



A Call for Expressions of Interest

Managing Future Shocks

Covid-19 has forced us to confront some of the risks inherent to our ever more interconnected world. We have had a stark reminder of the need for vigilance in the face of emerging health threats, and the very real possibility of new pandemics with potentially worse outcomes. Yet future shocks are not limited to pandemics, and could be climate-related, economic, geo-political, social, technological, or environmental. The only certainty is that there will be more, and that they will severely challenge our economies, social cohesion, political stability, and the natural systems which support our lives.

James Martin's vision was that the Oxford Martin School should be unique in bringing together teams of researchers from across disciplines to innovate and find solutions to the pressing global challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. The 21st century is likely to experience severe global shocks more often than we have in the past, and therefore one of this century's great challenges will not only be trying to avert such shocks, but to manage those that prove unavoidable.

James Martin believed that "we can make any kind of world we want". In response to this vision, the School seeks proposals on ***how future shocks can be managed***.

There is ***no limitation to the type of shock*** your research might relate to or the way in which you might envisage the response. At this stage, the School invites Expressions of Interest for research that will lead to solutions to the urgent, critical challenge of managing future shocks.

Complex challenges often require multiple disciplines to find a solution that works, but there is another motivation for interdisciplinarity: innovation often comes from the unexpected combination of two or more things, so researchers working together from different fields have more chance of achieving significant new insights. In your expression of interest, we therefore require an element of ***diversity of expertise***.

The Oxford Martin School aims to support new ways of conceptualising, analysing, and addressing the opportunities and challenges of the 21st Century. The School judges research projects by their scale, excellence, impact and additionality. In the context of this call, ***scale*** means addressing large future systemic shocks. The projects need to demonstrate outstanding research ***excellence*** and that, if successful, they will have significant ***impact*** on managing future shocks. The School looks to demonstrate ***additionality***, bringing together innovative research groups and supporting projects that could not be funded from existing sources.

All prospective applicants are encouraged to discuss their project with the School's Research and Programmes Manager, Dr Jean-Charles Buffet, ahead of submission.

Deadline for Expressions of Interest: 5 pm on Monday 18th October 2021.

More than a funder

The Oxford Martin 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. We seek to create exciting and novel research consortia from across the University. An Oxford Martin 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 fundraising support: in return, we expect our researchers to engage actively in our community.

How will we decide?

First and foremost, we will judge your expression of interest against the School's research funding criteria:

- Scale and significance: does the project address a contemporary challenge of global significance?
- Academic 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 that facilitates the management of, or the creation of solutions for, the major shocks that may occur in the 21st Century.
- Have the academic expertise and leadership in the relevant area and are eligible to apply.
- Have a clear pathway of impact so that the results of the project, if successful, will be taken up by policy-makers or practitioners.
- Are proposing an idea that would not be easily fundable through conventional research channels.
- Are willing and able to commit to being part of the Oxford Martin School's community of interdisciplinary and impact-focussed researchers.

Eligibility

We view the combination and selection of our Programme's Lead Researcher(s) as vital to the success of the programmes.

All prospective lead applicants (Lead Researchers) must be on a permanent contract or have a senior fellowship position that extends beyond the length of the proposed research. Please be aware of your Department or Faculty's policies; if you are not eligible to apply for research funding as a Principal Investigator in your own name, you are not eligible to submit an Expression of Interest.

Applications to the Oxford Martin School usually include Lead Researchers from more than one Department and successful proposals are very likely to pull together novel combinations of researchers from different fields. If we can be helpful in building partnerships across the University, please get in touch. We are particularly interested to receive expressions of interest from consortia

that span different divisions, though this is not a requirement. Please contact us if you intend to be named in multiple applications.

The School expects to provide funding for at least 20% of our Lead Researchers – 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 minimum amount, but we are flexible as to whether you are able to contribute more or, in some circumstances, less. We are aware that senior academics have a number of ongoing demands and commitments; however, you must be able to demonstrate that you have the time to lead an interdisciplinary research programme at the School.

The length of the 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.

Matched funding

Where other potential matching funds are available or highly likely, this should be made clear and will be considered positively by the committee, but this is not a requirement. Where other funding has not been identified, the School can work with you to identify and secure further resources.

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 four pages**) description of the proposed research and a short (<2 page) CV for each proposed Lead Researcher.

We are not prescriptive about the structure of the Expression of Interest, but it typically might comprise:

- A non-technical summary (300 words);
- The context and statement of the problem;
- A description of the proposed research and anticipated outputs (~2 pages);
- An outline of how the work, if it is successful, will effect change;
- Detail of matching funds (if available) and plans for funding continuing work; and
- A statement of your future anticipated interactions with the School.

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. Please note that the Oxford Martin School will meet directly allocated, directly incurred and estates costs, but not indirect costs. Real costs associated with the project will be allowable.

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The Expressions of Interest will be considered by the Management Committee of the Oxford Martin School (Heads of Divisions and Pro-VCs). All information will be treated in strict confidence.

Requests for full proposals will be issued in December at the latest. The deadline for full proposals will be in February, and it is hoped that final decisions will be made in March. It is envisaged that the research teams would be able to start work in Michaelmas Term 2022. Conceivably, this timetable may be affected by the course of the pandemic though we hope not.

We anticipate that the Oxford Martin School will contribute up to a total of £1 million per project over a period of two to five years.

If you have research or strategic queries, please contact Dr Jean-Charles Buffet, jean-charles.buffet@oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk, ext 87367. Please submit administrative queries and your Expressions of Interest to Claire Jordan, claire.jordan@oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk.