# Faculty of ASIAN & MIDDLE EASTERN Studies Research Grant Application Approval Process

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# Introduction

The Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies’ Research Committee reviews research applications made to and through the Faculty, and works with the University’s Humanities Divisional Research Facilitators to help applicants submit the strongest possible applications to the most appropriate grants. The Director of Research and the Divisional Research Facilitator are able to advise colleagues on potential grant applications.

If you wish to apply for a research grant, you will need to follow the procedures outlined below. Please note that the processes for permanent post-holders and for other applicants differ.

Before you decide on a specific grant, and before you approach the Director of Research or the Divisional Research Facilitator, familiarise yourself with the grant eligibility and application guidance material on the grant funder’s website. And see ‘[A Brief Guide to Applying for Funding](https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/access/content/group/a55c44d3-9f21-4dec-b48c-2dc6fa4e4bee/Forms/Oriental%20Studies%20Research%20Booklet.pdf)’.

* Major grant providers in the Humanities are: Arts and Humanities Research Council, British Academy, Leverhulme Foundation, European Research Council, Marie Curie International Fellowships and – internal to the University of Oxford – the John Fell Fund.
* Members of the Faculty will receive regular emails about funding opportunities: these can facilitate your preliminary research into appropriate grants.
* Of course, there are other funders out there, and specific grant calls come up regularly. We are able sometimes to suggest, but you can and should take the initiative to identify potential grants appropriate to your research and situation.
* Each funder has its own eligibility requirements, types of grants, outlines of what a successful grant will include, assessment criteria, and of course, deadlines.
* It is especially useful to keep in mind the assessment criteria as you formulate your research plans and applications.

**Externally funded small research grants (£5,000 or less) which do not have any financial or employment-related implications for the Faculty do not have to be submitted for consideration, but the committee is willing to review them and to make suggestions.**

* These should be sent to the Director of Research four weeks in advance of the submission deadline.

**Contact details (as at MT 2022):**

Director of Research Jacob Dahl (jacob.dahl@ames.ox.ac.uk)

Research Facilitator Ingrid Locatelli ([ingrid.locatelli@humanities.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ingrid.locatelli@humanities.ox.ac.uk))

Head of Administration and Finance Thomas Hall ([thomas.hall@orinst.ox.ac.uk](mailto:thomas.hall@orinst.ox.ac.uk))

# John Fell Fund Applications

* To be eligible for funding from the John Fell Fund you ‘should normally be a current salaried employee of the collegiate university holding an academic post (Professor or Associate Professor), or a research fellowship awarded competitively and intended to enable the holder to establish an independent research career (eg Royal Society University Research Fellow, Junior Research Fellow)’.
* Small-grant applications to the John Fell Fund, *must* be submitted to the Faculty’s Research Committee, since the Faculty is expected to rank these applications as a gathered field when they are submitted to the Division for further consideration.
* Draft bids for large John Fell Fund applications (over £10,000) *must be submitted ten days before the Week Four meeting in the term prior to submission of the application.* John Fell Fund Divisional deadlines occur shortly before the start of each term.
* Draft bids for small John Fell Fund applications *must be submitted by Monday of Week Eight in the term prior to submission of the application.* John Fell Fund Divisional deadlines occur shortly before the start of each term.
* Following revisions requested by the committee, final John Fell applications *must be submitted for reconsideration no later than three weeks before the start of term.* If accepted by the Research Director, they will be ranked by the committee. (The Humanities Division requires that we rank JFF applications prior to submission to the Faculty for further consideration.)

# APPLICATION PROCESS

**The Faculty operates a *two-stage process* when considering applications for research to be submitted through the Faculty.** Applications require Research Committee approval. Ideally, at both stages – outline applications and later, near-final drafts – documents are submitted *ten days prior to the termly committee meeting*, which is held on Friday in Week Four of each term.

**Applications outside of Research Committee cycles:**

It is recognized that deadlines occur throughout the year, and that not all deadlines will suit this schedule. In that case, committee discussion will take place by email circulation or special additional meetings. Timing of submissions must be discussed with the Director of Research. You must allow ample time for Faculty review by the committee.

# Initial/Outline Application

## **Post Holders (Permanent Members of the Faculty)**

Faculty post holders and those with permanent College posts who are associates of the Faculty are welcome to initiate conversations with the Director of Research about potential applications (in person or via email). This is particularly urged for colleagues who are planning large bids. Such bids require significant work and review, and applicants are advised to initiate the process several months in advance of the deadline.

Some large grants and special calls must undergo an internal Divisional or University competition in order to proceed. These require an Expression of Interest made to the Division, but evaluated first by the Director of Research and Research Committee. This is approximately equivalent to our outline stage as described below. Interested applicants should follow those guidelines, in consultation with the Director of Research.

