Train and Engage – Guide for Applicants

Deadline: Midnight Sunday 3rd June

The aim of the Train and Engage grant scheme is to increase activity, skills and understanding of public engagement among postgraduate research students across UCL.

The scheme is funded and administered by UCL’s Public Engagement Unit (PEU) and only those who have attended training delivered by the PEU are able to apply for the funding of up to £1,000. If you have been funded through this scheme in the past, you are not eligible for this round.

Please read these guidance notes carefully before you complete your application.

It is strongly recommended that you talk to the Public Engagement Unit in advance of submitting your application. Contact publicengagement@ucl.ac.uk to get in touch with the relevant Public Engagement Coordinator.

Applications must:

a) Be led by:
   A UCL postgraduate student or postdoctoral member of staff who has attended at least one of the following courses delivered by the PEU:
   - Train and Engage (any year)
   - The Doctoral School ‘Connecting with the public: Research Communication, Public Engagement and Outreach’ course
   - If you are at all unsure about your eligibility, please contact publicengagement@ucl.ac.uk
   A UCL postgraduate student or postdoctoral member of staff who has not been funded through Train and Engage in the past.

b) Be related to a particular type of public engagement project or activity. Examples include:
   - Using expertise, knowledge, time and resources to support communities and respond to community need.
   - Encouraging people outside the university, especially those who do not traditionally do so, to contribute their knowledge to our activities.
   - Encouraging conversations between researchers, publics and the university about the direction of our research and teaching.
   - Communicating research, especially to specific and more diverse audiences.
   - Creating knowledge and changing practice in collaboration with communities and interest groups outside the university.

c) Build upon candidate’s research/learning.

d) Represent good value for money.

e) Be for activities that will be completed by the end of the 2018/19 academic year (although they may be part of a larger ongoing/longer term project).

Possible projects supported could include:

- Running workshops with appropriate groups
- Developing an innovative model of open day
- Co-curating an exhibition with the public
- Organising a participatory design competition
- Guided tours of a place or building
- Organising a festival
- Producing a podcast for a particular audience
- Running a series of evening cultural events
- …any other ideas you have!
For other ideas, please refer to our leaflet on your Public Engagement Journey, which focuses on helping you to think about different ways of working with public groups:

Application process

Complete the application form and submit it to UCL’s Public Engagement Unit at publicengagement@ucl.ac.uk by Midnight Sunday 3rd June.

Members of the Public Engagement Unit will then offer feedback on your application by Monday 11th June, and you will then be able to submit a final version of your application by midnight Sunday 24th June.

Applications may only be submitted electronically as MS Word documents.

Your application will be considered by a small grants panel made up of UCL staff and students with significant public engagement experience. This panel will decide whether to fund your application.

The panel will consider:

- The quality of the idea behind the application.
- Whether they think the project can realistically be delivered within cost and time constraints.
- The potential impact of the project on the public.
- The potential impact of the project on staff/students involved.
- Whether the evaluation of the project has been effectively planned and organised.

The panel’s decisions will be communicated to applicants in mid-July.

Additional information:

What is public engagement? This scheme will use the definition of public engagement developed by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/what):

“Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.”

And a definition of ‘public’ developed from that provided by HEFCE:

“The ‘public’ includes individuals and groups who do not currently have a formal relationship with an HEI through teaching, research or knowledge transfer.”

Filling in the form:

For the purposes of this application we use the term ‘project’ to describe the activities you take part in that require funding. We do recognise that there are all sorts of things that you might use a grant for.

At the top of the form we ask for basic information about you, your studies and your proposed project. Please fill this in as completely as possible. We ask for some of this information so that we can make a smooth transfer of funds to you if you are awarded a grant.

In addition to this guidance, please refer to your training and the knowledge and slides provided by the Public Engagement Unit following your training.

Question 1:

This question is all about your reasons for doing the project. How will this project help you to develop your own skills? Are you hoping to inform people about your work? Are you planning to help people using your specialist knowledge or skills? What do you hope will be the effect on the project team? What do you hope will be the effect on the community or public group?

Please note that value for money isn’t simply judged by the number of people involved in your project. For example, a project that creates a meaningful relationship with 10 people may have more value than one that has a small impact on 1,000. The best public engagement projects are those ran at an appropriate scale for your aims and public groups.
Question 2:
This question is intended to focus your thoughts on the people outside of your project team who will be involved. If you’re putting on an event, what sorts of people are likely to come along? Will they be defined by age group, location, profession, or a shared interest? Where will they come from? If you’re working with a specific community group, who are they? Please also say something here about how you will contact this audience and let them know about the activities. How will you make sure they want to participate? If the audience for your project is school age children, please talk to a member of UCL’s Public Engagement Unit to discuss your application prior to completing the application form, as your project may be better suited to your university’s Widening Participation agenda.

Question 3:
Please provide a short description of what will happen as a result of you receiving the Train and Engage funds. There is space further down for you to explain what the aims of the project are. If you are funded, you will be given an opportunity to make changes to this description before it is used on our website.

Question 4:
If you’ll be working with other people or partners, whether from your university or from outside academia, please tell us who they are, what they do, and what involvement they’ll have. Please give a very short description of people’s experience, making sure that it’s relevant to the project.

Question 5:
This question allows you to show the panel how you’ll know that you’ve achieved your aims. How will you assess whether your project was a success? We don’t expect an in-depth evaluation, but we expect you to be clear about what success looks like. If your aims and objectives, as laid out in Question 6, are easy to understand, and genuinely measurable, you should be able to express how you’ll measure and reflect on them here. Please get in touch with the PEU for guidance, tools and advice on evaluation publicengagement@ucl.ac.uk and view our toolkits and guides online: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/culture/projects/engagement-toolkits-and-guides

Question 6:
Please describe how the project links to your studies or research area at UCL.

Question 7:
Please include a rough timescale for your project. The simplest way of doing this is to list the major milestones in the project and the month that they will take place.

Question 8:
Please provide a budget listing each item or group of items (for example, catering, materials, travel) to be paid for. You can apply for funding for running costs of your project. This can include: training, materials, venue hire, and equipment, resources for participants, stationery, and travel. All costs must be related to your project. This means that we will only provide funding for what you need in order to achieve your aims and objectives. Please also include a brief note of any costs that will be covered by other funding. You should also note anything being provided free of charge (such as venues or volunteers’ time). Including these details allows the panel to get a better picture of everything that will happen. Please note that Train and Engage funding cannot be used to pay researchers for their time.

International travel:
Due to the scale of the award, international travel is not ordinarily funded. If your engagement is happening abroad, it is expected that you would align your need to be in that location with times you are already travelling: for instance for field research. If international travel outside of times you are already travelling or to a different location is unavoidable, please talk to the PEU for advice.
Question 9:
We’re aware that you might want to use this grant to make an existing project better, or to allow it to be spread to a wider audience. This question lets the panel know how much of a difference the grant will make. It’s also a chance to describe your plan B – if a grant isn’t forthcoming, what will you do instead?

If you’re successful
All project leaders who are awarded funding will be asked to:
1) Attend group sessions to share their learning and experiences with the other project leaders.
2) Share their learning as widely as possible and participate in UCL Public Engagement Network activities.
3) Stay in touch with the Public Engagement Unit, informing us of any changes in their project.
4) Complete a short project learning and evaluation report at the end of their project, reflecting on the project. This will include an end of project budget breakdown with itemised costs.

Everyone who receives a Train and Engage award will be required to fulfil all four of the conditions listed above. In most cases, the Train and Engage awardee will receive the Train and Engage grant by transfer into their department.