



Humanities Division

John Fell Fund Guidance Notes

The **John Fell OUP Research Fund** is an internal funding scheme that fosters creativity and a proactive approach to research opportunities in all subject areas, and particularly interdisciplinary fields. For more details, visit the [John Fell Fund website](#).

Your Faculty may run an internal selection process so please check their procedure before you start writing your application.

All applications require your Faculty's approval before they can be submitted to the Division. Please check internal deadlines with your departmental administrator and make sure you allow enough time for the approval process.

Before submitting in your application, please use the provided Checklist (see Annex 1) to ensure the application follows the scheme's eligibility criteria.

Eligibility: Employees of the collegiate university holding an academic post or a research fellowship (e.g. Junior Research Fellow) can apply to the John Fell Fund. The applicant should be on a contract of employment that runs beyond the proposed project. Applications may also be considered from an employee who does not yet hold an academic post or fellowship; as long as the department agrees to support the application in their name as principal investigator. These applications must include a letter from the applicant's line manager confirming that they support the application and that it is consistent with the applicant's existing duties. If in doubt, you should talk your departmental administrator (HAF) and research facilitator.

Assessment Criteria: Awards made to the John Fell Fund will be assessed against the following criteria:

- 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

Furthermore, the Review Committee will also consider whether:

- The application gives an appropriate and lucid scholarly context (N.B. the application is read by non-specialists).
- The application is appropriately costed in detail (the committee will consider the amount requested and, where it feels it is appropriate to do so, reduce the funds awarded);
- Efforts have been made to raise external funding and/or that funds have been raised internally (a slight preference has been given to 'matching' a faculty or college contribution, even if this is not the full amount requested).

Types of application: Applications may be made for small, large or divisional awards as follows:

1. Small Award Scheme (funding up to £10,000): applicants need to demonstrate how the award would lead to further funding or research opportunities.
2. Main Award Scheme (funding over £10,000): there is no upper limit but the higher the amount requested, the more exceptional the case will have to be.
3. Divisional Award Scheme - The Humanities Division also administers devolved funds with separate criteria from the main scheme.

NB Applications for TORCH Network funding are also made via the Small Award Scheme.

Types of award: Applications can be made for any of the following purposes:

- Pump-priming
- Early career researcher
- Networks, collaborations and partnerships Support related to bids for external funding

For more details, visit the UAS John Fell Fund website ['Notes for applicants'](#)

There is also an additional type of award within the John Fell Fund Small Award Scheme, called [TORCH Network Scheme](#), a targeted call for researchers seeking to establish multi- or interdisciplinary research networks. This scheme follows the same submission process and deadlines of the Small/Large JFF applications. More information about this scheme and the application process can be found [here](#).

Early Career Researchers: Applications from those who meet the definition of an early career researcher will be assessed in the context of their career stage as evidenced in their CV. Early career researchers are classified as those within their first five years as an independent researcher, and should always apply under category (b).

Underwriting: Whilst waiting for the result of an external funding application, an applicant may apply to the Fell Fund to underwrite external scheme applications where success rates are low, such as the BA Small Grants scheme. It is in effect a guarantee that a project can go ahead whether or not the external bid is successful. However, the committee may elect to underwrite only some elements of the application, but not others. Although applications should be for underwriting rather than outright grants in the first instance, evidence of a prior 'near hit' with external funding for a project may be taken into consideration.

Impact-related proposals: Impact is not a requirement for funding, but it will be helpful to consider it as part of your research activity. If the proposed project has the potential to generate impact (effect, benefit or change on individuals, groups or communities outside of academia), this should be clearly stated within the application. Where impact potential is stated, applicants should include information on the possible reach (number of people or communities/groups engaged with) and significance (the effect, benefit or change that resulted from the engagement) of the activity. An evaluation plan to measure the progress of impact should be in place from the beginning of the project, and any resources required to deliver the impact (including staff time) should be itemized and costed accurately.

Project Start and End dates: Please note that the start date should be at least three months after the application closing date and the project end date must be before the expiry date of the main applicant (PI), if applicable.

