



Research
England



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FUND: POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Call specification and guidance (Call Document A)

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This call is a University-wide initiative funded via its allocation from Research England's Quality-related Research Strategic Priorities Funding. Researchers from all disciplines and Divisions are eligible to apply. This call is only open to researchers at the University of Oxford.

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

The deadline for applications is 1700 GMT, 10 December 2020.

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

Useful contacts:

Applicants are encouraged to approach their departmental or divisional support team in the first instance. Enquiries relating to eligibility should be addressed to researchandpublicpolicy@admin.ox.ac.uk.

For support in developing proposals, please contact

- **For SSD:** Irini Tseminidou, OPEN Co-ordinator (01865 614872 | irini.tseminidou@socsci.ox.ac.uk)
- **For Humanities:** Jessie Simkiss, Humanities & Public Policy Officer (jessica.simkiss@theology.ox.ac.uk)
- **For MSD and MPLS:** Will Pryor, Head of Policy Engagement (01865 270401 | E: william.pryor@socsci.ox.ac.uk)

A.1. Introduction

The University is keen to support researchers who share a vision of **public policy powered by the world's best available research evidence and expertise**, equipping them to make their knowledge, skills and experience available to the policymaking community so that, together, they can develop better policies that change the world for the better.

Many researchers are developing partnerships with members of the policymaking community 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. Through **co-design, collaboration and co-production**, they are ensuring that research of the highest quality clarifies, or expands, the range of options open to policymakers.

Strategic aims

The present call is open to researchers from all disciplines and Divisions at the University who share this vision and mission, and who can contribute to one or more of the following **strategic aims**:

1. To share evidence with policymakers, improving access for the policymaking community to the best available evidence and expertise from across the University;
2. To understand policymaking better, deepening researchers' understanding of how they can positively contribute to policymaking, and acquire the relevant skills to do this effectively;
3. To broaden and deepen policy networks, creating and developing more opportunities for engagement; and
4. To strengthen leadership for policy engagement, promoting greater reward and recognition of excellence in policy engagement at all career stages.

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 evidence, expertise and experience for mutual benefit. They will prioritise proposals that:

- Contribute to clear policy-related goals;
- Define realistic outcomes that relate to a clearly identified policies, and to outputs that are clearly connected with those; 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 activities, or substantially new activities. The former must clearly demonstrate the added value of further funding and the potential for timely impact.

Under the terms of this funding, proposals may also include costs already incurred since 1 April 2020, subject to the eligibility criteria set out in Section A.4.

Proposals should not normally exceed £30,000 in eligible costs. (These are set out in Section A.4 below.) **Cash or in-kind contributions from partners should be quantified and entered in IRAMS.**

At least £500,000 is available for projects in the scope of this call, which must be **completed by 31 March 2021**.

The following kinds of activity are some of those that may be supported:

- New research, produced in partnership with policymakers, particularly to better understand local, regional or national challenges, enabling the policymaking community to inform the research agenda, and both partners to apply research to policy challenges
- Seminars or workshops that facilitate the use of existing research, and the exchange of knowledge, between universities and policymakers
- Activity aimed at improving the dialogue between universities and policymakers
- Activity and training to better equip researchers at all career stages to communicate effectively with policymakers
- Academic placements in the policymaking community, and placements of members of the policymaking community at the University
- Co-design of tools and resources that emerge from research that can maximise the use of research outputs in the policymaking community

A.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](#).
- Many departments have **internal eligibility criteria, approval processes and other guidelines to which all applicants should adhere.** Please consult your departmental administrator.
- Applications are expected to involve **at least one named partner in the policymaking community.**
- The **Principal Investigator** must hold an academic post, or a research fellowship 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 ensure their current contract extends until at least 31 July 2021.
- Early Career Researchers (i.e., within four years of the submission of their doctoral thesis) who do not meet the criteria above may apply as Co-Investigator.
- DPhil and Masters students are not eligible to apply.
- College-based academics at Oxford 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.
- If the PI moves to another university during the course of their project, this funding will not transfer with them.

A.4. Eligible costs

Eligible costs can include any of the following

- Salary costs of ECRs and 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 this call 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.

* **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.**

Applicants are expected to demonstrate in their proposal that there is a genuine commitment from partner organisations. **Cash or in-kind contributions from partners should be quantified and entered in IRAMS.**

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate to cover some costs of a partner organisation, where these are essential to the success of the project but would otherwise be prohibited by cost. **VAT cannot be recovered so must be included in the costs where necessary.**

Efficiency, cost-effectiveness and value for money should be clearly demonstrated in the application. Payments will not be approved for miscellaneous expenses or unspecified items. Applicants who are unsure about the eligibility of a specific expense, should contact the Policy Engagement Team for further guidance.

