UCL Global Engagement Funds 2024/25
CRITERIA & GUIDANCE

What are the Global Engagement Funds?

- Offered as part of the wider [Research, Innovation and Global Engagement (RIGE) funding streams](#), UCL Global Engagement Funds (GEF) provide seed funding to UCL staff to facilitate research or education collaboration, public engagement, global policy and capacity building through partnerships that address global challenges, and which may have the potential for global reach and real-world impact.
- Up to £5,000 is available for each new project undertaken before 31 July 2025 in academic year 2024/25.
- The funds are led by UCL's network of [Vice-Deans (International)](#) and supported by [UCL Global Engagement](#).

Who are the Global Engagement Funds open to?

- Applications are open to UCL staff members across all faculties and departments with the following roles:
    - Professor or equivalent
    - Associate Professor/ Reader or equivalent
    - Senior Lecturer/Principal Researcher/Principal Research Associate or equivalent
    - Lecturer/Senior Research Associate or equivalent
    - Post Doc/Researcher/Research Associate or equivalent
    - Professional Service & VP Office staff are also eligible to apply
    - *Applicants must have an open-ended UCL contract or a fixed-term contract which lasts until at least July 2025. If an applicant has a fixed-term contract that does not last until July 2025 they can apply if their contract covers the dates in which the project is due to take place and have a co-applicant who is a UCL staff member with an open-ended contract. In this case, the co-applicant will be responsible for reporting outcomes to UCL Global Engagement.*
- Applicants are not required to have a doctorate to apply but do have to be in one of the categories above. PhD students are not eligible to apply as the main applicant but can be involved as collaborators in a project.
- Honorary staff members are not eligible to apply as lead applicants but may be co-applicants or contribute to the project. Honorary staff members cannot commit or authorise expenditure of UCL funds.
- In line with UCL's commitment to equality and diversity, we encourage applications from a range of backgrounds regardless of career stage, age, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and religion.
- **Please note that some small changes have been introduced for the 2024/25 UCL Global Engagement Funds in order to increase the reach and breadth of access across UCL.**
    - You can submit a maximum of two proposals across these funding streams, either as a lead applicant or co-applicant. For example, you could submit 1 GEF proposal and 1 partner proposal, or 2 GEF proposals, or 2 partner proposals.
    - You can receive a maximum of 1 award per scheme as a lead applicant. For example, you could receive 1 GEF award and/or 1 partner award.
    - If you were the lead applicant of a proposal that received GE seed funding in 23/24, you cannot apply as a lead applicant for any 24/25 GE seed funding schemes, but you will be eligible for the 25/26 schemes. Please note: A special exception can be made where there is strong potential for significant impact and/or scaling up of a collaboration with a global partner based on the outcomes of 23/24 project activity. Please contact us if you feel this applies to your activity.

What can be funded through the Global Engagement Funds and when?

- Projects which involve academic, education, enterprise, or policy engagement activity involving one or more UCL individuals and a 'global partner' that is, one or more colleague(s)/research team(s)/department(s), based at an overseas HEI, research institute or international public/corporate/charitable organisation. This could be collaborations initiated and run by individual academics or departments, e.g. by a PI and their research group with other individuals across the globe. Applicants may have worked with the selected partners in the past, or it may be a new collaboration - but the project activity which is the subject of the GEF funding application must be new.
- Funds must be for a new activity (not activity that has already happened or that is, in substance, covered by other research funds). The new activity can build upon outcomes from a previous project.
- Activities for which the funds are allocated must take place before 31 July 2025.

