

International Fellowships 2026

Guidance for Host Organisations and Mentors

The expectation for USF International Fellowship awards is that all Fellows will have an appropriate and experienced Mentor within the host organisation at which they are based for the Fellowship duration. It is intended that the Fellow should benefit from the support and expertise of the Mentor, as well as the wider scholarly community and practical support of the host organisation.

As part of this support:

Host organisations should be committed to the ethos of the International Fellowship scheme, as a joint investment with the USF in developing international research networks, capacity, and scholarship in the Global South. Host organisations in the Global North are therefore expected to waive or heavily discount any overhead costs as an in-kind contribution. As part of the USF's commitment to support Southern scholarship, host organisations in the Global South may charge a small overhead. More guidance for host organisations is offered below.

Mentors should be present to help initiate, adjust (if necessary), and successfully complete the proposed research plan, and to assist with the Fellow's career development. This role will therefore include interfacing with the host organisation and local research community, and also external bodies if relevant (e.g. research funding bodies, NGOs, industry, etc.). More guidance for host organisations is offered below.

This document offers further details and best practice guidelines for the relationship between the Host Organisation, Mentor, and USF International Fellow.

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1 Host organisation role

The USF expects that all International Fellows should benefit from the practical and infrastructural support of the host organisation, as well as its scholarly resources and communities.

This must be ensured via a formal visiting affiliation with the host organisation that includes the following minimum expectations:

- A practical and dedicated workspace within the host organisation for the Fellow, ideally in close proximity to the relevant department or institute where they (and their mentor) are based.
- Shared access to the host organisation's scholarly resources and IT services (e.g. library, journal subscriptions, printing, internet, etc.).
- Shared access to the host organisation's relevant support services (e.g. visa services, career services, housing services, and other basic support needs).
- Equal access to other shared resources and services that are normally available to all visiting scholars at the host organisation.

The USF expects that host organisations understand the International Fellowship scheme as a partnership with the USF in developing international research networks, capacity, and scholarship in the Global South. It is therefore expected that host organisations in the Global North should be prepared to waive or heavily discount any overhead costs as an in-kind contribution to the grant (including but not limited to affiliation fees, bench fees, etc).

The waiver or discount of such costs is one way that the USF evaluates the strength of the partnership with the host institution, and the latter's willingness to contribute to the success of the Fellowship program. However, the USF also acknowledges that not all organisations have access to the same resources, and therefore provides the following guidelines for host organisations depending upon where they are based:

- Host organisations based in countries on the current OECD's current [ODA recipient list](#) may charge overheads up to **GBP 150** per calendar month of the Fellowship.
- Host organisations based in other countries (including those of the Global North) should be prepared to waive or heavily discount all overhead costs (bench fees, affiliation fees, etc). Provided evidence of such discount is included with the mentor's support letter (e.g. indication of standard charges versus proposed charges), the USF will however consider overhead costs up to an absolute limit of **GBP 125** per calendar month of the Fellowship. The USF expects that mentors should explore and secure the waiver or discount of such costs until they fall within this level.

The USF will not consider overheads above these limits under any circumstances.

2 Mentorship role

The USF expects that the Mentor should be fully committed to the aims and objectives of the International Fellowship award, as detailed in the call and Further Particulars. The USF regards the mentorship component of the Fellowship as a crucial input towards achieving the wider outputs, outcomes, and impact of the scheme. It should be clear from the supporting letter that the Mentor fully understands the importance of their input and commitment to these objectives, and that they understand the responsibility and value of their role in fulfilling the scheme's goals.

The USF also expects that discussions over all aspects relevant to the formulation, conduct and presentation of the Fellow's research will be undertaken with the Mentor. The USF does not anticipate needing to intervene in this relationship, and will trust the Mentor to treat the USF International Fellow fairly throughout the award.

However, there are certain minimum expectations that the Mentor should fulfil:

