

Research and Public Policy Partnership Scheme *Call for Proposals*

Guidance for applicants

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This call focuses on policy challenges outside the UK, and those that require international responses, and offers support for partnerships between researchers at any department or faculty at Oxford and policymakers in and outside the UK.

Applications should be submitted by Research Partners through [IRAMS](#). Partners who have not worked together before are encouraged to consider applications for less than £1,000 in the first instance; applications of this size can be submitted at any time between 9 a.m. on 5 January and 1200 on 14 February 2022. **Applications requesting between £1,000 and £5,000 must be submitted ahead of gathered field deadlines of 12.00 on 14 February and 21 March 2022.**

This call is only open to researchers at the University of Oxford and their prospective Public Policy Partners. Full details on eligibility can be found below. This initiative is funded via the University's allocation from Research England's Higher Education Innovation Fund.

Researchers are encouraged to join the Oxford Policy Engagement Network (OPEN) before applying. Application takes less than 10 minutes and can be completed [here](#).

- Potential applicants are encouraged, in the first instance, to use existing networks to identify Research or Policy Partners, and to explore the resources listed in Section 8 below before approaching potential partners.
- Eligible policymakers looking for Research Partners are encouraged to contact [relevant Departments at the University](#) directly, and may consult members of the University's Policy Engagement Team, using the contact details provided below.
- For support in finding partners or developing proposals, researchers are encouraged to consult:
 - For Mathematics, Physical and Life Sciences: [Jess Hedge](#), OPEN Co-ordinator;
 - For Humanities: [Jessie Simkiss](#), Humanities & Public Policy Officer;
 - For Social Sciences: [Will Pryor](#), Head of Policy Engagement; or
 - For Medical Sciences: [Naomi Gibson](#), Policy and Public Engagement Coordinator
- The University's Policy Engagement Team are responsible for administration of this funding. Enquiries relating to eligibility should be addressed to researchandpublicpolicy@admin.ox.ac.uk.

1. Introduction

Policy engagement is all about relationships: investing in them, maintaining them – and, from time to time, ending them.¹ For some researchers and policymakers, however, it can be difficult to know where start, or how to develop these relationships. The Research and Public Policy Partnership Scheme makes it easier for potential partners to connect and collaborate, share knowledge and expertise, so that, together, they can contribute to better policies that protect what is valuable and change the world for the better. This is central to the mission of [the Oxford Policy Engagement Network](#) (OPEN), a growing network of more than 570 researchers and others at the University who share a vision of public policy powered by the world's best available research evidence and expertise.

Launched in 2020 with the UK Civil Service Policy Profession, the Research and Public Policy Partnership Scheme has already supported researchers across Oxford and partners in the UK policymaking community – in local and central government, as well as Parliament. Such partnerships have focused on

- Better anticipating demand in Oxford for food aid during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Improving language teaching in primary schools;
- Early experiences of integration of resettled refugees;
- Learning lessons from Violence Reduction Units for school exclusions after COVID-19; and
- Better understanding of [the impact of direct-to-consumer genetic testing on the NHS](#).

The scheme has also supported partnerships focused on policy challenges outside the UK. These partnerships have included those focused, for example, on

- Developing a better understanding of [the trade-offs involved in application of the concept of health security](#);
- Improving responses to the mobility needs of some of the poorest people in Istanbul, during and after the pandemic; and
- Developing a shared understanding of the impacts of COVID-19 on pastoral communities in Central Asia and elsewhere, and [exploring with them ways to mitigate those](#).

¹ See Roche, C., Tomlin, A., & Krishna, U. (2020). [Monitoring, evaluation and learning for policy engagement: Approaches, questions and resources](#). University of Oxford

Research partners in these projects are among many at Oxford involved in [research that relates to countries outside the UK](#). Of those who work with policymakers, some have partners in national or local government, or parliament, and others in international organisations. Yet these relationships can be particularly difficult to develop, [especially for researchers who do not have well-connected local research partners](#), and policymakers who are unlikely to be aware which of the 190,000 or so academics at UK universities might be interested in, or open to, collaboration.

