University College London (UCL) and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi

Joint Call for Collaborative Research Projects and Exchange Activities

1. Introduction

To enhance interdisciplinary and collaborative research interests between UCL and AIIMS, New Delhi, this joint seed fund initiative invites joint project proposals involving faculty members from both institutions.

The scheme provides a one-time grant for projects to galvanize research groups from both sides to work on proof of concept ideas, generate initial data and apply for further grants from international funding agencies. It is expected that the successful interdisciplinary research groups will:

(i) grow in size or merge with other allied research groups to enhance the level of expertise and scope of research within a specific interdisciplinary theme;
(ii) attract support from external funding agencies;
(iii) catalyse ‘cross-research activity’ between the two institutions, leading to joint research publications and patents.

The success of proposals will be determined by a number of parameters, including (i) how the project contributes to joint research activity between the two institutions, and (ii) what external grants the team is able to jointly bid for on completion of the project.

2. Eligibility for participants within the scope of this call

i) The project should have two principal investigators (PIs) – one from each institution. There may be co-PIs from the same or other departments provided there are no financial implications to the concerned department/faculty.

ii) The project work should not be part of the thesis/dissertation work of a resident or PhD student.

iii) Applications are open to UCL staff members in the following roles:

▪ Professor/Professorial Teaching Fellow or equivalent.
▪ Reader or equivalent.
▪ Senior Lecturer/Principal Researcher/Principal Research Associate/Senior Teaching Fellow or equivalent.
▪ Lecturer/Senior Research Associate/Teaching Fellow or equivalent.
▪ Post Doc/Researcher/Post Doc Fellow/Research Associate or equivalent – eligible provided the contract covers the spend and activity period.
▪ Applicants are not required to have a doctorate to apply, but do need to hold a role at one of the levels described above.
▪ PhD students are not eligible to apply, but are encouraged to take part in the project.

iv) The call is open to all AIIMS faculty members and scientists.
3. Area of collaboration
The funding call invites proposals from all areas in the fields of healthcare and medicine, including those aimed at addressing COVID-19.

4. Collaborative activities
Collaborative activities must be based on joint research projects set up by faculty/staff members of both institutions. We encourage projects of an interdisciplinary nature, where relevant.

5. Number of projects, value and duration
Up to four successful proposals will receive one year of funding, jointly provided by UCL and AIIMS. Each successful proposal will receive up to £10,000, with 50% going to the academic at each respective institution (up to £5,000 will go to UCL faculty and Rs 5 lakh to AIIMS faculty).

The funds should be used within the financial year, and proposals should demonstrate the ability to deliver research despite the impact of COVID-19.

The principal investigator from AIIMS will be responsible for submission of the final joint proposal (see section 9).

6. Timeline

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Call for proposals</td>
<td>Monday 12 October 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for submission of proposal</td>
<td>Friday 20 November 2020 by 4pm UK time, 9:30pm Indian Standard Time</td>
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<td>Communication of Results to applicants</td>
<td>During week commencing 30 November 2020</td>
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<td>Start date of Awards</td>
<td>During week commencing 7 December 2020</td>
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7. Identifying academics at AIIMS and UCL
i) In order to identify academics at either institution, please refer to the institutional websites in the first instance. These are [www.ucl.ac.uk](http://www.ucl.ac.uk) and [www.aiims.edu](http://www.aiims.edu).

ii) If further help is required, UCL applicants should contact Professor Vineet Ahuja ([researchsectionaiims@gmail.com](mailto:researchsectionaiims@gmail.com)) whilst AIIMS applicants should contact Dr Amit Khandelwal ([amit.khandelwal@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:amit.khandelwal@ucl.ac.uk)). We will help where practicable and possible.

8. Ethics and Governance
i) The research proposal will require ethics clearance from the respective ethics committees of both institutions. The clearance letters may be submitted when submitting the initial project proposal or after the project proposal is approved for funding. Funds will be allocated for approved projects only after ethics clearance is
obtained and evidence presented to the Dean (Research) at AIIMS, New Delhi and the Global Engagement Office at UCL.

ii) It is mandatory that PIs from both the institutes sign a collaborative research agreement before commencement of the project. This ensures intellectual property rights (IPR) are protected for both sides.

iii) Collaborative research agreements, IPR issues and joint supervision issues will be addressed as per the guidelines described in detail in the proposed UCL-AIIMS MOU, a copy of which can be found here: ucl.ac.uk/global/sites/global/files/ucl-aiims_mou.pdf

9. Submission of proposals

i) Project proposals are to be prepared and submitted jointly.

ii) Proposals will be received by AIIMS, New Delhi. It is therefore crucial that UCL faculty, in particular the PI, liaise closely with their AIIMS counterparts who will be responsible for completing the following form: ucl.ac.uk/global/sites/global/files/ucl-aiims_project_proforma_0.docx

iii) The PI from AIIMS must ensure that their UCL counterpart is in full agreement on all aspects of the proposal. Confirmation of this will be required as part of the submission process. Only one proposal should be submitted.

iv) The PI from AIIMS should submit the joint proposal using the link researchsubmission.aiims.edu where instructions for submission and the project proforma can be found.

v) Proposals must be submitted by 20 November 2020, 4pm UK time and 9:30pm Indian Standard Time. Proposals received before the deadline will be sent to both the office of the Dean (Research) at AIIMS, New Delhi and UCL’s Global Engagement Office for adjudication.

10. Adjudication

i) Proposals received by AIIMS, New Delhi and UCL’s Global Engagement Office will be evaluated by a separate review at each institution.

ii) Selection Criteria: Both internal review committees will assess each proposal according to the following criteria:

- **Scientific merit, project design and rationale** (how clearly presented and justified is the design and basis for the collaboration?)

- **Project impact** (how clearly linked are the outcomes to the planned activities and performance indicators, such as joint papers, external funding applications, joint research with industry and proposals for policy recommendations?)

- **Impact of collaboration** (is there a distinct advantage provided by this collaboration that is not possible by the two institutions working individually?)

- **Capacity for future collaboration** (what is the extent to which future collaborations are possible as a result of the proposed exchange activities?)

iii) Please identify which of the seventeen UN Sustainable Goals (sdgs.un.org/goals) your project falls under. The information sought here is for internal use only, and is not part of the selection criteria.

iv) A joint committee will convene to select up to four final proposals.

11. Communication of results
Final results will be announced by means of communication to the successful faculty members or PI’s in each institution, during week commencing 30 November 2020.

12. Reporting after project completion
All awardees must, as a condition of receiving an award under this call, complete a narrative report of achievements (of between 1 and 2 pages) including how they intend to take the research forward beyond the funding period.
They will also have to submit an auditable Statement of Expenditure to respective institutions.

13. Contacts
For any clarification points or questions on the joint call, please do not hesitate to contact the colleagues listed below

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<tr>
<th>UCL</th>
<th>AIIMS, NEW DELHI</th>
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