- It is anticipated that the Mentor will be willing to assist the progress of the Fellow to ensure that they are able to fully realise their writing ambitions during the sabbatical period, possibly including jointly authored publications.
- The Mentor should be willing to commit to regular and frequent meetings with the Fellow at the host organisation, and there is an expectation that the Mentor should be readily accessible for the entire duration of the fellowship.
- The Mentor should ensure that the Fellow is welcomed into the relevant local research groups, networks and community at the host organisation, and where available, other useful local organisations.
- The Mentor should be active in seeking out other appropriate academic opportunities for the Fellow. Since whilst some fellowships may be relatively short, it is nevertheless intended that the award should lead to lasting scholarly networks and connections for all parties.
- The Mentor should approach the USF directly (via the USF Managing Director) should they have any concerns regarding the Fellow and their progress throughout the duration of the fellowship. Since, if challenges to a Fellow's progress do occur the USF will always endeavor to assist if possible, and it is therefore crucial that an open line of independent communication exists between all parties.
- The Mentor should be prepared to invest time at the application stage to ensure the appropriate expectations are set with the host organisation, and with specific reference to this guidance (e.g. including the waiver or discount of any overhead costs). It is expected that Mentors should clarify such details in their support letter (e.g. waiver of overheads, provision of resource support, etc).
- Optionally, a small budget can be included in the application to enhance the Mentor's understanding of the Fellow's research networks and context, to assist the Fellow to reach their intended goals and outputs, and to develop medium and long-term collaborative

networks. This might support activities such as a visit of the Mentor to the Fellow's home organisation(s), network(s), research site(s), and the participation in activities such as conferences, workshops, talks, and other engagements. This is optional rather than compulsory, and can be included in the budget of the Fellowship proposal if appropriate and justified in terms of strengthening leadership roles and future research and teaching collaborations between host and home institutions. The budget statement and any supplementary documents should be used to explain the value of this item.

3 Supporting letters

It is expected that Mentors should be able to clearly communicate their contribution to the proposed Fellowship via a supporting letter submitted with each application. This letter should also elaborate on the host organisation's contribution to the Fellowship, and make it clear that the proposed arrangements will contribute to the objectives of the scheme in both supporting the Fellow and the wider outcomes and impact of each grant.

Supporting letters should at minimum communicate:

- The Mentor and host organisation understand the scheme's aims and intent, and will contribute to these goals accordingly.
- The specific contribution(s) of the Mentor and host organisation to the Fellowship, including in terms of their support for the Fellow's scholarship, proposed aims and outputs, and other operational and/or logistical considerations (e.g. work space and institutional support).
- The Mentor understands their role and responsibility as part of the Fellowship, and are committed to fully supporting the Fellow in achieving their goals.
- An explanation of the Mentor's own motivations in supporting the candidate and the wider objectives of the scheme.

4 Reporting

The International Fellow has an obligation to produce an End of Award Report for the USF, and this report includes an obligatory section for substantive comments from the Mentor. The report is due no later than one month following the completion of the fellowship.

The USF provides a template form for completion of these reports, and it is expected that the Mentor will give due attention to their respective section. The USF considers evidence of a productive, creative relationship between the Fellow and the Mentor as vital to continuing the support of the International Fellowship funding scheme.

The Mentor's contribution should include:

- Confirmation that the Fellow's report is accurate, to the best of his/her knowledge.
- A detailed assessment of the progress of the Fellow over the duration of the USF grant. This should include reference to the wider purpose of the award, such as:

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The Urban Studies Foundation is a charity registered in Scotland, reference SC039937.

- Fostering global collaborative research networks.
- Developing high quality research that makes a significant contribution to urban studies.
- Strengthening the international career path of the Fellow.
- A detailed statement of how the Mentor has assisted the progress of the Fellow over the duration of the USF grant (e.g. mentoring arrangements, progress meetings, joint authorship, joint organisation of events, joint impact activity work, etc.)
- A statement of difficulties, if any, the Mentor has encountered with the Fellow over the duration of the fellowship.

The Mentor's section of the Report may be submitted separately from the International Fellow's report if this is deemed appropriate. The Fellow should be informed if this option is chosen, and the Mentor may send the final report with their section completed directly to the USF Managing Director.

The USF may also request a short interim update from the Mentor regarding the Fellow's progress during the Fellowship, but this will be requested via email only.

5 Other support

The USF is committed to supporting its fellows as best as possible throughout the duration of their award. Whilst awards made by the USF are typically final with regard to the terms and conditions of the award (amount of funding, duration, purpose, etc.), the USF recognises that certain circumstances may result in: hardship or other difficulties for the fellow, a limited research support budget, or new and unforeseen opportunities that may justify amendments to the original award and/or small top-ups of funding. Therefore, in some cases, the USF may provide a limited source of additional support funding.

In such instances, the mentor is strongly encouraged (if appropriate) to contact the USF to discuss any situations that arise which might give concern and/or reason for the further support of a fellow beyond the original funding award made.

However, in all cases the USF expects the mentor to have first adequately assisted and advised the fellow on what other avenues of support may exist to benefit the fellow, and the USF certainly cannot guarantee any additional funding over and beyond the original award made. For this reason, all parties should be satisfied that the budget is carefully researched and with low risk.