Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF)

**Oxford Policy Engagement Network (OPEN)
Fellowships 2019-20**

Call specification and guidance (Call document A)

The deadline for applications is <u>5 p.m. on 30 September 2019</u>.

Applications should be submitted through IRAMS.

This call is a University-wide initiative funded via its allocation from the Higher Education Innovation Fund. Researchers from all disciplines and Divisions are eligible to apply. This call is only open to researchers at the University of Oxford.

Useful contacts:

> Applicants are encouraged to approach their local support team in the first instance. The lead contacts for this funding are as follows:
>
> - ***University of Oxford*** | Research & Impact Team, Social Sciences Division
>
>   - o *First line enquiries* | Lorna Hards, IAA Manager
>   T: 01865 670253 | E: impact@socsci.ox.ac.uk
>
>   - o *Support developing proposals*
>   - ▪ *Social Sciences, Humanities and MPLS* | William Pryor, Head of Policy Engagement | T: 01865 270401 | E: william.pryor@socsci.ox.ac.uk
>   - ▪ *Medical Sciences* | Naomi Gibson, Public Engagement Coordinator T: 01865 289558 | E: naomi.gibson@medsci.ox.ac.uk

A.1. Introduction

Scientific certainty does not translate smoothly into which policies can and should be adopted to address the clear implications of the data, and how those policies should be balanced against policies in respect of other public goods… Good policy is the considered course of action by which a supposed public benefit is accomplished, which otherwise would not be accomplished, by the best use of the resources available. It is grounded in reality and thought-through as to its consequences. But get policy wrong and instead of the desired benefits there may be further and unintended problems, or even nothing achieved at all.[1]

Over the last decade there has been a significant shift in how universities are funded, with more emphasis being placed on the value of research beyond academia. In 2014, the first Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise was carried out – an assessment of the quality of research and its societal 'impact', designed to inform core funding allocations. Under the REF, the proportion of funding allocated to 'impact', including on public policy, is increasing.[2]

In the UK and elsewhere, academic and policymaking communities continue to explore how best to ensure that academic evidence and expertise can inform and improve government policy.

The University's vision is of one Oxford, bringing together staff, students and alumni, colleges, faculties, departments and divisions in ways which benefit society on a local, regional, national and global scale and fostering a culture in which innovation and collaboration play an important role. Accordingly, in 2018 it awarded the first five Oxford Policy Engagement Network (OPEN) Fellowships, funded by its allocation from the Higher Education Innovation Fund. In 2018 applicants enjoyed a 42% success rate. Examples of successful applicants can be found online [here](#).

The present call is for further applications to this scheme, aimed at enabling recipients

- To understand better the relevance of their research to local, regional, national and international policymakers;
- To work with policymakers to identify and explore mutual interests; and
- To develop and leverage networks and other resources to generate benefits to research, policy and the wider world.

OPEN Fellows receive peer support before, throughout, and after the project as a cohort of Fellows.

Proposals may involve an academic spending time working closely with/embedded in a policymaking partner organisation over a period of 6 to 9 months, or they could involve someone from such an organisation working closely with/embedded in the University over a similar period.

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[1] Allen Green, D. (2014, November 25). What is a 'policy' – and what is good policymaking? *Financial Times*. Retrieved from https://www.ft.com/content/f1cf47a4-4af6-39bd-a5b9-8b9ce0315e05

2 Sasse, T., & Haddon, C. (2019, May 24). How academia can work with government. Retrieved from https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publications/how-academia-can-work-government

Partnerships could involve law-makers at devolved, national or supra-national level; civil service policy professionals and others who support law-makers; statutory bodies with responsibilities that are sectoral (e.g., regulators), regional (e.g. local councils) or subject-matter-related; international and intergovernmental bodies; think tanks; or advocacy groups.

A.2. Scope

The University's **Policy Engagement Steering Group**, chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) and with representation from all four Divisions, is looking for practical and innovative proposals from members of any department or faculty at the University that enable them and their policy partners to share experience, expertise and for mutual benefit. They will prioritise proposals that

- Contribute to clear **policy-related** (as opposed to only research-related) **goals**;
- Define realistic **objectives that relate to a clearly identified policy** (or policies), and to impact that is clearly connected with that (or those); and
- Focus on **activities that enable collaboration, co-design and co-delivery of those outputs with those who make or shape relevant policies**.

This scheme will **not** fund

- Research consultancy;
- Knowledge Transfer Partnerships;
- Studentships or internships for Research Council-funded DPhil students, where these are funded through Research Council Doctoral Training Grants; or
- Academic conferences with no KE component.

