

# Octagon Small Grants Fund: Instructions for applicants



Supporting UCL-based researchers  
and graduate students  
Faculties of Arts & Humanities  
and Social & Historical Sciences  
School of Slavonic and  
East European Studies

## INTRODUCTION

This document aims to provide comprehensive guidance for candidates wishing to apply to the Octagon Small Grants Scheme.

This is not a book, nor should you read it like one. Please use the contents page to navigate to the relevant section.

If, having read this guidance, you still have questions; please get in touch with the Octagon Administrator.

### **Octagon Administrator**

Mr Joe Noteboom

Joint Faculty Quality Assurance & Governance Officer

Faculty of Arts and Humanities and Faculty of Social and Historical Sciences

[j.noteboom@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:j.noteboom@ucl.ac.uk)

020 3108 6976

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# I WANT TO APPLY FOR A GRANT.

## 1. Can I apply?

To be eligible for a grant you must be:

- In the Faculty of Arts and Humanities; the Faculty of Social and Historical Sciences; the School of Slavonic and East European Studies; the Institute of Advanced Studies.
- A student working towards a research degree (PhD, MRes, MPhil Stud etc.); a recent graduate of a research degree; an early career researcher or involved in the teaching or mentoring of researchers.

## 2. What can I apply to do?

The Octagon Small Grants Fund provides grants of up to £1,500 for events that demonstrate:

- Evidence of interdisciplinary engagement and discussion;
- The leadership or meaningful involvement of postgraduate research students and early career researchers. This includes providing a chance to display their own research;
- The research of the Faculties of Arts & Humanities and/or Social & Historical Sciences and/or SSEES beyond UCL;
- Engagement with postgraduate students and academic staff at other institutions;
- A link with UCL's strategic priorities.

In previous years, the funding panel has awarded grants for the following types of event:

- **Theme-based conferences:** applications for both small themed mini-conferences or for larger ones linked to applications for outside funding.
- **Seminar series:** providing an opportunity to discuss and highlight UCL research, as well as funding visiting speakers and/or 'round table' events.
- **Workshops:** especially those that cross departments and/or disciplines.
- **Presentations/performances:** particularly those that involve wider public engagement, such as presenting research to the public or carrying out practice based research through performance art or exhibition.

## 3. What does the grant pay for?

If you are the successful recipient of an Octagon grant, you can use it to cover most of the operational costs for holding an event. In principle, the funding panel will usually approve expenditure on:

- Accommodation and travel for speakers from outside London;
- Catering costs associated with the event, including a dinner for the conference organisers and visiting speakers;
- Small bursaries to cover the cost of travel for student participants from other institutions;
- Any materials that your home department cannot reasonably provide.

The funding panel will not approve requests for expenditure on:

- Honorariums for visiting speakers;
- Paying participants for work producing the event;
- Stationery, printing or any other service that your home department could reasonably provide;
- Branded pens, tote bags and similar merchandise provided to participants;

- Any other expenditure that seems unreasonable or outside the parameters outlined in UCL’s Expenses Policy.

If you have any questions regarding appropriate expenditure prior to completing your application form, contact the Octagon Administrator.

## 4. How do I apply?

In order to apply for a grant from the Octagon Small Grants Fund, you must complete the application form, found on the website.

### GUIDE TO COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

In order to give yourself the best chance of a smooth application process, please read the following guidance.

#### Section 1: Personal Details

This is the most straightforward section. Please give the details of the person coordinating the event, or the portion of the event for which you intend to use the grant. This person will be asked to complete the expenses form and to provide the post-event report.

#### Section 2: Event Proposal

The first thing to draw attention to in this section is the “Date of event” field. This field will be used to manage communication with you as your event progresses. Most importantly, you have to submit your expenses claim and your post-event report within one month of this date. If the date of your event changes, you must inform the Octagon Administrator as soon as possible, otherwise you may have problems when it comes to claiming expenses.

The “Further details” field is your chance to convince the funding panel that your event deserves support. Successful applications are succinct and clearly relate back to the aims of Octagon (detailed in Section 2).