The present call focuses on **policy challenges outside the UK, and those that require international responses**, and offers support for partnerships between researchers at any department or faculty at Oxford and policymakers in and outside the UK. For support in finding partners or developing proposals, potential applicants are encouraged to consult those identified on page 1.

Potential benefits for partners

Research partners stand to learn more about the value of their skills and expertise to public policy, and enhance both; to build their professional networks; and discover how to collaborate effectively with policymakers at pace and in the face of widespread uncertainty.

Policy partners may use this opportunity to collaborate, for example, on synthesis of evidence from diverse sources, disciplines and contexts to inform policy debates, options or decisions; learning lessons from other countries or regions; or developing monitoring, evaluation or scrutiny of chosen policies. (See Section 6 below for more details of eligible activities.)

All proposed partnerships must involve at least one applicant from a department or faculty at the University, and at least one from the policymaking community. (See Section 5 below for more details of eligibility.)

2. Scope

The panel will prioritise practical and innovative proposals that

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

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.

No application should exceed £5,000 in eligible costs. (See Section 7 below.) **Those successful in securing initial awards of less than £1,000 may not subsequently apply for more than £4,000.**

£40,000 is available for partnerships arising from this call. **Cash or in-kind contributions from partners should be quantified and entered in IRAMS. All activities must be completed and related expenditure incurred by 31 July 2022.**

3. Selection criteria

The scheme aims to support new engagement activity or follow-on support for completed activities, especially those that facilitate or involve collaboration, co-design and co-delivery by partners. Projects that do not envisage such activities are unlikely to be supported. The panel will also consider the following criteria when reviewing the applications:

- **Relevance** to clearly identified current/emerging public policy objectives;

- **Potential for mutual benefit** – reflected in outcomes and outputs of benefit to both partners;
- **Sustainability** – reflecting the potential of the partnership to lead to future collaboration or to create/accelerate impact; and
- **Value for money**: an appropriate and well justified budget, with careful consideration of individual costs, as well as investment (cash or in-kind) by partners.

Interdisciplinary approaches are desirable but not essential.

4. Application

Applications should be submitted by research partners through [IRAMS](#). The partners should work together to complete the Case for Support, available to download through IRAMS, which includes more detailed guidance about what to include in each section.

Deadlines and review process

All applications will be considered by a panel consisting of representatives of at least two Divisions and of the Policy Profession. Partners may submit

- Applications for less than £1,000 at any time from 9 a.m. on 5 January until 1200 on 14 February 2022; and
- Applications for £1,000 to £5,000 ahead of gathered field deadlines of 1200 on 14 February and 21 March 2022.

Applicants can expect to hear of panel decisions within 10 working days. Feedback from the panel review will be available on request.

In exceptional circumstances and with adequate justification, applications for more than £5,000 may be considered. Partners considering such an application should consult the Policy Engagement Team at an early stage.

5. Eligibility

- Applications are welcome from members of any department or faculty at the University of Oxford.
- **All applications must involve at least one Partner, contracted until at least 31 July 2022, from among**
 - Policymaking staff of central government departments;
 - Policymaking staff of county, district or city councils, or similar local authority;
 - Staff of the House of Commons Committees Office; [Library](#) or [Scrutiny Unit](#); Lords Committee Office or [Library](#); or [Joint Committees](#); [Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology](#); or similar structures in other national or regional legislative assemblies; or
 - Policymaking staff of intergovernmental organisations, e.g., the UN and its programmes, funds, and specialised agencies.
- **Approval from the head of the relevant research department or faculty is required.** Many departments and faculties 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.
- College-based academics and those from Gardens, Libraries and Museums who wish to serve as PIs must apply via a department/faculty. Awards can only be held in departments or faculties, not in colleges.
- Current postgraduate students are not eligible to apply; however, postgraduate students who have submitted their thesis and are awaiting examination are eligible to apply as ECRs.