Proposals may relate to continuation of ongoing or earlier activity, or substantially new activities. The former must clearly demonstrate the added value of further funding and the potential for timely impact.

Proposals should not exceed £25,000 in eligible costs. (These are set out in Section A.4 below.)

For 2019-2020 £100,000 is available for these fellowships, which must be **completed by 31 July 2020**.

Proposals might support policymakers in one of the following ways:
- Building partnerships with a view to shaping the policy agenda in local, regional, national or international contexts
- Improving or supporting evidence-based policymaking
- Developing and sustaining strategic relationships with key policymakers
- Improving and diversifying the breadth of policy engagement at Oxford through policy partnerships

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> **The following kinds of activity are some of those that may be supported:**
> - Academic placements with policymaking or influencing organisations
> - Policy practitioner placements at the University of Oxford
> - Policy or evidence seminars (to facilitate knowledge exchange and develop ideas)
> - High-level stakeholder meetings
> - Policy practitioner meetings/workshops
> - Activities to facilitate the development and management of relationships with non-academic users/stakeholders
> - Co-design of tools and resources that emerge from research that can maximise the use of research outputs in policy practitioner communities
> - User-led and co-produced research, where researchers are engaging directly with users in jointly shaping the research agenda and in applying research to current issues relating to policy, strategy or practice

A.2.1. KE Fellowships

The range of possible KE activities and partners is broad. The KE Fellows – whether from Oxford, or from within an external organisation – will work closely with their partners. **If the KE Fellow is an 'outgoing' academic working with, or embedded in a policy partner organisation**, they will share their knowledge to the benefit of their research/the academic field and the policymaking partners e.g., by providing innovative ideas for improving policies and processes, by contributing to improved service delivery, capacity building or product/service development or by providing specific expertise for an area they are working in. Researchers will benefit from the practice, knowledge and perspectives of the policy partners, feeding this experience back into their research to enable it to be more relevant and useful to end users.

If the KE Fellow is an 'incoming' partner from an external policy organisation, they will benefit from working closely with researchers, e.g. learning/using research skills, utilising data, literature and equipment not normally accessible to them or developing critical analysis skills. The aim is that this involvement with research will feed into their normal practice and forge closer relations between the University and their organisations and networks.

Funding will be provided flexibly to cover project costs as required. This can include costs to cover salary or salary buy-out of the academic or incoming partner as well as well-justified direct project costs for projects of around 6-9 months (e.g. event costs). KE Fellows (whether outgoing academics, or incoming practitioner partners) will be expected to spend the majority of the project time (no less than 50%) working within their partner organisation; significant partner engagement is required.

In terms of salary costs, the award can be used as follows:

For established researchers, the award is intended to provide the following options:
a) A period of buy-out from a current contract with a college, department or faculty (subject to agreement of all parties); or
b) Hourly-paid research assistance roughly equivalent to the value of a term's buyout (this must be supported through your faculty/department);

For early career researchers (ECRs) undertaking the KE Fellowship, supported by a senior researcher as PI, the award can provide salary costs for the duration of the award, either full-time or part-time. The award size has been calculated based on six months of salary at the Division's standard entry level for postdoctoral researchers - grade 7, point 1 (https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/epp/payroll/scales/grades6andup). However, salary rates above 7.1 can also be used for existing employees on higher points of the scale.

For incoming visiting Fellows from external organisations – salary costs may be eligible. Please see A.4 (Eligible Costs) for further guidance.

A.3. Eligibility

- Applications are welcomed from members of **any department or faculty** at the University of Oxford. **Approval from the Head of Department is required**.

- Many departments have **internal eligibility criteria, approval processes and other guidelines to which all applicants should adhere**. Please consult your departmental administrator for internal deadlines and further information.

- All applications must include **at least one external non-academic partne**r organisation.

- The **Principal Investigator** must hold an academic post or be a PI on a research contract awarded competitively and intended to enable the holder to establish an independent research career. If you are in any doubt of your eligibility, please contact impact@socsci.ox.ac.uk for clarification.

  o An Academic Lead on a fixed term contract must ensure their current contract extends significantly beyond the proposed project end date.

  o Early Career Researchers (ECRs) may not serve as Academic Leads but may apply as KE Fellows. ECRs are defined as being **within four years** of the submission of their doctoral thesis. This limit can be extended in exceptional circumstances e.g., extended periods of illness, maternity or paternity leave, etc.

