

Using COS Funding Alert

COS Funding Alert delivers all new funding opportunities relevant to your work directly to your desktop each week. This information is sourced from the world's largest database of funding information, COS Funding Opportunities (<http://fundingopps.cos.com>).

If your institution provides you with this service, to automatically start receiving customised weekly funding alerts about new grant opportunities tenable in your country and relevant to your work, you need only an expertise profile with an e-mail address and an expertise statement. You can edit your profile, control your COS Funding Alert account and access other research services from your personal workspace on the Web, your COS Workbench.

If you already have a profile, you will have received an e-mail with your username and password for accessing your COS Workbench. Login at <http://login.cos.com>. If you do not know or do not remember your password, please go to this page and follow the relevant instructions. If you do not already have a profile, please add one, clicking on the 'join' link from this page.

Change Your Alert Options and Setting User Defaults

You can customise your alert options, such as turning e-mail delivery on or off or changing the core search settings on all your alert searches (such as citizenship), via the 'Options' link.

The first thing you should do is confirm or set your User Defaults. This will pre-set some of your search parameters when you add or modify an alert search. On the Options page, click on User Defaults. Choose your citizenship(s) from the picklist, then click on the Browse button under Activity Location (this opens a new window) to select the countries or regions where you normally would consider doing your work. Finally, if you are an academic at an academic research organisation, choose Yes for the Demographic Information. Then save these changes, and go back to Workbench home.

Adding New Searches and Modifying Existing Searches

You can set up to five Funding Alert searches to find specific funding information. To add a new search or modify an existing one, go to the Funding Alert section of your Workbench, set your user defaults appropriately as above and then:

1. Click on 'Add an Alert' or 'Modify Alerts'.
2. Name or re-name the search as desired.
3. Click on 'advanced search interface' to set up a detailed search, or add Keywords to the simple search interface by clicking on the "Add Keywords" button and choosing terms from the Keyword browser.
4. Set a search using the form provided.
5. Preview the search to see if it gives you appropriate results. If not, go back and modify the search until you get a relevant results list. Note that this search preview runs against the entire COS Funding Opportunities database; the alert will only run the search against the 300-600 new opportunities added each week.
6. Save the search once you are happy with it.

Please refer to the end of this document for some tips on getting results relevant to you.

Viewing Your Funding Alerts

A weekly e-mail is sent to notify you of all new funding opportunities that match your search specifications. The e-mail includes the URL links that take you directly to the opportunity. You may also log into your COS Workbench to view and download the results, which are archived for three to four weeks. (You will need to do so if you are not working from your institution's network.)

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COS Keywords

When you submit, edit or update an expertise statement in your profile, COS editors assign relevant Keywords from a controlled list (<http://fundingopps.cos.com/keyword.shtml>) which describe your research interests. These Keywords are then matched against new funding opportunities, which are indexed using this same keyword vocabulary.

When you add to the Keyword collection in any COS Funding Alert search, you will also be given the option to add the COS Keywords to your expertise profile.

To delete unwanted Keywords from your profile and/or your searches, follow the 'Options' and then the 'Keywords' link in your COS Funding Alert account section of your Workbench.

Search Setting Tips

This section provides advice on how to make best use of the service generally. The following bullet points detail some specific ideas on how to use the fields in the advanced search interface:

activity location field = wherever you would like to do your work; you may wish to try with and without the "unrestricted" box ticked.

citizenship field = your citizenship(s); you may wish to try with and without the "unrestricted" box ticked, generally it is best to leave the "unspecified" box unticked.

amount field = you may wish to set a minimum US\$ amount, unless you are interested in very small grants as well.

funding type field = you may wish to restrict this to, for example, research, or curriculum development, or other kinds of funds you need; alternatively, you can choose "not" from the picklist at the left to exclude certain types of funding, such as scholarships.

keywords field = have a browse through our keyword hierarchy to see if there are some that more specifically describe your areas of interest; you could combine these terms by "and" rather than "or" to make a highly refined search. When you change the keywords in your searches, you will be presented with the option of changing them in your Expertise profile as well.

'all fields' field = as an alternative to or in addition to keywords, you can search for specific word or specific phrases (enclosing the phrases in quotes) in the 'all fields' field or in the abstract field.

sponsor type field = if you set the activity location and citizenship fields properly, you will only receive those that are open to you, however, to reduce the number of results you receive each week, you may wish to exclude all US federal opportunities by highlighting all of the sponsor types EXCEPT for "federal, US", by holding down your control or open apple key.

Set up additional searches to compare various search strategies, to find specific opportunities (for example, to fund a trip to a particular conference in Malaysia) and to find funding for your students. Choose a name for them that will remind you what they are for. You can set up to five searches, the results of which will be delivered in a single, weekly e-mail.

You can select more than one item from a picklist by holding your control key (on a PC) or the open apple key (on a Mac).

You can also use the "refine your search" link to search within a list of results as you narrow down to an Alert search appropriate for you.

If you do not have much experience with database searching, you might find it helpful to go through the search help documentation available from all the COS services. It explains things like searching using Boolean terms (and/or/not) and using quotation marks and truncation. Searching databases—including COS databases—is a transferable skill, but one that does take some time to learn to do effectively.

If you have questions, please use the online help documentation as your first point of call. If this does not help, please contact the COS liaison at your institution. The COS help desk (help@cos.com) is also available to answer your questions.