

JOHN FELL OUP RESEARCH FUND: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT FOR 2009-10

Executive Summary

Since 2006, Oxford University Press has transferred £5m per annum to create the John Fell OUP Research Fund. The Fund is intended to foster creativity and a proactive approach to research opportunities in all subject areas, by making seedcorn and start-up grants, and providing staff and funds to stimulate applications to external agencies.

In 2009-10, the John Fell OUP Research Fund Committee allocated the following sums:

- £1,376k for 62 proof-of-concept projects;
- £1,040k in 57 grants to early career researchers;
- £407k for 36 projects involving other academic activities likely to lead to new research initiatives;
- £403k to extend 2 research facilitator posts;
- £1,220k in 34 awards for 'matching' contributions to help leverage funding from external bodies;
- £645k for 57 division-specific projects.

51 'main awards' (that is, grants above £7,500) were made for projects falling under the first three categories above: by value, this represents 33% of the amount requested by applicants for these purposes over the course of the year.

The John Fell Committee regularly collects reports on projects that were funded in earlier years of the fund's existence and have now been completed. Reports received to date on 275 projects, which received a total of £6m from the Fell Fund, indicate that overall, these projects have attracted further income from other sources of £38m. These figures suggest that on average, Fell Fund awards are leveraging other funding at a ratio of up to 1:6. Evidence is emerging that research facilitators supported by the Fell Fund are having a substantial impact on the research culture and attraction of external funds. Some aspects of the Fund's work, such as support for early career researchers, may not produce immediate returns, but are intended to help retain researchers of high calibre and identify promising lines of research for the future.