A.5. How to apply

DEADLINE: 1700 GMT, 10 December 2020

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

1. Complete the online section of the application
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
 - Letter(s) of support from external partner(s)

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

Application

- Apply through IRAMS. Complete the online form and download the Case for Support.
- If you are requesting funding for any costs already incurred (since 1 April 2020), please make this clear in the budget section of your application, and ensure that the project start date in IRAMS also reflects this.
- The earliest start date for new activity is 1 January 2021.
- Projects must be completed and all funds spent by **31 March 2021**. *No extensions can be given after this date.*

Case for Support

- **Project details** | These should include the following
 - **Overview** – What is challenge(s) you and your partners will tackle, and how they will tackle it/them; how this project relates to the strategic aims of the call, and to the latest developments in research and policymaking environments. *(Maximum 300 words)*
 - **Goal** – What is the ultimate goal of this collaboration? What difference will it make? To/for whom? *(Maximum 100 words)*
 - **Outcomes** – By the end of the project what will be the benefits to research, policy or and when – in terms of societal benefit, impact on policy, legislation, regulation or approaches to them? How will success be measured? *(Maximum 200 words)*
 - **Outputs** – What will be the outputs that the partners jointly or separately will have delivered? How will they contribute to achievement of the outcomes identified? *(Maximum 200 words)*

- **Activities** – What is required to deliver the outputs listed above? Who will do what? By when? How will partners collaborate in designing and delivering the proposed outputs? How will they monitor and evaluate progress, and learn from this project?
- **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.
- **Declaration of Interest** | In keeping with 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.

Statement of support from lead partner

- A letter (or e-mail) of support (**1 side, maximum**) should be provided by the lead partner organisation. 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.
- **Any award made in the absence of such a letter will be conditional on provision of one.**

A.6. Selection process

The Policy Engagement Steering Group will make final decisions, based on an assessment of the applications against the selection criteria outlined below. Applicants will be notified by email of the outcome of their application **by 18 December 2020**.

A.7. Selection criteria

The Steering Group aim to support high quality proposals which (a) show strong potential to deliver policy impact arising from excellent research and (b) demonstrate a commitment to co-design, collaboration and co-production with the policymaking community.

The following criteria will also be considered at review stage:

- **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 partners in the policymaking community and likely importance of the research expertise to those partners;
- **Design and methods** – Effectiveness of project design and methods, particularly involvement of policymaking partners throughout the project;
- **Usefulness** – Timeliness of the outcomes for external partners and the ability of the project to meet external partners' needs; and
- **Value for money** – including demonstrable investment (cash or in-kind) by 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 policy engagement. 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 policy engagement in the University. We will contact applicants on an individual basis with requests for support when appropriate.

A.9. Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Applicants are encouraged to start planning for monitoring and evaluation at application stage, to help ensure time is set aside for this, [stakeholders identified](#), engagement monitored (using, for example, a [research diary](#)), and [outcomes harvested](#). This will inform learning during and after the project, and facilitate reporting. Successful applicants will be required to submit two reports:

- **End-of-project report** – This will enable the award-holder to evaluate outcomes and progress towards the planned goal, demonstrate the impact and benefits for both the researcher and the partner organisation, and detail any future plans for ongoing engagement. This will be requested by the Policy Engagement Team in April 2021 (or earlier, for relevant projects) and will be drawn on for reporting to Research England.
- **Impact report** – This will enable the award-holder to outline further impacts achieved in the six months following the project's completion, and will also be requested by the Policy Engagement Team.

A.10. Guidance

- [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?](#)
- [Oxford's Experience in Policy Engagement](#) – news, stories, and advice from OPEN Fellows and other policy-engaged academics at Oxford
- ['How to engage with policy makers: a guide for academics in the arts and humanities'](#) (Institute for Government, Arts & Humanities Research Council)
- ['Guidance on Planning and demonstrating Effective Policy Engagement'](#) (Arts & Humanities Research Council)
- [Science for Policy Handbook](#) (Elsevier)
- ['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)
- ['Engaging with local government: A Guide for Academics'](#) (University of Cambridge)
- [LSE Impact Blog](#)
- [Transforming Evidence](#) (Blog)