#### Section 3: Event Specifics

This section of the form is broken down into the following:

- **Expected attendee no.:** please ensure that this reflects your projected expenditure.
- **Expected total cost of event:** if the event will cost more than the amount that you are requesting from the Octagon, please give the overall total and detail your other funding sources.
- **Applying to Octagon Small Grants Fund for:** as stated on the form, this can be any figure up to £1,500.
- **Breakdown of likely costs:** applications that have researched the likely costs before submitting the form, and provide an itemised budget detailing this, have been more successful. Please remember that Octagon will not cover certain forms of expenditure (as detailed above). Where the grant will only be making up part of your total event cost, please detail what you are asking the Octagon to cover.

Once you have completed all relevant sections of the form, please email it to the Octagon Administrator.

Once submitted, the Octagon Funding Panel will consider your application at its next scheduled meeting. Submission deadlines are published on the Octagon website.

## 5. How is my application considered?

The Octagon Funding Panel considers all applications to the Small Grants scheme. The members of the panel are:

- Dr James Wilson: Vice Dean (Interdisciplinarity), Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- Prof Megan Vaughan: Vice Dean (Interdisciplinarity), Faculty of Social and Historical Sciences
- Dr Benet Salway: Faculty Graduate Tutor (Research), Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- Dr Paulo Drinot: Faculty Graduate Tutor (Research), Faculty of Social and Historical Sciences

The panel considers each application in turn and assesses both how closely it aligns with the funding criteria, outlined in section 2, and what aspects of the event it would be prepared to fund, based on the criteria in section 3. The panel also considers whether it requires further information, or can provide any guidance to help improve an event.

As outlined above, the more detail that you can provide in your application, the easier it is for the panel to reach a decision. Queries often arise where this is a lack of clarity regarding projected expenditure or where there seems to be a lack of interdisciplinarity or student involvement in the event proposal.

## 6. How will I find out if I am successful?

Following the panel meeting, the panel secretary, Joe Noteboom, will email you. Depending on the panel's decision, the email will confirm one of three things:

1. The panel has approved your application
2. The panel has further queries
3. The panel has not approved your application

If the panel has rejected your application, or has further queries, the email will explain why and inform you of the next steps.

If your application is successful, the email will inform you of the amount that you have been awarded.

**Note:** the panel does not always award the full amount requested. Where this happens, the email will explain why.

## PLANNING THE EVENT

This section details the procedures we expect successful applicants to follow when planning their events. If you still have a question after reading this section, please ask the Octagon Administrator.

### 1. Important information for successful applicants

Before delving into the detailed guidance, it is important to make you aware of a couple of things.

Firstly, the Octagon Small Grants Fund does not provide up front funding for events. All expenditure must be after your event has taken place. With that in mind, you should begin to coordinate with your department as soon as possible to ensure that you do not have to bear any of the upfront costs yourself. If you do incur any personal financial costs, you must reclaim these after the event.

Secondly, there are two conditions you must meet in order to receive your grant. You must:

1. Credit the Octagon Small Grants Fund in all publicity and literature for your event.
2. Provide a short report on the success of your event, accompanied by any photos/videos that you might have taken.

These conditions are very important as they help to improve the visibility of the scheme and evidence the reach and impact of the research in our faculties.

### 2. I want to provide catering

If your event is taking place on campus, the most straightforward option for catering is to book through Sodexo, UCL's catering supplier. You should try to book this through your home department, who will then be able to recoup the expenditure from the Octagon budget later. If you are unable to do this, please email the Octagon Administrator, citing your event name, the date of your event and the catering you wish to provide. You can also arrange a time to do the order in person. The Sodexo catering catalogue is on the following web page: <http://ucl.sodexo-uk.com/hospitality>. You will not be able to book through Sodexo without a valid departmental account code.

If you would prefer to use an external catering supplier, or simply purchase your food and drink from the supermarket, this is also possible. Please ensure that you retain original copies of all receipts and make note of the restrictions in the [Entertainment and Hospitality](#) section of the UCL Expenses Policy when making your purchases. The same guidance applies to post-event dinners.

### 3. I need to make travel arrangements

#### RAIL TRAVEL

All train travel should be standard class and should be booked as early as possible in order to take advantage of any advanced fares that are available.

It is possible to book rail tickets through the UCL Procurement portal. Your home department should be able to help you with this. If you do not want to use the procurement portal, you should aim to book your tickets online, using a website such as [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) or [www.thetrainline.com](http://www.thetrainline.com). Keep hold of any receipts or proofs of purchase, as you will need these to complete your expenses claim.

