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

With the objective of enhancing interdisciplinary and collaborative research interest between UCL and AIIMS, New Delhi, a joint research seed fund has been established to invite joint project proposals from faculty members from both institutions.

This scheme essentially provides seed funds for research 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 these interdisciplinary research groups will:

(i)   *grow in size* or merge with other allied research groups and, in the process, enhance the level of expertise and scope of research in a specific interdisciplinary theme.
(ii)   *catalyse* synergistic 'cross-research activity' between the two institutions, leading eventually to joint research publications and patents.
(iii)   *apply for, and attract support from*, external funding agencies, leveraging the funding provided in this call

The joint research seed fund is a catalytic one-off grant, and the success of these project will be determined by a number of parameters, including (i) how the project has contributed to joint research activity between the two institutions and (ii) what external monies the team is able to jointly bid for on completion of the project.

2. Eligibility for participants within the scope of this call

i)   There should be at least two principal investigators (PIs) – one from each institution. There may also be co-PIs from the same or other departments provided that 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 staff members from both institutions with the with the following roles:

UCL	AIIMS, New Delhi

Staff members with the following roles:
 	
    Professor/Professorial Teaching Fellow or equivalent.
    Reader or equivalent.
	The call is open to the call is open to all faculty members, college of nursing faculty and scientists.

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 are eligible provided the contract covers the spend and activity period. Note: - 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 PIs are encouraged to include PhD students in their project.	

3. Collaborative activities

The call for proposals is open to all areas in the healthcare and medical domains, including COVID-19. In addition, allied domains such as nursing, genomics and community engagement are also eligible.

Collaborative activities may be based on joint research projects set up by faculty/staff members from both institutions.

We would encourage projects of an interdisciplinary nature that demonstrate a pathway to impact and focus on the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

4. Funding Envelope, Value and Duration of Award

Funding Envelope

Funding will be jointly provided by UCL and AIIMS

UCL and AIIMS have allocated £30,000 and Rs. 30 lakhs respectively for this call for proposals.

Value of Award

Up to six successful proposals will receive an award.

Each successful proposal will receive up to £5,000 per year for UCL faculty and up to Rs. 5 lakhs per year for AIIMS faculty.

Duration of Award

A maximum of 12 months.

Additional Points

- The funds should be used within the current financial year. For example, for UCL this means that funds must be consumed before 31st July 2023.
- UCL applicants do not need to undertake Work tribe costings but the expenditure of funds will be auditable by UCL.
- The principal investigator from AIIMS will be responsible for submission of the final joint proposal (see section 8).

5. Timeline

Launch Call for proposals	Monday 22nd August 2022
Deadline for submission of proposal	Monday 17th October 2022 by 9:00am UK time, 1.30pm Indian Standard Time
Communication of Results to applicants	By end of the week commencing Monday 14th November 2022
Start date of Awards	Monday 21st November 2022 onwards or immediately thereafter

6. Identifying academics at AIIMS, New Delhi and UCL

i)   In order to identify academics at either institution, please refer to the institutional websites in the first instance: www.ucl.ac.uk and www.aiims.edu.

ii) If further help is required, then UCL applicants should contact Professor Vineet Ahuja (researchsectionaiims@gmail.com) and AIIMS, New Delhi applicants should contact Dr Amit Khandelwal (amit.khandelwal@ucl.ac.uk) to seek assistance. We will help where practical and possible.

7. Ethics and governance

i)   The research proposal will require ethics clearance from the respective Ethics Committee of both the institutions. The ethics 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 and the Global Engagement Office at UCL.

ii) It is mandatory that the PIs from both the institutions sign a Research Agreement before commencement of the project. This would ensure Intellectual Property Right (IPR) rights are protected for both sides.

iii) Collaborative Research Agreement issues, IPR issues and Joint Supervision issues will be addressed as per the guidelines described in detail in the UCL-AIIMS, New Delhi MOU.

8. Submission of proposals, including deadline

i)   The AIIMS-UCL project proposals are to be prepared and submitted jointly.

ii) Compilation of submissions will be handled by AIIMS, New Delhi. It is therefore crucial that UCL faculty, in particular the Principal Investigator, liaise closely with their AIIMS, New Delhi counterpart who will be responsible for filling in this project proforma.

iii) The AIIMS, New Delhi PI must ensure that their UK counterpart is in full agreement on all aspects of the proposal. A confirmation of this will be needed as part of the submission process.

iv) The Principal Investigator from AIIMS, New Delhi should submit **only one** joint proposal using the proforma at researchsubmission.aiims.edu, where instructions for submission and the project proforma can be found.

v) The full joint project proposal should be submitted by AIIMS, New Delhi to both the office of the Dean (Research) at AIIMS, New Delhi and the Senior Partnership Manager (South Asia) at UCL by **Monday 17th October 2022, 9.00pm UK time, 1.30pm Indian Standard Time** for adjudication.

9. Adjudication

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

ii) Both internal review committees will assess proposals 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 policy recommendations)
  - **Interdisciplinary nature of the project** (the aim of the funding is to encourage academics to collaborate on a project that will require a range of disciplines for successful delivery)
  - **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 Development Goals your project will fall under. The information sought here is for mapping purposes. It is not part of the selection criteria.

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

10. Communication of results

Final results will be announced by means of communication to successful faculty members or PIs by each institution, by the end of week **commencing 14th November 2022.**

11. 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 one and two 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.

12. Contacts

For any clarification points or questions on the joint call, please do not hesitate colleagues listed below:

UCL	AIIMS, New Delhi
Professor Monica Lakhanpaul Pro-Vice-Provost (South Asia) Email: m.lakhanpaul@ucl.ac.uk	**Professor Subrata Sinha** Dean (Research) Email : Deanresearchaiims@gmail.com
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