- A **KE Fellow** should be an academic employed by a department or faculty who will spend time working closely with or be embedded within an external non-academic organisation/s or a practitioner from the partner organisation who will spend time at the University

  o Early Career Researchers (ECRs) may apply as KE Fellows

  o DPhil students are only eligible to apply as an ECR KE Fellow if they will have submitted their thesis and are awaiting examination at the point their project will commence. Masters students are not eligible to apply.

- College-based academics at Oxford wishing to serve as an Academic Leads or KE Fellows must apply via a department or faculty. Awards can only be held in departments or faculties, not in colleges.

- Retired and Emeritus Fellows are ineligible.

- Project staff not already employed by the University must be able to demonstrate their eligibility to work in the United Kingdom.

- *NB: If you move to another university during the course of your project, your funding will not transfer with you.*

A.4. Eligible costs

Eligible costs can include any of the following

- Salary costs for ECRs
- Salary buy-out/teaching replacement for KE Fellows
- Salary costs of project staff, e.g. Research Assistants
- Travel and subsistence (for researchers, external partners or delegates)
- Project costs (publishing, venue hire, transcription, IT)
- Consultancy/professional fees e.g. for external partners*
- Equipment

Funding for these schemes is not provided on a full economic cost (FEC) basis. Estates and indirect costs are not covered by this funding but 100% of direct costs will be covered

Applicants are expected to demonstrate in their proposal that there is a genuine commitment from project partner organisations. Clear details of any combination of cash or in-kind contributions to project costs are desirable although not essential.

* In certain circumstances it may be appropriate to cover some costs at the partner organisation, if the participation of the partner organisation is essential to the success of the project, but would otherwise be prohibited by cost. **Please also note that VAT cannot be recovered so must be included in the costs where necessary). If the KE Fellow is incoming from an external organisation, or a partner is delivering services in aid of the project, any additional costs including VAT need to be checked and factored in to the budget at application stage.**

Efficiency, cost-effectiveness and value for money should be clearly demonstrated in the application. Payments will not be made for miscellaneous expenses or unspecified items. If you are unsure about the eligibility of a specific expense, please contact us for further guidance.

A.5. How to apply

> **DEADLINE: Monday 30th September, 5pm**
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> **Applications should be submitted to the Social Sciences RIE team via IRAMS.**
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> 1. Complete the online section of the application
> 2. Download and complete the statement of support template from IRAMS
> 3. Combine the statement of support with the other supporting documents into a single PDF
> 4. Upload the single PDF file to IRAMS containing all the relevant supporting documents
>
> The statement of support comprises:
>
> ☐ **Application form, including:**
>   a. **2-page project proposal**
>   b. **CV (for ECR fellow applicants)**
>
> **Applicants should also include the following supporting documents:**
>
> ☐ **Letter(s) of support from external partners**
> ☐ **Statement of support from the Head of Department**
> ☐ **A breakdown of costs presented as an X5 admin output**
>
> **Please check with your department for internal approval procedures and deadlines. Some departments require significant notice to check and submit proposals, so we advise that you seek guidance from your departmental administrator as soon as you are considering making an application.*

Application

- Apply through IRAMS. Complete the online form and download the statement of support. Complete the statement and create a combined PDF which includes **all** of the documents listed above.

- The earliest **start date** under this call is **1 November 2019**.

- Projects should plan to be completed in the 2019/20 academic year, no later than **31 July 2020**. No extensions can be given after this date.

- **ECR**s should confirm their eligibility by stating either the date of their Doctoral Award or the date of their thesis submission.

- **List of publications** | Applicants should provide a list of publications relevant to the proposed project to demonstrate their experience and the quality of their research in this area. (Applicants' career stage will be taken into consideration when assessing relevant experience so as not to disadvantage ECRs).

- **Resources** | Please provide a detailed list of resources requested up to a maximum of £25,000. Please give enough detail in the description of costs to enable a reasonable/full assessment by the panel. The TOTAL of requested resources should match the PRICE on the costing output (see below).

- **Additional budget information** | Please provide headline budget information in this section. This should match the figures on the costing output(s) (see below). If your department or any of the partner organisations have stated a willingness to provide additional **contributions (cash or in-kind)** for the project, please state the details of this in the relevant section. If they are

contributing to the project in-kind, where possible please estimate the monetary value of this contribution.

- **Declaration of Interest** | According to the University's policy, please use the space provided on in IRAMS to disclose activities/relationships with any of the external organisations partnering in your project that might give rise to conflicts of interest or the perception of conflicts, and describe how, if necessary, they will be managed or avoided. Conflicts of interest may be financial or non-financial or both. For more information on declaring interests, please see the Research Services guidance page.

