



## Environment and Wellbeing

### 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 doctoral or postdoctoral researchers) from across the university to undertake collaborative research, working with colleagues from other disciplines. We also strongly encourage partnership with community groups, UCL's professional services teams, and other organisations or individuals.

We are now inviting researchers to apply for funding for activities under the Grand Challenge of Human Wellbeing's (GCHW) priority theme – **Environment and Wellbeing**. 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, however **1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> applicants must be UCL researchers and must represent different disciplines**.

The GC programme is keen to consider 'disruptive thinking' ideas, in keeping with the priorities of the [Campaign for UCL](#). Successful bids will be those that clearly explain how working between disciplines will help to resolve important questions in research and/or in the translation of novel research discoveries for societal benefit.

#### FUNDING

Two tiers of funding are available:

1. **Tier 1** – Led by a doctoral student (up to £2,500 per award)
2. **Tier 2** – Led by a postdoctoral or more senior researcher (up to £5,000 per award)

GCHW has made a commitment to spend a total of £10,000 on this initiative. Due to the UCL fiscal year end of July 31<sup>st</sup> 2019, 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, defined outputs may still be delivered in Terms 1 or 2 of academic year 2019-20.

## **THEMES**

Environment and Wellbeing as a GCHW priority theme provides opportunities for researchers across UCL to identify potential interdisciplinary topics as bases for further research, problematize current debates, and consider critical issues. For example, but not exclusively:

### *Making sense of complexity*

Defining the concept of wellbeing can be problematic, as it includes subjective factors relating to quality of life, prosperity, and mental health. Therefore, how do we evaluate and monitor the impact of the natural and built environment on human and animal wellbeing? What are the measures of a healthy environment? How do different risks interact and compound one another (e.g. stress, air pollution, exposure to UV or chemicals)?

### *Looking to the future*

The goal of ensuring the wellbeing of individuals and populations has to be reconciled with demographic, economic, and urbanisation pressures, in order to create a sustainable and wellbeing-inducing future. What planning is needed to anticipate future developments and align stakeholder incentives? How do we design space that encourages healthy and safe behaviour, and builds a sense of community? How can we ensure equitable access to healthy environments (including access to energy, healthy food/water, and clean air)? Should the digital environment be regulated to promote more safety and inclusiveness?

### *Driving local improvement*

UCL's proposed Wild Bloomsbury initiative (as part of the new Sustainability Strategy) is a great example of planning as a response to local needs and opportunities, placing the university at the forefront of London's greening agenda. Following this example, what initiatives can be proposed to encourage local ownership and stakeholder collaboration?

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

- [UCL Mental Health Strategy](#)
- [Morris & Saunders, "The Environment in Health and Well-Being", Oxford Research Encyclopedias, 2017](#)
- Lancet Commission report on Health and Climate Change, [2015](#), [2018](#)
- [Report of the EEA Scientific Committee Seminar on Environment, Human Health and Well-Being, 2014](#)
- [European Commission's Environment Action Programme to 2020](#)

## **OUTPUTS**

Project outputs can include research or policy workshops, symposia or conferences; reports; preparatory or exploratory material towards larger grant applications; public and community engagement activities.

### Criteria for submission of proposals

1. **Activities should be planned to take place 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.**
2. 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. It will be assumed that submitted applications have been approved by the 1st Applicant's head of department and/or by the departmental finance manager. Please check with one or both of them before submitting.
3. 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).

### Application guidance notes and information

1. Lead (1st) applicants are invited to submit their proposals by filling in the application form (to be downloaded from the website), 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.** Honorary or Emeritus academics or researchers affiliated to UCL academic departments are eligible to stand as 2nd applicants.]
2. Doctoral student applicants should provide a statement of support from their Departmental Graduate Tutor.
3. The application form (word) should be submitted at [this link](#).
4. **The deadline for applications is 12:00 (noon) on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019.**
5. Applicants will be informed about the outcome of their applications by Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March.
6. If an application is successful and accepted by both applicants, the award, in its entirety, will be sent by IDT from OVPR to the 1<sup>st</sup> Applicant's department before the end of March 2019 (as long as the necessary financial information has been provided).

### Award conditions

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

- Provide a short report within one month of the project ending, 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-up activities and impact the project has generated (e.g. research grant applications; policy development commissions; academic monograph)
- Permit inclusion of the report, and details of the project, in an overall report on the GC Health Systems 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.