTE: As the RCo-I status is intended to support early career research staff in the development of their career, the review panel might not favourably assess applications if the RCo-I status is used to bring to Oxford an established external scholar.

Please contact your divisional [John Fell officer](#) and/or your departmental support officer if you are not sure about eligibility. Your application will not be considered unless it is supported by your department or faculty via the online application process.

Assessment Criteria

The John Fell Fund seeks to fund proposal that clearly demonstrate:

- Excellence and intrinsic merit of research.
- Potential for long term sustainability and academic impact of the project.
- Relevance to department and divisional research strategy.
- Necessity for John Fell Fund versus other sources of funding.
- Value for money, noting in particular the potential for shared use of equipment and other facilities.
- Both the Small Awards and Main Awards panel will review whether the proposal:
 - Meet in full or part the Fell criteria outlined above.
 - Is written in a clear and concise manner (i.e. needs to be understood by a non-specialist panel).
 - Is within the word limit (two pages for Small Awards, four pages for Main Awards. The template **must not be amended**). Applications beyond the page limit and/or for which the template has been amended may be declined.
- Be appropriately costed in detail (see the [University's Fell Fund website for guidance on eligible costs](#)).
- Include a realistic plan for outputs.
- Demonstrate a clear plan for the sustainability of the project beyond the duration of the John Fell Fund award and how external funding will be sought.

The panels will also consider the feasibility of the project.

Decision-making process for Fell Fund applications

John Fell OUP Research Fund Committee

The Fell Committee is a sub-group of the University's Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC) and the Research and Innovation Committee (RIC). The Fell Committee is Chaired by the Pro-Vice-



Chancellor (Research) and has representatives from all academic divisions (MPLS, SSD, MSD and Humanities). Fell Committee membership is given on the Fell Fund web pages. The Fell Committee meets in Week 10 every term.

Social Sciences Division Fell Panel

The SSD Fell Panel consists of the Head of Division and the Associate Head of Division (Research). This panel makes the decisions regarding which applications from SSD should be recommended for funding to the Fell Committee. The panel makes these decisions based on the assessments produced by the Divisional Small Awards Assessment Panel and the Divisional Main Awards Assessment Panel.

Small Awards Assessment Panel

SSD Small Award applications are assessed, scored and ranked by the Divisional John Fell Fund Small Awards Panel according to the Fell Fund criteria described further above. The ranking and scoring are confirmed by the SSD Fell Panel, which in turn submits its recommendations for funding to the Fell Fund Committee. For some awards the release of funds may be conditional on, for example, the PI attaining research ethics clearance before the project starts. Small Award grants are approved by the Chair of the Fell Committee.

The amount of money available each term for Small Awards is c. £75,000.

The SSD Small Awards panel consists of two permanent members (the Senior Divisional Research Facilitator and the Divisional Research Facilitator) and two members that serve for only one academic year: a fixed-term researcher (normally a member of the Divisional Research Staff Forum) and a Departmental Research Facilitator.

Main Awards Assessment Panel

Main Award applications are assessed, scored and ranked by the Divisional Main Awards Assessment Panel according to the Fell Fund criteria described further above. The ranking and scoring are confirmed by the SSD Fell Panel, which in turn submits its recommendations for funding to the Fell Committee. For some awards, the release of funds may be conditional on, for example, the PI attaining research ethics clearance before the project starts. SSD Main Award recommendations for funding are considered alongside applications from all divisions at the termly Fell Committee meeting.

The amount of money available for SSD Main Awards each term is dependent on the amount of funds available within the Fell Fund. Usually, SSD is able to recommend that SSD Main Awards are funded up to the value of c. £250,000 - £300,000 per term in total (5-6 awards per term).

The assessors for the Divisional Main Awards Assessment panel are academics based in the departments from across the division according to the following rota:

<i>Michaelmas Term</i>	<i>Hilary Term</i>	<i>Trinity Term</i>
Economics	Sociology	DPIR
OSGA	ODID	Education
Law	SOGE	Anthropology
OII	BSG	SPI
Archaeology		SBS

Applicants should note that scores and rankings from assessors from the same department as the candidate will be discounted in the overall rankings. However, the members of the SSD Fell Panel will be



aware of these scores and will at all times aim to be fair and consistent when deciding which applications to recommend for funding to the John Fell Committee.

Adjustments to budgets and queries about applications

Given the funding envelope available each term and the desire to fund as many outstanding proposals as possible, the SSD Fell Panel may contact PIs whose applications are being considered for funding with budgets over £65K to request that PIs adjust their budgets downwards. The SSD Fell Panel may also contact PIs with queries and requests for clarification about applications.

Notification of application outcome

The central Fell Fund administration team notify applicants about the outcome of their application and handle the administration of awards (e.g. generating cost codes). See the [University Fell Fund website](#) for more information.

Feedback on applications

The SSD Fell Panel may be able to offer feedback to applicants. Please contact the SSD Fell Fund Officer to request feedback (fellfund@socsci.ox.ac.uk).

Resubmissions

Resubmissions are by invitation only, either from the Fell Fund Committee or the SSD Fell Panel. Either way, the division would let you know. If you are not invited to reapply within a week of learning that your application has been unsuccessful, it follows you have not been invited to reapply.

Contact:

If you cannot find the information you require on the Fell Fund website or in the Divisional advice, or have further queries, please contact the SSD Fell Fund Inbox (fellfund@socsci.ox.ac.uk)