* The outline application consists of:
  + a **2-page narrative** of the proposed research, foregrounding major research questions and the project’s importance to the discipline or larger research area. This should include an estimated time table and planned research outputs.
  + a brief **statement of the project’s significance** to the applicant’s longer research trajectory and long-term publication plans, including any REF-related activities.
  + an **indicative narrative budget**, stating categories (e.g., salary, travel expenses, IT) and estimated funding amounts to be requested, in addition to any resources in kind that will be needed (e.g., office space).
    - Any anticipated costs, such as database management, must be noted and projected plans for meeting them must be given. In the case of IT management, the Research Director may forward the proposal to the Faculty IT committee for evaluation.
  + a brief **statement regarding Faculty and Subject Group duties**: how those relating to the applicant will be met in the event of a successful application.
* These materials are to be submitted, as a single Word or pdf email attachment, to the Director of Research. The Director of Research may advise the applicant to also discuss the outline application with the Humanities Divisional Research Facilitator.
* At this stage, the Director of Research will review the material for comprehensiveness and clarity and may ask for revisions or additions. If appropriate, the Director of Research may seek confidential input from a colleague in the relevant field.
* If given initial approval by the Director of Research, the applicant will need to secure the views of the Subject Group on the potential bid.
  + To carry the application forward, the Director of Research and Committee require a written statement from the current Subject Group chair, responding to the following questions, to ensure that these issues have been thoroughly aired:
    - What will be the impact of a successful grant and the specific buyout (if applicable), over the period of the grant, for the Subject Group in teaching and administration?
    - Will the applicant continue to fill administrative needs of the Subject Group?
    - Which Subject Group members will do which jobs in the event that this application is successful?
    - Are there other major grant applications in the pipeline from the Subject Group, and/or sabbatical leave applications, and what management plans are in place in the event that more than one application is successful?
* With the Subject Group’s responses on the above questions, the outline application will be forwarded to the Research Committee for discussion.
* If the committee has suggestions for improvement, or feels that the outline application is not ready for approval, the applicant may rewrite the application and re-submit it to the Director of Research for reconsideration. The Director of Research may approve it by Chair’s action if it is felt that the committee’s suggestions have been successfully met, or may re-circulate it to the committee for further discussion.

## **Fixed-Term Post Holders and Other Applicants, Internal and External**

Potential applicants are invited to submit an outline application to the Research Committee as an email attachment to the Director of Research. This will consist of the following:

* An [application cover sheet](https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/access/content/group/a55c44d3-9f21-4dec-b48c-2dc6fa4e4bee/Forms/Faculty%20Cover%20Sheet%20Grants.doc)
* A single Word or pdf attachment comprising the following:
  + a **2-page narrative** of the proposed project, foregrounding major research questions and the project’s significance to the applicant’s discipline or research field. This should include an estimated time table and planned research outputs.
  + a **1-page statement of the project’s significance** to the applicant’s longer research trajectory, publication plans, and overall career trajectory
  + a **justification for applying through the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies** and for carrying out the research at the University of Oxford
  + an **indicative narrative budget**, stating categories (e.g., salary, travel expenses, IT) and estimated funding amounts to be requested, in addition to any resources in kind that will be needed (e.g., office space).
    - Any anticipated costs, such as database management, must be noted and projected plans for meeting them must be given.
    - The Director of Research may forward the proposal to the IT Committee for consideration.
  + a full **CV**
* A statement from a mentor who will oversee the project locally. **The mentor is a crucial element in your application**, and the Research Committee will only consider applications with demonstrated strong mentor participation. Please note the following very important points:
  + The mentor will be expected to hold a permanent academic post in the University. She or he will be either a member of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies or have a recognised association with the Faculty.
  + The mentor is responsible at the application stage and throughout the project, should the bid be successful, for in-depth review and feedback. The mentor will be expected by the Faculty to be involved at every stage.
  + It is the applicant’s responsibility to secure the **mentor’s written recognition of their support and involvement – to be submitted at this outline stage**, acknowledging recognition of their commitment to their role and substantively approving of the applicant’s project and justification for working at Oxford.
  + This entails submitting a draft application to the mentor for comment *before* submitting the outline to the Director of Research.

If the outline application is approved by the Research Committee, applicants will be put in contact with the Divisional Research Facilitator for support in taking the application further.

NB. In **ALL cases**, submission of an application to the funder remains contingent on final Research Committee approval.

**Specific calls:**

Some grants are competitive at the Faculty level: that is, the Research Committee will consider them as a gathered field and will select those to put forward to the Division and/or University.

1. For high-volume Postdoctoral Fellowship schemes (e.g., British Academy, Leverhulme), expressions of interest from all applicants will be reviewed by the Research Committee. Expressions of interest should take the same form as the outline applications as detailed above, or follow specified procedures as published for each scheme.
2. For large and complex bids (e.g., ERC; multi-institutional or multi-Faculty projects), applications where the PI is not a post holder or where their post will not outlast the project, or where evidence of selectivity is required by the funder (e.g., AHRC Leadership Fellows scheme), a short proposal (equivalent to the outline proposal as described above) must be submitted to the Director of Research, initially for discussion, which will include the Head of Administration and Finance (HAF) and Research Facilitator.
   1. This will then be forwarded to the Faculty Research Committee for consideration. The proposal must include the academic case and also project management details, spelled out in the narrative budget.

# Faculty review of full draft application and budget

All final applications require approval from the Research Committee before submission to the funder.

A **near-complete draft of the application** and **near-complete budget** must be submitted to the Research Facilitator in time to receive feedback, finalise the budget and make any necessary revisions. This will then be forwarded for review by the Director of Research and Head of Administration and Finance *ideally four, and no later than two, weeks prior to the external deadline.*

* If appropriate, the Director of Research may seek confidential input from a colleague in the relevant field.
* The application will then be forwarded to the Research Committee for discussion and final consideration.

# Outcome of the application review process

Depending on the Research Committee’s judgement, an application will be either

1. Approved for submission, alongside any feedback and suggestions on the proposal
2. Referred back to the applicant with comments that should be addressed before reconsideration by the Faculty
3. Withheld from approval, with feedback on reasons for this. The Committee may or may not permit resubmission.