

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. The Fell Fund is one means of supporting key strategic aims within the University, which include developing global reach and promoting interdisciplinary collaborations.

In 2013-14, the John Fell OUP Research Fund Committee received 444 applications for small or main awards (compared to 318 for 2012-13) and allocated the following sums out of the John Fell Fund:

Category of award	Purpose	Number of awards	Amount Awarded (John Fell Fund) (£k)	Amount Awarded (Capital Fund) (£k)
a	Proof-of-concept projects	86	2,177	0
b	Early career researchers	59	1,304	0
c	Other academic activities likely to lead to new research initiatives	50	461	0
d	Research facilitators	0	0	0
e	'Matching' contributions to help leverage funding from external bodies	14	427	0
f	Strategic investment in equipment	8	51	1,672

83 'main' awards (that is, grants above £7,500) were made for projects falling under the first three categories above: by value, this represents 31% of the amount requested by applicants for these purposes over the course of the year.

Figure 1 shows the number of main and small award applications supported and amount awarded by category in 2013/2014, and Figure 2 shows the same data for all years of the fund to date.

Figure 1

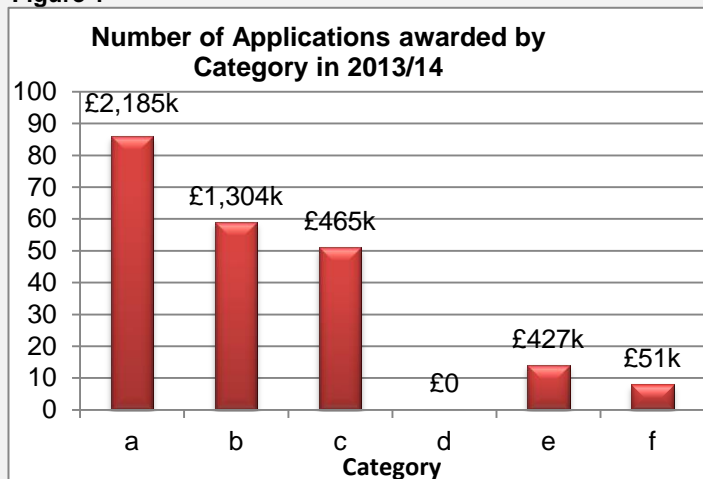
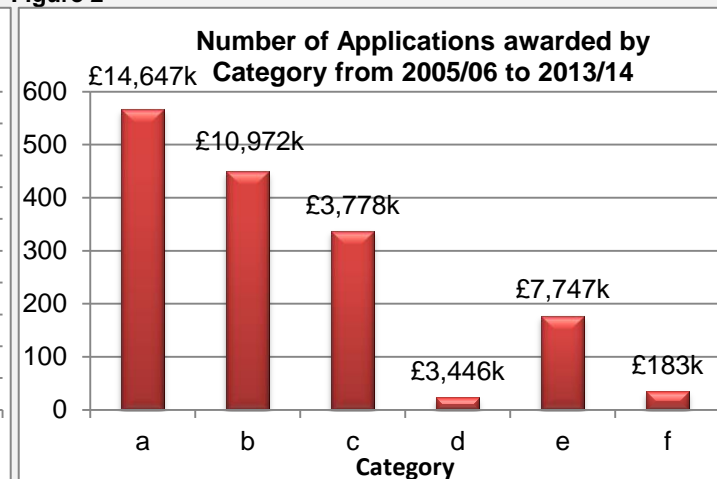


Figure 2



Some of the funds awarded under category f (strategic investment in equipment) are met out of the University's Capital Fund, on the recommendation of the John Fell Committee, under arrangements agreed by the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee. These arrangements supplement the funds available to the John Fell Committee to support applications for major pieces of research equipment.

Of the £5m per annum available for the John Fell Fund, £250k is set aside for each of the four academic divisions to provide for division-specific purposes that cannot readily be met within the categories of award outlined above. The divisions use these in different ways: purposes include provision of start-up funding to establish the research of new senior academic appointees, matched funding for Leverhulme Early Career Fellowships, and support for strategic initiatives. Balances that are not spent in one year may be carried forward to another. In 2013/14, 34 applications were received under this award stream, of which 19 were successful, and a total of £709k was allocated.

The total amount awarded by the John Fell Fund for main, small and divisional awards in 2013/2014 was therefore £5.1m. In addition, £1,672k was awarded from the Capital Fund.

The John Fell Committee 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 667 projects, which received a total of £14,947k from the Fell Fund, indicate that overall, these projects have attracted further income from other sources of £113,616k. These figures suggest that on average, Fell Fund awards are leveraging other funding at a ratio of up to 1:7.6.

During 2013/14, development work continued on a new online application system and database which will enhance the management of the Fund. The system was finalised and implemented for Trinity Term 2014. Whilst still in its infancy, the aims of streamlining the current process and providing more rigorous management of the Fund with benefits for applicants as well as administrators of the Fund are beginning to be realised.