Project duration: There is no written rule on the duration, however, the main purpose of JFF is to pump-prime new initiatives and is not intended to provide long-term support, or provide 'project funding' in the same way as an external funder, so for categories (a) (b) and (c), anything more than 2 years would be considered exceptional, and a strong case as to why this time is required needs to be included in the Case for Support (e.g. the proposed time is required to develop the proposed activity and is proportionate to the scale of expected outcomes/impacts).

Budget: Research Facilitators will cost salaries only, all other budgeting is undertaken by the applicant and, depending on faculty, an administrator there. The facilitators are unable to provide substantial advice and support to John Fell Fund applicants because of their ongoing external application load.

Research assistance: all casually paid research and project assistance should be costed at the recommended Divisional rates (see page 4).

Publicity: Where applicable, it is expected that award holders communicate with the Press Office about their project, and consider writing for The Conversation.

Copy editing, indexing etc.: It is not a priority for the panel when considering applications. Any request will normally be excluded unless an exceptional justification of the need is presented in the application.

Copyright/image costs: The panel will consider applications for copyright costs where these would prevent publication. Evidence must be shown that the applicant has attempted to get charges waived or reduced.

Sustainability: Any application to develop a database, website or similar electronic output must show evidence of how these will be supported after the end of the award, for example on a faculty website, and within the Bodleian Libraries. JFF award holders are expected to host their data with 'Figshare', in conjunction with ORA-Data deposit. At application stage please contact the Sustainable Digital Scholarship service team for guidance on costs and on the type of service they can offer. For more info on the service and the costs, please visit the SDS [webpage](#).

Childcare: while on a research trip is an allowable cost where it is clear that no other suitable arrangements can be made.

Payment of performance fees: the panel accepted the argument that these were eligible costs provided these could be justified in terms of the academic project being undertaken (for example, a musical performance that follows the theme of a conference). The applicant must show how the performance fits with and takes forward the research.

Repeat applicants: applicants with an existing Fell-funded project, or one that has finished within the last twelve months, must provide a very brief overview, with evidence of the benefit of that award. This may be done on one additional A4 sheet for any award to which this applies.

Practice-led research: practicing artists can apply for John Fell funding as long as the work they are proposing forms part of an integrated research project of critical or historical significance.

Applicant/Principal Investigator/Co-Is salary costs: these costs as well as teaching buy-out costs for the applicants are not permitted under this scheme. New academic posts or academic posts held by individuals other than the applicant are not eligible costs. In exceptional circumstances, under category 'Support related to current bids for external funding', funds might be made available towards an academic post for a limited period where this is tied to a specific bid to an external body.

Ethics Review: Projects may require an ethical review and a CUREC number before starting. More guidance on when ethics reviews are required is here:

http://www.socsci.ox.ac.uk/information_for_internal_users/research/ssh_idrec_brief_guidance

Academic activities

Further Guidance on Conference Funding:

- Conferences, open workshops or seminars for which the Fell Fund is requested to provide support must charge a registration fee to non-university members that is sufficient to cover venue, publicity and support costs. The budget should clearly show which expenditure items the Fell Fund is being asked to support. Organisers charging less must provide a convincing explanation in the proposal. This fee is not applicable to closed workshops with a small number of invited participants which meet the Fell criteria for pump-priming.