- Retired and Emeritus Fellows are not eligible.
- Project staff not already employed by the University must be able to demonstrate their eligibility to work in the United Kingdom.
- Funding under this scheme for any researcher who moves to another university during the course of a partnership funded by the scheme will not transfer with them.
- **Early Career Researchers (i.e., within four years of the submission of their doctoral thesis) may serve as Co-Investigators but are not eligible to be designated as the PI for the project unless they have a permanent contract.**
- **The Principal Investigator (PI) must be a current employee at Oxford, holding a permanent academic post, or 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 researchandpublicpolicy@admin.ox.ac.uk for clarification.
- A PI on a fixed-term contract must be contracted until at least 31 August 2022.

6. Eligible activities

Examples of the types of activities that may be supported include:

- Collaboration on evidence synthesis aimed at informing policy debates, options or decisions, and co-development of approaches to filling gaps;
- Co-production of tools and resources that facilitate uptake of research evidence in policymaking;
- Placement of researchers in policymaking institutions or policymakers in University departments;
- Preparation of policy briefs, working papers, blogs or other outputs that support policy-oriented research or evidence-informed policy;
- Establishment, development or leverage of mutually accessible networks.

Examples of activities that are **not** eligible include:

- Research consultancy;
- Academic conferences or seminars lacking clear engagement with policymakers;
- Studentships or internships for Research Council-funded DPhil students, where these are funded through Research Council Doctoral Training Grants.

7. Eligible costs

Eligible costs do **not** include salary of Research or Policy Partners, but include those related to:

- Salaries of other staff, e.g., research support, communications or events management staff;
- Venue and catering;
- Other event costs e.g. equipment, printing, IT/AV support; and
- Surveys.

Travel and accommodation costs are also eligible, but should be calculated with close attention to travel and other restrictions as they affect partners and other participants at time of application.

Funding for this scheme 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. More information about costing and pricing projects is available [here](#).

Clear details of any combination of cash or in-kind contributions are sought from both partners to reflect shared commitment to and value of the partnership. **The contribution of policy partners is expected to be at least 25% of the total sum requested from any partnership.**

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 those identified on page 1 for further guidance.

8. How to apply

Research partners should check with their department for internal approval procedures and deadlines and seek guidance from their departmental administrator at the earliest opportunity to take into account any notice they may need to assist.

Applications should be submitted via [IRAMS](#).

1. Complete the online section of the application in IRAMS
2. Download and complete the Case for Support template from IRAMS
3. Combine the Case for Support with the other supporting documents into a single .pdf file
4. Upload the .pdf file to IRAMS, which should comprise:
 - Case for Support, with all relevant fields completed
 - Statement of support from senior representative of parent organisation of Policy Partner

* Please check with your department for internal approval procedures and deadlines.

a) IRAMS application form

The earliest start date for projects between £1,000 and £5,000 in value is two weeks after the call deadline. Earlier start dates for such projects, and for all proposals of less than £1,000 in value, must be agreed in consultation with the Policy Engagement Team.

b) Case for Support

Research Partners should download the Case for Support from IRAMS and complete together with Policy Partners all relevant sections. Detailed instructions for completing the Case for Support are included in the form.

Budget information | Partners are asked to provide clear, quantified descriptions of all resources required, indicating amounts requested from this scheme, along with estimates of any match funding or in-kind funding provided. **The Research Partner should consult their departmental administrator about the preparation of costings. The department or faculty is responsible for confirming the accuracy of those costings.**

Other information | Research Partners should use the space provided on the application form to disclose activities/relationships with Partners involved in the 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, non-financial or both. For more information on declaring interests, please see Research Services' [guidance page](#). All awards must, in addition, meet current University requirements and policies 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](#).

c) For Policy Partner: letter of support from parent organisation

A letter (or email) of support (maximum one side) should be provided by the line manager of the policymaking Partner (or lead Partner if more than one is involved). The letter should

- Reflect an understanding of the proposed goal, outcomes outputs and activities;
- Describe how the proposed goal relates to the policymaking agenda and how the proposed partnership will benefit the Partner organisation;
- Outline the support that will be provided to the Partners. A named individual from this organisation will be required to be responsible for overseeing the project.

