



Research funding - Call for Expressions of Interest

The Oxford Martin School is requesting proposals from eligible academics for solutions-focused research programmes that could have a major impact on this and future generations. Further details of our selection criteria are given below but we are looking for adventurous “high-risk high-reward” ideas that would not be fundable through standard research council or related routes.

Unlike previous calls, we are not specifying a theme but are considering any project that addresses the School’s mission. As always, we are interested in applications from parts of the University that the School has not previously supported, and welcome proposals that make novel interdisciplinary links across the University. Initially, we are requesting a short Expression of Interest (Eoi) that clearly state the programme’s aim, novelty and how, if successful, it will have real-world impact. The Eoi should also state why the Oxford Martin School should support the idea rather than traditional funders, and how the project would continue after the end of School funding. Our Management Committee will then shortlist a limited number of Eois to go to full proposals.

Please send your Eoi by 5pm on 19th February 2024 to Claire.jordan@oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk. E-mail jean-charles.buffet@oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk if you have any research queries related to your expression of interest.

More than a funder

The Oxford Martin School seeks to be a world-leading centre of pioneering research that addresses global challenges. The School aims to find solutions to the most pressing challenges of our time, in particular issues that cannot be understood by work in any one academic field alone. Underpinning all our research is the need to demonstrate a feasible pathway to impact and implementation at scale, from innovations in science, medicine and technology, through to expert advice and policy recommendations.

An Oxford Martin School research programme is not solely a funding arrangement but entails a partnership: we provide strong support for our researchers both in the unique challenges of interdisciplinary research and in disseminating the outcomes to effect real world change. We offer flexible, pragmatic funding and support in areas such as fundraising and communications; in return, we expect our researchers to engage actively in our community.

How will we decide?

We will judge your expression of interest against the School’s research funding criteria:

- **Scale:** does the project address a contemporary challenge of global significance?
- **Excellence:** does the project involve research of the highest international standard?
- **Impact:** will this research make a major positive difference in the world beyond academia, and how will this be achieved?
- **Additionality:** what is novel about the proposed research, and why should this research be funded by the Oxford Martin School, rather than by another funder?

Your Expression of Interest should therefore demonstrate, in a summary form, that you:

- Are addressing a key research question related to the creation of solutions for a major challenge of the 21st Century.
- Have the academic expertise and leadership in the relevant area and are eligible to apply.
- Have a clear pathway to impact so that the results of the project, if successful, will be taken up by policymakers or practitioners.
- Are proposing an idea that would not be easily fundable through conventional research channels.

Eligibility

We view the combination and selection of our Programme's Directors as vital to the success of the programmes. All prospective lead applicants (Directors) must be on a permanent contract or have a senior fellowship position that extends beyond the length of the proposed research. Applications to the Oxford Martin School usually include Directors from more than one Department and successful proposals are very likely to pull together novel combinations of researchers from different fields. We are particularly interested in receiving expressions of interest from consortia that span different divisions, though this is not a requirement.

The School expects to provide funding for our Directors – we do this because we want this programme to benefit from your full involvement and for the School to benefit from your membership. We view 20% as the ideal amount for the Lead Director (Lead PI), but we are flexible as to whether you are able to contribute more or less.

The length of a programme is flexible and, in the past, has been between 1 to 5 years. The budget is also flexible and, in the past, has ranged from £100k upwards, with this funding round having a maximum amount of £1 million. The Oxford Martin School does not support research external to the University of Oxford.

The process

For the first stage of our selection process, we are seeking short Expressions of Interest from eligible academics. We request that you provide a short (**maximum of two pages**) description of the proposed research. We are not prescriptive about the structure of the Expression of Interest, but it typically might comprise:

- A non-technical summary;
- The context and statement of the problem;
- A description of the proposed research and anticipated outputs.

At this stage we are interested in the subject to be researched, approach to be taken, and the suitability of the lead applicants. If we decide to request a full proposal, we will then need more details of the research, the timetable and the team. We do *not* require costed proposals at this stage, but please provide a rough estimate of budget and length of the proposed programme.

The Expressions of Interest will be considered by the Management Committee of the Oxford Martin School. All information will be treated in strict confidence. Requests for full proposals will be issued in March 2024; the deadline for full proposals will be in May 2024, and it is hoped that final decisions will be made in June 2024. It is envisaged that the research teams would be able to start work in Michaelmas 2024.