



Embedded Inequalities

A UCL Grand Challenges Activity

Call for Proposals: Academic Year 2018-19

UCL Grand Challenges supports cross-disciplinary collaborations that explore joined-up solutions in six areas related to matters of pressing societal concern: [Cultural Understanding](#), [Global Health](#), [Human Wellbeing](#), [Justice and Equality](#), [Sustainable Cities](#), and [Transformative Technology](#).

To do this, we fund researchers (academics and postgraduate or postdoctoral researchers) from across the university to explore collaborative working with colleagues from other disciplines and in partnership with community groups and other organisations or individuals.

We invite researchers to apply for funding for activities under the Grand Challenge of Justice & Equality's new priority theme – **Structural and Relational Inequalities**, defined as inequalities deeply embedded within society that relate to and impact upon one another. In total, £10,000 of Grand Challenges funding is available to support activities through this initiative, for expenditure before 31 July 2019. External non-academic partners are welcome as a third partner, particularly community or other organisations with experience of the social issues around inequality, however **1st and 2nd applicants must be UCL researchers and must represent different disciplines.**

The call is not restricted to London-based activities. Proposed activities can focus on inequality as it is experienced or as it impacts society and policy in other parts of the UK or overseas. Research-related activities focused on London or elsewhere in the UK should be designed with a view to generating insights of relevance more broadly. The GC programme is also keen to consider 'disruptive thinking' ideas, in keeping with the priorities of the [Campaign for UCL](#).

FUNDING

Funding of up to £2,500 is available for each project. Due to the UCL fiscal year end of July 31st, all expenses must be identified and invoiced by that date, with costed activities taking place by Monday 1 July 2019. However where appropriate, and without additional funds from Grand Challenges, outputs may still be delivered in Terms 1 or 2 of academic year 2019-20.

PREMISE

With the recent centenary of women gaining the right to vote in the UK, the UK's first transgender conference being held in September, and more than fifty years after equality commissions were first established in the UK and other European and North American states, there has been increased attention on issues of structural and relational inequality in society. Despite the demographic, socio-economic, and cultural transformations that have occurred over the past decades, vast inequalities remain both within and among countries.

Injustice and inequity are therefore becoming increasingly prominent in political debates, particularly concerning access to social goods, education, technology and resources. With recent reporting showing [13.5 million people are living in poverty in the UK](#) and of these, 60% are in households including an inadequately paid full-time worker; close to [eight in ten companies and public-sector bodies in the UK paying men more than women](#); and [disadvantage on the basis of ethnicity remaining in the UK labour market](#), to what extent can there be said to have been real progress made since the emergence of equality commissions and legislation, or are we witnessing a return to the inequalities of the past?

Such inequalities often overlap and are experienced in relation to one another. In this context, cross-disciplinary discussion and interdisciplinary scholarship can shed light on ways in which research can examine these issues, identifying new ways and effective solutions to tackle the inequalities and injustices that remain entrenched throughout society.

THEMES

The theme of embedded inequalities provides opportunities for researchers across UCL to identify topics that require cross-disciplinary attention as a basis for further research, for problematizing current debates, and considering critical issues. For example, demonstrable provocations and possible questions to consider could include:

Racial inequalities

- How do labour market outcomes vary with ethnicity across Britain? Have these outcomes improved or deteriorated over the past 20 years?
- What measures are police and the criminal justice system enacting in response to the Lammy Review's findings that BAME men and women make up 25% of prisoners in the UK despite making up 14% of the population?
- How might inter-racial trust in the UK's justice system be improved?

Gender inequalities

- After the introduction of gender pay gap reporting what next steps need to be taken to achieve equal pay?
- Do increases in paternal and shared leave allowances promulgate greater gender equality in the home?
- What effect are initiatives such as Athena Swan having on tackling gender inequality in higher education?
- How can the internet be ethically governed and can gender equal cyber-spaces be created?

- How has the introduction of parliamentary gender quotas transformed national policy in countries such as Senegal and Rwanda and do these examples provide a model for others to follow?

Inter-generational and health inequalities

- What do policies and measures enacted in the past tell us about how to combat rising child poverty?
- What role has technology played in improving global education rates, especially for girls?
- How can government policy address the gap in life expectancy between the richest and poorest areas in the UK?
- What can analysis of foodbank use tell us about food insecurity and access to a nutritional diet?
- What can be learnt from different regional responses to improving access to reproductive choice in developing countries?

Disabled and less able-bodied inequalities

- What measures can be taken to improve equitable access to the labour market for those with disabilities or who are less able-bodied?
- What barriers prevent people with disabilities and/or health conditions from moving into and progressing in work and education, and which interventions prove most effective at addressing these barriers?
- How can emerging technologies be deployed to improve equal access and opportunity to education and training for those with disabilities?