- Example types of activities within a project might include:
    - Organising a joint seminar/workshop with international partners (remotely or in person) which would lead to joint publications, future research collaborations, grant applications, or other follow-up activity. Funding might be used for any external services required to facilitate the event, e.g. professional moderation or technical support.
    - Meetings, or preliminary scoping work and baseline research/data gathering, to underpin the preparation of a long-term collaborative partnership (e.g. preparation of a PhD summer school, double degree, future exchange agreement, etc)
    - Stipends for research assistant and interns. UCL student casual wage costs for working on the collaboration can be covered, as can travel, accommodation and subsistence essential to the activity, in line with UCL's expense policy, sustainability agenda and coronavirus guidance. Please note that teaching buyouts are not eligible.

- o This list isn't exhaustive, and we understand that there may be other ways you wish to conduct the project.

- Examples of past activity in this scheme can be found on our [case studies pages](#) at the foot of the page. To see examples of how colleagues have been adapting their collaborative activities in favour of a blended approach, click [here](#).

What cannot be funded by the Global Engagement Funds?
- Activity which does not involve a global partner; activities which are solely UK-based/focused; work for which there is already a significant existing funding stream; activity that has already happened.
- Costings should be appropriate and relevant to the activity, for example the provision of alcoholic beverages for partners is not considered a valuable use of funds, unless it can be described how hospitality is critical for the building of this relationship or necessary/culturally significant for an event e.g. a public exhibition.
- Items which are already included in a research or teaching grant.
- A Worktribe costing is NOT necessary for GEF.
- Teaching time buyout cannot be funded under GEF. If you are concerned about your workload due to undertaking a GEF project, you should speak to your line manager and Head of Department. You should also consult the Workload Allocation Framework [here](#).

Sustainable International work in a time of changing mobility
- In line with UCL Sustainable Travel approach, methods of remote collaboration are eligible for funding and encouraged where possible, within the limits of what is permissible by the financial regulations of UCL and aligned with your own departmental guidelines. Please see the [Sustainable Travel](#) website for ideas on how to conduct your project. Appendix 1 on this document also has ideas on how funding can support remote collaboration.

Assessment of applications
- Applications will be assessed by panels chaired by the lead applicant's faculty Vice-Dean (International) (VDI).
- The scoring criteria will include:
  - **Strength of the project proposal and the global partner.** E.g., if the project activity is considered robust; if the VDI considers it desirable for UCL/the faculty/department/group to strengthen the relationship with the selected partner.
  - **Extent to which the application addresses a global issue.** Interdisciplinary applications on global issues are also eligible.
  - **Expected impact and outcomes of the activity.** This may include the potential subsequent external funding applications, development of a further project or partnership, publications or other research outputs, establishing a new network or developing an existing one.
  - **Extent to which the project supports or enhances potential long term international collaboration or network building.**
  - **Value for money.** Does the activity justify funding for international travel (if requested). Note: Applications for projects that are part funded by the global partner or seek to add value to international travel through additional activity (e.g. seeking to combine trips with alumni engagement or student recruitment events) are particularly welcome.
- Award recipients will be asked to provide a short report on impact and outcomes of the activity at the end of the project.

The online application process
- All applications must be submitted via a template Word document which can be found on the [GEF funding page](#) on Friday 24 May. Applications must be uploaded via the portal by 11:59 pm (BST) on Friday 21 June 2024.
- You should provide a breakdown of the costs you're seeking to cover in the relevant section of the application form. For travel costs, please include realistic estimates. We encourage you to build in some contingency for expense fluctuations. Global Engagement will be unable to cover any shortfall of your budget, for any reason including currency fluctuation. All expenses must be calculated according to UCL policy.
- Only applications submitted via the online portal will be considered.

Timeline
- The deadline for applications is 11:59 pm (BST) on Friday 21 June 2024.
- Applicants will be notified of panel decisions by end of July 2024.
- All activity must be concluded and paid for by 31st July 2025.
- Award recipients will receive GEF funds using the internal UCL transfer process known as 'journal transfer' (a method of arranging batch transfers to multiple recipients). Full instructions will be provided at the point of confirming the awards.

Queries
If you experience any problems making an online application, or have any questions about the GEF, please contact UCL Global Engagement at UCLglobalengagement@ucl.ac.uk.