Please note that UCL will not cover rail travel where it is the same as the individual's daily commute (such as travel to UCL for a member of staff or UCL student).

#### AIR TRAVEL

Where possible, all air travel should be booked using UCL's preferred travel provider. Your home department should be able to assist you in completing a booking.

If it is not possible to book through the approved travel provider, please bear the following in mind:

- UCL prefers lower fares, based on fixed time of departure and arrival.
- A different ticket option will need to be pre-approved
- Membership of a frequent travellers scheme should not deflect from booking the cheapest option
- UCL does not meet the cost of employees of contractors/external guests nor the costs of their spouses or dependants.

Permission to travel by a certain class is dependent on these guidelines:

- Restricted economy – flights of five hours or less
- Premium economy – flights of over five hours
- Business – a long international flight immediately followed by a presentation or meeting. This must be pre-approved prior to booking.

If you need to seek approval for a non-standard travel option, please contact the Octagon Administrator.

You need to retain all proofs of purchase to submit with your expenses claim.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND TAXIS

You can claim for journeys made on public transport but you should seek to use the most economical method possible. For example, if the claimant regularly travels in London, they should use an Oyster or other smart card rather than purchase a single journey ticket.

For journeys made by Oyster or other smart card, you can only claim for the cost of the individual journey, not the entire top up. Your claim should give specific details about the locations, dates and times and the purpose of the journey.

UCL will only reimburse taxi fares where:

- It is clearly the most efficient and cost-effective method of transport;
- Alternative methods of transport are impractical due to pregnancy, disability, illness or injury, luggage or similar;
- The claimant was working in the venue until very late, i.e. after 11pm;
- The Octagon Administrator has given prior approval.

Please ask for a receipt or you will not be able to reclaim your expense.

Please refer to the [Travel](#) section of the UCL Expenses Policy for more detailed guidance on all of the above.

## 4. I need to book accommodation

Appropriate accommodation for speakers or visitors should be booked through one of the hotel chains with which UCL has an existing agreement. An indicative list of these hotels is below and an updated list is on [UCL's procurement website](#). You should ask your home department to assist you when booking.

Hotel	UCL Rate	UCL Contact
<a href="#">The Goodenough Club</a> 23 Mecklenburgh Square London WC1N 2AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Standard single: £128</li><li>• Superior single/small double: £160</li><li>• Double/twin: £185</li><li>• Suite: £280</li></ul>	<a href="#">Anne-Marie Jeanneret</a> +44 (0)20 7520 1566
<a href="#">The Academy</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Single: £170</li></ul>	<a href="#">Nikoleta Gulisova</a>

21 Gower Street London WC1E 6HG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Double/twin, single use: £185</li> <li>• Suite: £270</li> </ul>	+44 (0)20 7631 4115
<a href="#">Ambassadors Bloomsbury Hotel</a> 12 Upper Woburn Place London WC1H 0HX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard double (single occupancy): £168</li> <li>• Delux double (single occupancy): £198</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Sharon Baker</a> +44 (0)20 7693 5427
<a href="#">Corus Hotel Hyde Park</a> 1 Lancaster Gate London W2 3LG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard double/twin: £130</li> <li>• Executive double/twin: £165</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Charu Patel</a> +44 (0)20 7298 5470 / +44 (0)7535 681551
<a href="#">The Crescent Hotel</a> 49-50 Cartwright Gardens London WC1H 9EL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single with shared facilities: £60.30</li> <li>• Single with shower (WC down the hall): £65.70</li> <li>• Large single en-suite: £95.40</li> <li>• Double/twin en-suite: £120.60</li> <li>• Triple en-suite (double + single bed): £148.50</li> <li>• Family room (for 4) en-suite (double + 2 single beds): £162</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Rita Cockle</a> +44 (0)20 7387 1515
<a href="#">Grange Hotels: The Clarendon</a> 34-37 Bedford Place London WC1B 5JR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single/double/twin – superior: £137</li> <li>• Single/double/twin – executive: £170</li> </ul>	<a href="#">David Acosta</a> +44 (0)20 7630 2000
<a href="#">Grange Hotels: The Beauchamp</a> 24 - 27 Bedford Place London WC1B 5JH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single/double/twin – superior: £145</li> <li>• Single/double/twin – executive: £175</li> <li>• Junior suite: £205</li> </ul>	<a href="#">David Acosta</a> +44 (0)20 7630 2000
<a href="#">Grange Hotels: The Portland</a> 31-32 Bedford Place London WC1B 5JH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single studio: £137</li> <li>• Double studio: £167</li> <li>• Deluxe double studio: £197</li> </ul>	<a href="#">David Acosta</a> +44 (0)20 7630 2000
<a href="#">Grange Hotels: The Langham Court Hotel</a> 31-35 Langham Street London W1N 5RE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single/double/twin – superior: £129</li> <li>• Single/double/twin – executive: £160</li> </ul>	<a href="#">David Acosta</a> +44 (0)20 7630 2000

