



Research
England



OPEN
OXFORD POLICY
ENGAGEMENT NETWORK



OXFORD POLICY ENGAGEMENT NETWORK LEADERS SCHEME 2022

Call for applications

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This call relates to a University-wide scheme, funded via its allocation from Research England's Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF). Researchers from all disciplines and Divisions are eligible to apply.

Applications for the first stage are welcome at any time before 1200 GMT on 22 March 2022.

This call is only open to researchers at the University of Oxford. Full details on eligibility can be found below.

- Applicants are encouraged to approach their local departmental/faculty grants team in the first instance.
- 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
- Researchers considering an application are encouraged to consult:
 - For Maths, Life and Physical 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.

1. Introduction

The University of Oxford is committed to changing the world for the better through research. This commitment is reflected, in part, in the breadth and depth of our researchers' engagement with public policy. Researchers at all career stages share their evidence and expertise with the policymaking community in local, national and international contexts. Many take up formal opportunities to do so, such as placements or advisory roles, or submit evidence in response to inquiries and consultations. Many integrate policy engagement into their research from the outset. Some do both, developing enduring relationships based on research excellence, an appreciation of shared interests, and the ability to serve as an honest broker.

About the Oxford Policy Engagement Network (OPEN)

An increasing number of these researchers are members of OPEN. Launched in 2020, this is a network of researchers and professional services staff from across the University, who share a vision of public policy powered by the world's best available research evidence and expertise. OPEN's mission is to enable members to share knowledge and expertise with the policymaking community so that, together, they can contribute to better policies that protect what is valuable and change the world for the better.

OPEN members work with partners in national and local governments, and arms-length bodies; in national parliaments and devolved assemblies; in civil society; in the UK, and around the world, including in international organisations. Their approach helps ensure that research of the highest quality clarifies, or expands, the range of options open to policymakers, through co-design, collaboration and co-production.

OPEN connects members with each other, and with opportunities for engagement, professional development, and funding, aligned with their areas of policy interest. It offers members guidance and support from the University's Policy Engagement Team, which also fields incoming expressions of interest from members of the policymaking community. A University-wide [Steering Group](#) guides the development of the network. More information about OPEN can be found [here](#).

Researchers are encouraged to join OPEN before applying to this scheme. Application takes less than 5 minutes and can be completed [here](#).

2. Scope

The [OPEN Strategy](#) identifies as a priority the need to strengthen leadership for policy engagement. To that end, in March 2021 a panel appointed the five OPEN Leaders, awarding them up to £8,000 each to enable them to design and deliver a range of activities to contribute to the other aims of the strategy, of benefit to their own and other departments. Most of this first cohort of OPEN Leaders also took up the opportunity to be matched with a peer mentor in the UK Civil Service.

The Steering Group is now searching for a second **cohort of at least five OPEN Leaders – researchers willing and able to take a leading** role in the development of the network, advocating for, designing and delivering initiatives that enable one or more departments or faculties to

1. Improve access for the policymaking community to the best available research evidence and expertise;
2. Deepen understanding of how researchers can contribute to policymaking, and develop skills to do this effectively; or
3. Broaden and deepen relevant networks, creating and developing more opportunities for engagement.

OPEN Leaders will be expected to allocate at least five days between March and July 2022 for these initiatives, and will receive **up to £8,000** towards the development and delivery of them. These funds must be spent by 31 July 2022.

Examples of initiatives applicants may wish to consider include:

- Development of the role of faculty or departmental champion for policy engagement, e.g. by offering advisory support, or building capacity;
- Incorporation of policy engagement in relevant strategies and plans, and delivering relevant elements of those;
- Development of the potential for mentoring, possibly involving the policymaking community;
- Piloting new approaches to professional development for OPEN members, e.g., seminars, workshops or masterclasses relating to engagement in one or more area of public policy, or particularly challenging aspects of engagement;
- Development of new guidance or other resources for the professional development of OPEN members;
- Initiatives aimed at improving the visibility of researchers engaged with the policymaking community, for research and policy audiences;
- Creation of opportunities for researchers and the policymaking community to share expertise and evidence, in person or online - e.g., offering to host a UK government department to explore their [Areas of Research Interest](#), or a visit to Oxford by a Select Committee to gather evidence of interest to its members;
- Other activities that broaden or deepen membership of OPEN, e.g. in a particular area of policy interest.