Appendix 1 – additional guidance:

Ethical approval and due diligence
Please check UCL's guidelines regarding research ethics. Applicants are responsible for reading these guidelines and ensuring projects adhere to UCL's ethical approval policy and process. If you are unsure if your project meets these guidelines or have been denied ethical approval, please contact UCL Global Engagement as soon as possible (UCLglobalengagement@ucl.ac.uk) to discuss this.
UCL's ethical guidelines can be found here:
- Research Ethics Committee at UCL guidelines
- Overseas Research Roadmap

We strongly advise applicants to undertake proportionate and appropriate due diligence, relative to the stage and scope of the research collaboration, before collaborating with global partners and travelling overseas. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Remote/Blended Collaboration: Student support for projects
- Global Engagement is working with the UCL Careers Service to help seed fund applicants in the process of paying students on a casual basis to engage in international collaborations: in compiling literature reviews, coordinating online round-tables, conducting interviews or other research, and in other ways. We hope to support the creation of opportunities for students in international partnership projects, to engage in impactful scholarly or public engagement work. Applicants might find that creating such opportunities may enrich and extend their partnership projects.
- The programme team and UCL Careers can help with the process of finding and recruiting students. As you prepare your seed funding application, you may find the following guidance helpful:
  - The salary scale has advice on UCL's policy on appropriate grades and points: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/pay-benefits/salary-scales
  - Full costs can be calculated using a very helpful spreadsheet maintained by Research Services: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research-services/applying-funding/costing-principles/salaryscales
  - The guidance on recruiting and working with Postgraduate Teaching Assistants (https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/postgraduate-teaching-assistant-code-practice) may be useful in ensuring your own process is fair and supportive, though your own department, school or faculty will probably have processes and practices which can help.

Remote/Blended Collaboration: Employing a research assistant or a member of staff
- If you would like to employ a research assistant or administrative assistant to support the project within your costing you will need to discuss this with your department first. UCL has several contract types and methods for this type of payment. You should consult the guidelines here with your department to decide the best method for this project and the specific department.
- The Finance Division provides guidance on when it is permissible to engage the services of an individual on a self-employed basis, including the eligibility of payments to visiting lecturers and examiners. The self-employment questionnaire and application form can be found here.
- The procedure to obtain approval involves the completion of a self-employment questionnaire by departmental staff. Finance and Business Affairs staff will inform the department after assessing the questionnaire whether gross payment is appropriate. If the matter needs to be referred to HMRC for a ruling the department will be advised. Please be aware that it can take some time for HMRC to respond, depending largely on the complexity of the case.
- See here before applying for guidance on setting up a new supplier (organisation/partner) or self-employed individual.
- For further guidance on types of contracted employment permissible at UCL, including guidance on As and When contracts and Unitemps please see here. Consult this guidance with your department before applying. Departments should also seek advice from HR Services if unsure.

Remote/Blended Collaboration: Overseas speakers or research assistant payments
- If you are looking to pay a research assistant or speaker for their time on your project you should consult your department. Paying overseas assistants is more complex and departments must consult the **Right to Work guidance and taxation team** on this website and decide the most suitable method for this type of payment.
- Unitemps are unable to process international payments via payroll as is UCL, and so individuals based internationally who require payment most typically do so through their institution's payroll or as a self-employed individual – in both cases relevant paperwork must be completed and the costs will be paid via Invoice received in line with UCL policy.
- It may be more suitable therefore for the assistant's institution to pay them directly and for the department to make payment to the institution via Purchase Order. A PO can be raised if the institution is set up as a supplier on UCL's procurement system or you may need to set up the institution as a new supplier following procedures here. This should only be done if necessary and you should consult your department first. If you have a query regarding this, **please consult HR or Procurement.**
  **Please note, all queries regarding payments and costings should be discussed and agreed with your department.