- Normally, only essential travel and subsistence costs for speakers are permitted, where this would unreasonably raise the conference fee (for example for international speakers), or where they can't meet these costs from their own institution's funds. A good practice is to offer 'capped' speaker travel expenses paying an agreed contribution towards travel costs rather than the full amount (subject to normal University accounting practices). Normally, a contribution to accommodation for invited speakers should be limited to £75 per night. A small number of graduate bursaries, where explicitly justified in the proposal, may be funded.
- The application should also indicate what future opportunities the event may lead to, particularly future research collaborations, but also whether (and what) publication plans there are for the conference materials. Conferences are also an opportunity for dialogue and discussion/feedback, not just for publications, and the committee will take into account any 'bigger picture' which the applicant presents. As with all Fell Fund applications, the committee will expect to see evidence of attempts to raise external *and* internal funds, in particular external funding applications submitted through the relevant faculty, but also faculty or college support (which may be 'in kind' such as the free use of rooms and/or reduced accommodation rates). If an external application has not been made, the applicant must justify why not. Where external funds have been secured, it is expected that these are brought through the relevant faculty.
- The costs of an evening dinner or reception as part of a conference are not usually permitted. It will not fund receptions, honoraria or similar costs.
- Items, such as setting up a website or employment of graduate assistants, will be considered provided the reasons for seeking these funds are explained in the proposal. Conference graduate assistance may be capped and the hourly rate should be established in consultation with the faculty administrator.
- Funding for general conference catering (excluding conference dinners and receptions), that is buffet/sandwich lunches and tea and coffee during conference breaks, need to be fully justified and should not normally exceed £12 per person. The normal expectation is, however, that these costs will be covered by the registration fee and applicants need to explain why this is not applicable. Catering costs for closed events can be included, provided they do not exceed £12 per person.

Publicity costs (posters, welcome packs, stationary) for events need to be fully justified and applicants are encouraged to talk to their faculties and TORCH before making an application about costs charged for poster printing and material distribution.
- It is highly unlikely that conferences or other similar events held outside of Oxford will be supported. In some cases, where a location outside Oxford is appropriate to the research, a strong Oxford involvement will be expected, along with any other external funding to be routed through Oxford where possible.

Guidance to costs

The following section provides an overview on some costs items that may form part of applications in this category. They are examples and not set figures, and may need to be adapted according to your project's needs.

- **Travel:** this depends on mode of travel and distance; as a general guideline, UK travel normally ranges between £50-100; return travel Oxford to London £30.00; EU flights £200-300; overseas £400 - 1,000.
- **Accommodation and subsistence:** HMRC publishes worldwide daily subsistence rates in local currencies [here](#). However, it may be easiest to use the Leverhulme Trust rate of £150 per day for stays up to 21 days in duration. We encourage applicants to use College accommodation whenever possible for a reduced rate.
- **Consumables:** this should relate to specific project supplies and should not normally exceed £100.

- **Research assistance/conference assistance:** this is usually budgeted following the University casual pay scales; depending on the role the assistant is expected to fulfil, a different pay grade may be required (from less skilled to postdoctoral). The hourly rate budgeted should include employer costs and thus correspond to the Faculty cost of employing someone rather than actual payable salary; your Faculty’s administrator will be able to advise on which grade to use.

Grade	Faculty hourly rate ¹
4.1	£16.17
5.1	£18.50
6.1	£20.81
7.1	£23.41

TORCH

If you are applying for TORCH New Network funding through the John Fell Fund, TORCH is able to offer in kind support as part of the project (for example a web page, event and communications support) and therefore the costs do not need to be included in your application budget. We recommend you talk to Sarah Clay, TORCH Operations Manager before applying to discuss the details of your budget further.

If you are applying for any other John Fell Funding, and want to involve TORCH and its resources in your proposed activity/research project, it is essential that you contact Sarah Clay to discuss this and gain approval before applying. This is to ensure that staff time can be allocated appropriately, and all necessary resources included (**one hour staff time is costed at Grade 5.7: £21.43 incl. employer on-costs**). The following figures have been provided by TORCH as an approximate guide.

- **Project website:** In certain circumstances, TORCH can host a basic webpage. The TORCH team can keep the content up to date (introduction to the project, people involved, events, videos and audio podcasts, blog posts, etc). We have Google Analytics set up so that we can track how many people view the pages, videos etc. Costs are based on staff support of a minimum of 2 hours per week, and approximate hosting fee of £100 per year. There may be additional costs to factor in the time for initial set up. For more complicated project webpages, please talk to TORCH about the options and potential costs. Professional web design if needed, should be estimated at around £800 per day.
- **Communication, marketing and promotion, newsletter and social media:** Costs are based on staff support of a minimum of 2 hours per week for the duration of the project.
- **Design of promotional material:** We have toolkits for designing posters and flyers so that they are eye-catching as well as being accessible for audiences with visual impairments. We can also assist with designing basic posters: 3 hours
- **Printing of posters and flyers:** £15 for 100 A4 sized posters (through [Oxford University Print Studio](#))
- **Event support:** TORCH can assist in events that happen in the Radcliffe Humanities Building or elsewhere; this includes room booking, catering and promotion. TORCH is not able to assess call for papers, do registration on the day, contact speakers, book their travel (although we can book international speakers flights’ through travel companies – this needs to be confirmed separately for each project). It may be advisable to hire a student/DPhil/postdoc assistant to support this. The costs are as follows:
 - **Event catering:** £7-10 per head for a light sandwich lunch, £2.30 per person for coffee/tea and biscuits (internal catering).