- **Research Integrity and Ethics** | All awards must, in addition, meet current University requirements and policy concerning research integrity and ethics. If your fellowship involves human participants or personal data, you should ensure that an ethical review is completed prior to commencing your project. Further information can be found on the research support website: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/integrity.

Project proposal

- The project proposal should be 2 sides, maximum (Arial 11pt or similar, 2cm margins, single spacing minimum).

- It should outline the nature of the work you plan to undertake in conjunction with the partner organisation and cover the following points:

  o **Rationale and research background** – The rationale and background to the proposed partnership. How does your research relate to and support this proposal? Which specific policy or policy areas does it relate to? What is your partner's ability to shape or influence those?

  o **Goal** – What policy-related impact or benefits will your partnership contribute to in the long-term? Why are these important? How might the partnership develop beyond this funding?

  o **Objectives** – The direct outcomes or effects of the partnership – what each partner and other beneficiaries will get out of it by the end of the project, and why they need it; refer where possible to specific policy or policy areas.

  o **Outputs** – What specific results will your planned activities generate, for whom and by when?

  o **Activities** – How will you and your partner collaborate in designing and delivering your proposed outputs? How will you manage the fellowship placement/visits in practice? How will you monitor progress?

  o **Justification of resources** – Outline in brief how you intend to spend the budget allocated to your project. This justification will aid reviewers to make an informed judgement on whether the resources requested are appropriate for the activities posed.

- With a view to measuring your success effectively, **your goal, objectives, outputs and activities should be as specific, measurable (quantitatively or qualitatively), achievable, realistic and time-bound as possible**. Please include reference to key milestones.

- We have a number of previously successful 2-page project proposals available to view via SharePoint.

Letter of support from external partners

- A letter of support (1 side, maximum) should be provided by each partner organisation with whom the project is proposed. The organisation should demonstrate an understanding of the proposed activities, their role and contribution to the project.

- The letter should describe how the project will benefit the partner organisation; and outline the support that will be provided to the applicant. A named individual from this organisation will be required to be responsible for overseeing the project.

- The letter should describe how the project will benefit the partner organisation; and outline the support that will be provided to the applicant and the arrangements that will be made to host the secondment. Include a named individual from this organisation responsible for the project.

- In instances where obtaining a support letter is particularly difficult/inappropriate at the proposal stage, we may accept applications without, and subsequently offer a conditional award pending presentation of a letter of support.

Statement of support from the Head of Department

- A short statement of support from the **Head of Department for the Academic Lead** (1 side, maximum) should be provided. It should explain the benefit of the project to both the applicant and the department/faculty and detail any contributions the department/faculty plan to make to the project. In cases with multiple Academic Leads from the same department, a single collective support statement from their Head of Department is adequate.

- It is important for the department/faculty to give support because they will be responsible for providing administrative and HR support to applicants throughout the project. This may include financial management, negotiating contracts, hiring new staff and providing desk space as required.

- This statement must come from the **Head of Department/Faculty** rather than the head of Institute or Centre (where relevant), and should include a signature. Where the head of department is one of the Academic Leads, the proposal should be approved by either a Deputy Head or Research Director/Coordinator.

- Where proposals include staff time for researchers based in a different department to the Academic Lead(s), a statement should be provided by all departments involved.

Costing

- A detailed breakdown of the project costs is required. In IRAMS, please give a clear breakdown of the resources requested up to a maximum of £25,000.

- You are also asked to provide an FEC costing. This should be presented in the form of an admin output from the University's costing and pricing software, X5. Please ask your research administrator or finance officer to produce the X5 costing for you. (See Call Doc B for instructions for this costing)

- The total requested in IRAMS should match the PRICE on your X5 costing output

- Include the X5 admin output as part of your combined PDF of supporting documentation.

A.6. Selection process

Funding will be awarded competitively by a process of peer review. The Policy Engagement Steering Group will make the final decisions, based on an assessment of the applications against the selection criteria outlined below.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in **late October 2019**. Results will be issued by email. Feedback from the panel review will be available on request.

A.7. Selection criteria

> **The Steering Group aim to support high quality KE proposals which (a) show strong potential to accelerate and deliver impact in policy arising from excellent research and (b) demonstrate commitment to developing productive partnerships with policy partners.**

The panel will also consider the following criteria when reviewing the applications:

- **Quality and potential of partnership** – Applications showing the potential of the relationships and scoping work to lead onto future collaboration will be prioritised.