In cases where obtaining a support letter is particularly difficult/inappropriate at the proposal stage, the panel may consider applications without one, and subsequently offer a conditional award, pending provision of such a letter.

9. Sharing best practice

All successful applicants will be invited to a cohort-building meeting in March 2022. They may also be invited by the University or Policy Profession to take part in briefing, training or other events that support the aims of the scheme.

Applicants should note that successful applications are likely to be used as exemplars for future applicants but an opportunity to opt-out of this will be available.

In addition to any publications that may be delivered through their partnership, successful applicants will be invited to help the Policy Engagement Team prepare a short lay summary of their project for publication via University channels and others at their discretion.

10. Reporting requirements

Partners will need to submit joint periodic reports. Reports will be the key mechanism to collect critical information for reporting and will assist the Policy Engagement Team in monitoring project progress and managing any issues that arise.

A schedule of reporting dates will be provided with award offer letters. Research Partners will be contacted with email reminders closer to the date that a particular report is due for submission.

- **End-of-project report** – The end-of-project report (max. 1,500 words) should evaluate the project, demonstrate the impact and benefits, including those for both Partners, and detail any future plans for ongoing engagement. 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 six months following the project's completion. The aim is to capture any impact since submission of the end-of-project report.

11. Further information and support

For support in developing or refining an application, get in touch with the relevant Divisional contact named on page 1 at your earliest convenience and **no later than 10 working days** before the deadline to ensure adequate time is available for review and revisions.

Please find below some sources of inspiration, information and guidance from the Policy Engagement Team and others at Oxford:

- [Oxford's Experience in Policy Engagement](#) – news, stories, and advice from OPEN Fellows and other policy-engaged researchers at Oxford
- [Policy Engagement: guidance and resources](#)
 - [How can I engage with policymakers?](#)

- [How does UK Government work and what do policymakers look for?](#)
- [How do I engage with the UK Parliament and how do parliaments work?](#)
- [How do I build policy engagement into project design?](#)
- [How do I engage with policymakers internationally?](#)
- [How do I monitor, evaluate and learn about policy engagement?](#)
- [Social Sciences Division impact case studies](#) – lay summaries of successful impact stories
- [TORCH KE Fellowships and other projects](#) – run by the Humanities Division
- [Oxford Impacts case study series](#)
- [Oxford's KE and Impact pages](#)

... and from elsewhere:

- [‘Engaging with local government: A Guide for Academics’](#) (University of Cambridge)
- [‘Guidance on Planning and demonstrating Effective Policy Engagement’](#) (Arts & Humanities Research Council)
- [‘How to engage with policy makers: a guide for academics in the arts and humanities’](#) (Institute for Government, Arts & Humanities Research Council)
- [‘Routes to Policy Impact: A Practical Guide for Academics and Researchers’](#) (University of Nottingham)
- [ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize](#) – watch winners’ impact videos
- [ESRC Guidance for Collaboration](#)
- [ESRC Impact case studies](#) – read case studies or watch videos
- [ESRC Impact Toolkit](#)
- [Policy Impact: A ‘how to guide’ for researchers](#) (University of Cambridge)
- [Rebuilding a Resilient Britain](#): outputs from a programme in July 2020, convening researchers, funders and policymakers to identify evidence and uncover research gaps around cross-cutting Areas of Research Interest (Government Office for Science)
- [Research England’s Knowledge exchange pages](#)
- [Science for Policy Handbook](#) (Elsevier)