Social mobility and educational inequalities

- To what extent do different education systems magnify or reduce inequalities between children?
- How do disadvantages of opportunity and ethnicity/gender/disability/religion interact in routes to accessing education?
- What role can universities play in promulgating equal opportunities?
- What does equitable social mobility look like?
- How can the personal stories of injustices and inopportunities that lie behind official statistics be accessed?
- How can the differences in participation in further and higher education and training routes be understood and how do issues of access or choice affect disadvantaged pupils?

Spatial inequalities

- What are the underlying drivers of geographical differences in educational attainment?
- What lessons can be drawn from past policy initiatives to address regional inequalities, both in the UK and globally?
- What geographical inequalities are likely to persist over the longer term on the basis of current and potential socio-economic trends? How might these be countered?

- To what extent are patterns of inequality affected by the power of the global and changing external market conditions?
- What interventions would make a fundamental change in improving opportunities and resources for those living in under-performing economic areas?

Employment inequalities

- What effect will Brexit have on the UK's existing equality laws?
- Is the National Living Wage a sustainable and effective pay policy?
- How might changes in the law tackle inequalities in the 'gig' economy?
- What types of support and incentives most effectively enable and encourage people with multiple disadvantages and/or barriers to employment move into sustainable employment with opportunities for progression?

Enacting change

- How might research help to shape and enact policy change to address inequalities?
- Are equality commissions and human rights organisations still fit for purpose? Exactly what role should such bodies aim to play in complex democratic societies?
- How might we ensure that developing countries are better represented in decision-making on global issues so that solutions to inequalities can be more effective, accountable, and enacted on a global scale?
- How can we ensure that prosperity benefits everyone?
- What might an equal society look like and how do we get there?

Proposals, however, need not be limited to these themes or topics. Additional documents that may further stimulate research ideas and contribute to proposals, include:

- [UN Sustainable Development Goals \(10. Reduce Inequality within and among countries\)](#)
- [Department for Work and Pensions - Areas of Research Interest \(2018\)](#)
- [Department for Education - Areas of Research Interest \(2018\)](#)
- [Ministry of Justice – Areas of Research Interest \(2018\)](#)
- [UK2070 Commission on spatial and regional inequalities](#)
- [UNICEF: An Unfair Start Inequality in Children's Education in Rich Countries](#)
- [Gender Pay Gap Information Regulations 2017](#)
- [Government Equalities Office: Publications](#)

OUTPUTS

Project outputs can include research or policy workshops, symposia or conferences; reports; preparatory or exploratory research materials towards larger grant applications; public and community engagement activities; or research-led performance/public art-based outputs, including plays and documentary films. We encourage interaction with community groups, artists or arts organisations, and with UCL Culture.

Criteria for submission of proposals

- (a) **Activities should be planned to occur before Friday 27 September 2019, the awarded funds being spent by the end of UCL's financial year – i.e. by Wednesday 31 July 2019 [Awarded funds remaining unspent after 31 July 2019 will be automatically reabsorbed by UCL's central finance office]**
 - (b) Projects should be designed to take place using either UCL's facilities and/or an external venue within the event budget. It is intended that the budget should cover (for example) the employment costs of a postgraduate intern engaged to assist in the organisation of the event and writing up of a report, and the cost of a networking reception
 - (c) Projects should have the additional aim of strengthening existing, or establishing new, links between UCL researchers with different disciplinary skill-sets (either in the same or different departments/faculties) or between researchers and non-academic organisations (e.g. commercial or charitable organisations)
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Application guidance notes

1. Lead (1st) applicants are invited to submit their proposals by filling in the form below, also on behalf of 2nd applicants and, if applicable, external (3rd) partners. **[Please note, both 1st and 2nd applicants must be UCL-based and represent different disciplines]**
- 2. The deadline for applications is 9am on Monday 3 December 2018**
3. Applicants will be informed about the outcome of their applications by Monday 17 December 2018
4. If an application is successful and accepted by both applicants, the award, in its entirety, will be sent by IDT from OVPR to the 1st Applicant's department before Monday 14 January 2019
5. Researchers may email the Grand Challenges team for an informal discussion of the initiative and application guidelines, and for further advice regarding submission. Please contact Dr Ian Scott (ian.scott@ucl.ac.uk) or Siobhan Morris (siobhan.morris@ucl.ac.uk).

By applying, applicants indicate their agreement, if successful to:

- Undertake evaluation and provide a short report within one month of the project's end, describing the activity undertaken, event audience size/composition, a brief summary of discussions, project findings and outputs, photographs and testimonials (if applicable)
- Provide details of any planned follow-on activities and impacts the project has generated (e.g. research grant applications; policy development commissions; academic paper or monograph)
- Permit inclusion of the report, and details of the project, in an overall report on the *Embedded Inequalities* initiative and on the Grand Challenges website

Successful applicants will be responsible for all the practical arrangements for their activity/event, without further logistical support from the OVPR.

UCL Grand Challenges undertakes to publicise the immediate, medium and longer-term outcomes attributable to funded activities/events.