- **Contribution** – Contribution to knowledge for external partners beyond the academy and likely importance of the research expertise to those partners;

- **Design & methods** – Effectiveness of project/activity design and methods, particularly involvement of external partners at all stages of the project (co-design, co-delivery and policy-making involvement in dissemination are encouraged);

- **Usefulness** – Timeliness of the outcomes for external partners and the ability of the project/activities to meet external partners' needs;

- **Value for money** – Value for money, including demonstrable investment (cash or in-kind) by external partners, if appropriate;

A.8. Sharing best practice

We would like to use successful applications as an exemplar for future applicants. Please bear this in mind if your application is successful. All sensitive data will be removed from applications before they are shared. You will be given an opportunity to opt-out of sharing your proposal.

We would also like to invite successful applicants to share their experiences of being a KE Fellow and participating in KE activities. This may take the form of helping to deliver a briefing or training session, sharing ideas with other colleagues or helping to provide materials to raise the profile of KE activity in the University. We will contact applicants on an individual basis with requests for support when appropriate.

Short summaries of the awarded projects will be prepared, in consultation with the PI and Co-Is. These summaries are intended for a lay audience and will be shared via the Social Sciences Division website. We will provide these materials to award holders for their own use, to publicise their project via their departmental/personal websites.

A.9. Reporting requirements

In order to meet the conditions of their grant, award holders will need to submit periodic reports. Reporting requirements are intended to be light-touch and reports should be brief. Reports will be the key mechanism to collect critical information for reporting to the funders and will assist the SSD Research & Impact Team in monitoring progress and managing any issues that arise.

A schedule of reporting dates will be provided with award offer letters. Award holders (PIs) will be contacted with an email reminder closer to the dates that reports are due for submission. The emails will include a number of questions to help shape your reports.

- **Mid-project report** – For projects exceeding 6 months in length, a progress report is required at the mid-point of activities. This report should outline progress with the delivery of the project, highlight any interim lessons learned, and outline any particular challenges with the project, partners or finances, which might delay or impede successful project completion. For awards shorter than 6 months, no mid-project report is required.

- **End-of-project report** – The end-of-project report should evaluate the project, demonstrate the impact and benefits for both the researcher and the partner organisation, and detail any future plans for ongoing engagement with the partner organisation. This report should be submitted within 1 month of the end of the project.
- **Impact report** – The impact report should briefly outline further impacts achieved in the 6 months following the project's completion.   The aim is to capture any impact that has developed since the project's completion date.

A.10. Support
- **Downloads**
    - **Guidance documents** | Follow this link to our SharePoint site
    - **Exemplar successful applications** | We have a number of previously successful HEIF KE Fellowship applications available via SharePoint.

- **Email queries** | Applicants in any doubt about their eligibility or any other aspect of their application are advised to email impact@socsci.ox.ac.uk for further advice and assistance.

- **Facilitator review** | Email a draft version of your application to impact@socsci.ox.ac.uk if you would like feedback and ideas for improving the proposal. It is suggested that you email at your earliest convenience and **no later than 10 working days** before the deadline to ensure adequate time is available for review and revisions. You can also arrange a face-to-face session to talk in more depth about your plans and application drafts with the ESRC IAA Manager or Head of Policy Engagement Book a session by emailing impact@socsci.ox.ac.uk.

Get some inspiration for your KE and impact activities form Oxford:

- Social Sciences Division impact case studies – lay summaries of successful impact stories
- ESRC IAA funded project summaries – short summaries of projects funded to date
- TORCH KE Fellowships info – similar scheme run by the Humanities Division
- Oxford Impacts case study series
- Oxford's KE and Impact pages

Inspiration from elsewhere:

- Areas of research interest (ARI) – these give details of the main research questions facing UK government departments
- ESRC Knowledge Exchange
- ESRC Impact Toolkit
- Research England's Knowledge exchange pages
- ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize - watch winners' impact videos
- ESRC Impact case studies – read case studies or watch videos
- National Centre for Universities and Business – read success stories
- National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement – read case studies
- LSE Impact Blog
- Transforming Evidence (Blog)
- 'Guidance on Planning and demonstrating Effective Policy Engagement' (Arts & Humanities Research Council)
- 'Routes to Policy Impact: A Practical Guide for Academics and Researchers' (University of Nottingham)
- Policy Impact: A 'how to guide' for researchers (University of Cambridge)