Where a speaker or participant needs to stay in London overnight, the cost of the hotel should not exceed £150 per night. Receipts should evidence all claims for the room cost, breakfast, dinner and relevant necessary incidentals. If the room cost will exceed £150 per night, you must seek approval from the Octagon Administrator.

Please refer to the [Overnight Costs & Allowances](#) section of the UCL Expenses Policy for more guidance.

## 5. I need to book a space for my event.

There are a couple of different options for booking space for an event. The following list is not exhaustive.

### **The Institute of Advanced Studies Common Ground and Forum**

These spaces, managed by the IAS, are reserved for research based study and events. If you would like to request use of either space, you should contact the Institute Administrator, Catherine Stokes

([c.stokes@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:c.stokes@ucl.ac.uk)). You must not advertise that you will be using this room until you receive confirmation from the IAS.

### **Booking a room through a department**

Many departments have teaching rooms that they control. You can usually find information on the department's website. Be aware that it might be difficult to book a room during advertised teaching hours.

### **Booking a room through UCL Room Bookings**

If you cannot secure a room through either of the above options, you could try to book a room through the Room Bookings system. Your home department should be able to support you in doing this. Please note that it can take several weeks to receive confirmation from the central room bookings team so you should apply early.

## **6. I need help publicising my event.**

It is standard practice to advertise all Octagon funded events on the Institute of Advanced Studies website. In order to produce the advert, we will need you to complete the web advert form found on the Octagon website. To complete this form you will need to provide:

- Event Title
- Event Image
- Short blurb
- Eventbrite Link
- Date, Time and Location
- Timetable/agenda/speaker bios (when available)

If you need help setting up the Eventbrite page, please refer to [this article on Eventbrite's support website](#) in the first instance. If you are still stuck after reading this, please contact the Octagon Administrator.

If you need further help, such as circulating a call for papers or distributing the event to a wider student list, please email the Octagon Administrator.

Please remember that you must credit the Octagon Small Grants fund in all publicity and link to the Octagon website in any electronic publicity.

## AFTER THE EVENT

### 1. How do I claim for expenditure?

There are four important things to keep in mind in relation to your expenditure:

1. You can only reclaim expenses after the event has taken place;
2. You must submit your expenses claim no later than 30 days after your event;
3. Your claim must be accompanied by hard copy receipts;
4. Your claim will not be approved until you have provided your post-event summary.

#### UCL STAFF

UCL Staff should submit all expenses claims through the iExpenses module on MyFinance. The following [UCL training module](#) will take through a systematic guide in using iExpenses if you have not used the system before.

Once you have completed your iExpenses claim, please send a hard copy of your claim, with the receipts attached, to Accounts Payable. You must also submit a photocopy of the claim and all receipts to the Octagon Administrator. We will not approve your claim until you submit the photocopies.

#### UCL STUDENTS AND EXTERNAL VISITORS

All UCL students and external speakers/organisers should complete the general expenses form. A link to this can be found on the Octagon website.

When you have filled out the form, please print it, sign it and append all receipts and proofs of purchase. You will then need to send it to the Octagon Administrator. You can either deliver it in person, send it through UCL's internal mail system or post it to the following address:

Octagon Administrator  
AH-SHS Faculty Office  
G01 Andrew Huxley Building  
University College London  
WC1E 6BT

Once your form has been received, and the administrator is happy that all expenditure is appropriate and has accompanying receipts, it will be sent to Accounts Payable.

#### UCL DEPARTMENTS

If your home department, or another UCL department, paid the up-front costs for your event, they must request an interdepartmental transfer through the MyFinance system. Please advise your home department to contact the Octagon Administrator to arrange the transfer.