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

- Research consultancy;
- Publications or other activities that already took place;
- Knowledge Transfer partnerships;
- Academic conferences or seminars lacking clear benefit for OPEN members.

£40,000 is available for this pilot scheme. **All activities must be completed and related expenditure incurred by 31 July 2022.**

This scheme is intended to enable OPEN Leaders to develop professionally, and to foster sustainable change of benefit to their department and, potentially, others. Other funding opportunities, including the Research and Public Policy Partnership Scheme and OPEN Fellowships, support engagement as such. Details of those can be found [here](#).

3. Eligibility

- Applications are welcomed from members of any department or faculty at the University of Oxford. Departmental approval is required.
- **Researchers are encouraged to join OPEN before applying.** Application takes less than 10 minutes and can be completed [here](#).
- Support and approval from the head of the relevant research department or faculty obtained in advance of the application 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.

- **Applicants must be current employees, holding permanent academic posts or research contracts awarded competitively and intended to enable the holders to establish an independent research career.**
- Researchers on a fixed-term contract are also eligible, as long as they are contracted until at least 31 August 2022.
- College-based academics and those from Gardens, Libraries and Museums must apply via a department/faculty. Awards can only be held in departments or faculties, not in colleges.
- Current postgraduate students are not eligible.
- Retired and Emeritus Fellows are not eligible.
- Funding under this scheme for any researcher who moves to another university will not transfer with them.

4. How to apply

Applications should comprise

- A letter from the applicant (max. 3 pages), setting out
 - Their motivation and interest in taking on this role, and the skills and experience they bring to it;
 - The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing their department in relation to one or more of the objectives enumerated in Section 2; and
 - An outline of their proposed programme of activities, indicating how each would address those, and what kind of support they might need from the Steering Group or Policy Engagement Team;
- A one-page CV; and
- A statement of support from their Head of Department.

These should be combined into a single .pdf and be submitted **by 1200 GMT on 22 March 2022** to researchandpublicpolicy@admin.ox.ac.uk.

5. Selection process and criteria

The panel will prioritise applications from researchers in departments and faculties that have not benefited from this scheme to date.

Shortlisted applicants may be invited to make a short presentation to a selection panel in late March 2022. This will enable them to explain their plans in more detail. These presentations will be assessed in relation to their contribution to the objectives enumerated in Section 2, and considered along with their skills and experience.

Applicants will be expected to have demonstrable interest in, and some understanding of, public policy in at least one area, and some experience of the kind of engagement described in Section 1. This is an opportunity to develop as a leader, and the panel will therefore also be looking for evidence of the potential:

- To communicate effectively with a wide range of interlocutors, including researchers at different career stages and members of the policymaking community, and to persuade through reasoned discussion;
- To recognise and encourage contributions from colleagues;
- To sustain collaborative relationships, and to create, develop and exchange knowledge in collaboration with external partners, as well as other researchers;
- To promote the application of research to public policy in innovative ways; and
- To raise awareness, foster engagement with and understanding of the mutual benefit to be derived to research and society of effective policy engagement.

6. Reporting

OPEN Leaders will be required to provide a narrative report, evaluating progress against their objectives, within one month of completion of the last activity, along with a report on expenditure against eligible costs. The Policy Engagement Team will contact them 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.

7. Eligible costs

This pilot scheme has been designed with a view to minimising the administrative burden for applicants. Fully costed proposals are welcome but are not required.

OPEN Leaders' salary costs cannot be covered by this scheme, but any of the following can be covered:

- Research or teaching assistance (up to £4,000)
- Travel and subsistence (for researchers or external partners)*
- Project costs (publishing, venue hire, transcription, IT/AV support)
- Consultancy/professional fees e.g. for external partners**
- Equipment

* Travel and accommodation costs are also eligible, but should be calculated with close attention to travel and other restrictions in place at time of application.

** 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.

8. Further information and support

Applicants are encouraged to explore the guidance and resources available at www.ox.ac.uk/policyengagement, and to contact those listed on page 1.