¹ Table of hourly rates w. e. f. 1 August 2022. Please note that an individual must earn in excess of £144 (gross) per week in order for employer NI contributions to be payable.

- *Room booking*: free, except for the Chapel out of hours = £180 per hour
- *Staff support*: minimum of 2 hours per event; if the event is 3 days or longer, one hour per day of the event is required. A continuous cycle of events should include minimum 1 hour per week .
- ***Public and wider engagement with research***: We can advise on the end to end process of planning and putting together these activities, as well as ways in which you can reach out and engage new audiences. We have particular strengths in connecting and working in Museums and cultural venues. Costs: minimum of 2 hours staff time per event .
- ***Evaluation***: The TORCH team can advise on this and give support and examples of what could work for their project. Costs: minimum of 2 hours staff time per event)
- ***Photography***: Photographers cost around £100 per hour and we usually advise 2 hours per event.
- ***Podcasts & Filming***: Filming will cost approximately £400 per event, (£200 per hour), but this would increase if the event is running outside normal office hours. There may also be additional costs associated with editing, livestreaming etc. Edited recordings can be added to the University podcast site and TORCH YouTube Channel and linked through onto the TORCH website.

Annex 1 - Checklist for Humanities John Fell Fund applications

Check-points	Yes/ No?	Notes
Have you obtained the Faculty's support?		All applications require your Faculty's approval before they can be submitted to the Division. Please check internal deadlines with your Research Facilitator and/or the Head of Administration and Finance (HAF) and make sure you submit the application via IRAMS a few days before the submission deadline.
PI eligibility		Check the Humanities Guidance notes. Follow the link for more info about eligibility: John Fell Fund FAQs Research Support (ox.ac.uk)
Start date		3 months after the application submission date.
End date		The end date must be before the end date of the main applicant's contract, if applicable. Please also allow time to process all expenses once your actual project has ended - we suggest including a 2 month grace period after completion of the work.
Case for support – total number of pages?		The case for support must be a maximum of 2 sides for Small awards OR 4 sides of A4 for Main awards (11 point font minimum).
Curriculum Vitae attached?		A one-page CV is required for (a) any applicant or co-applicant who is an early-career researcher, and (b) any named researcher to be employed on the project (but not for any other applicants or co-applicants). If the application involves more than one early-career researcher or more than one named researcher, please add additional CVs as necessary. Each should be a single side of A4.
Have you contacted the research facilitator for the salary costs?		Your Faculty's Research Facilitator can provide you with the employment costs for a postdoctoral post, or other staff to be employed.
Are your research expenses eligible?		Please ensure that salary costs for PI and Co-I(s) are not included, as these are not eligible. For more info about non-eligible costs: Notes for applicants Research Support (ox.ac.uk)
Do you need an Ethical review?		If your project requires ethical review, you must obtain a CUREC number before your project can start. If you have a CUREC number approved for this project already, please provide it on the relevant section of the application form. For further information see the CUREC webpages .
Does the project have digital elements? Have you included FigShare costs?		For more info about the Sustainable Digital Scholarship Service (SDS) and FigShare costs, please see: What is the Sustainable Digital Scholarship Service? Sustainable Digital Scholarship (ox.ac.uk)
Finally: Have you emailed the Faculty's HAF to let them know your application is submitted and requires Faculty's approval?		Please make sure you submit leaving enough time before the deadline for the Faculty approval process.