Provost’s Awards for Public Engagement 2016/2017 – guidance for nominators

These awards recognise the hard work that people at UCL put in to sharing and developing their research, teaching, and learning with public groups outside the university. To get an idea of the kind of activities we’re talking about, have a look at our website: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/public-engagement

Nominations must be submitted by Friday 2nd December 2016.

What are these awards for?

UCL is committed to rewarding and recognising excellent public engagement activity. The Provost’s Awards for Public Engagement are an opportunity to celebrate this work and an important part of our commitment to our local communities.

The Provost’s Awards for Public Engagement aim to:

1) Champion and make visible good practice in public engagement
2) Reward and recognise public engagement at UCL
3) Demonstrate UCL’s role, achievements and impact in the field of engagement

Widening participation work with schools, or work that is intended to recruit students to UCL or higher education more generally, is not covered by the Public Engagement Awards.

Public engagement for the purposes of these public engagement awards is characterised by being based in UCL research, teaching, or learning.

The definition of public engagement used at UCL

As public engagement is a developing field, there are several different definitions. UCL use the definition of public engagement developed by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/what):

“Public engagement describes the many ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.”

And a definition of ‘public’ developed from that provided by HEFCE: “The 'public' includes individuals and groups who do not currently have a formal relationship with an HEI (Higher Education Institute) through teaching, research or knowledge transfer."

This definition includes, for example, communities or individuals with an interest relevant to your research, but would typically exclude students at other universities, or contacts in industry.

In light of these, the Public Engagement Unit, UCL Culture, supports UCL staff and students involved in a range of activities, but this fund particularly supports activities like:

- Taking part in dialogue about the direction of our research and teaching.
- Creating knowledge in collaboration with communities and interest groups outside the university.
- Supporting communities with our expertise in a mutually beneficial way.
- Creating opportunities for people outside the university to contribute their research and knowledge to our programmes.

You can find UCL’s Public Engagement Strategy, which was developed in 2010 by a cross-section of UCL staff, here: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/public-engagement/publicengagementstrategy
Who and what is eligible for the awards?

UCL staff and postgraduate research students are eligible for the awards, as are community partners for the community award. Honorary staff, and individuals not currently working for or studying at UCL, are not eligible. Staff of UCL Culture are not considered for these awards.

If you’re uncertain of the eligibility of an individual, or into which prize category they should be entered, please do get in touch with us at publicengagement@ucl.ac.uk.

Nominations are welcome for people who have been unsuccessfully nominated in the past. Individuals cannot win twice in the same category.

Please make clear when the work took place. The judges will particularly focus on work in the last year, but will also take into account previous years’ activities.

Who can make a nomination?

Nominators can be UCL staff and students, or members of the public from outside UCL who have benefited from the nominated person’s engagement work. Nominators will receive an acknowledgment that we have received the nomination within three working days.

How should I answer the questions on the nomination form?

1) Information about the nominated person and the nominator

Please give the nominated person’s name, course (if student) or job title (if staff or community member), department, institute or research centre (as appropriate), and contact details.

In addition to this information, we will also ask for the nominator’s name and contact details, as well as their relationship with the nominated person. Typical answers to the last question might be ‘I am the nominated person’s line-manager’, ‘I am the nominated person’s student’, or ‘I worked with the nominated person on an engagement project’.

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We also request a short description of the main purpose of the nominated person’s job if they are UCL staff (40 words max). This is to help the panel understand what was carried out above and beyond the duties required by their job. The panel will take into account the proportion of public engagement that the person is required to undertake as part of their day-to-day role when considering nominations.

Please check with the nominated person to ensure that they have been nominated in the correct category.

Please note the eligibility restrictions detailed on page 1 of this document.

Please note that the nominated person will be informed of the nomination and given the opportunity to withdraw the nomination if they wish.

2) Please describe the public engagement activities for which you wish to nominate this person/community partner

Give as much information as you can, as concisely as you can, in this answer. Remember that the panel can only judge based on the information given in your nomination. Please include:

- A description of the activities the person has been involved in
- Whether the nominated person has instigated activities or taken part in activities organised by others
- What communities, public groups and or audiences have been involved in the activities
- For the community award, consider also how the person has contributed to engagement activities and how they have facilitated dialogue on research, education or learning

The judges make their choice based only on the information on the form. Nominations with relevant, full answers are more likely to secure an award.
3) How, in terms of public engagement, has the described activity benefited the wider community and/or contributed to UCL?
You might find it useful to consider the following areas when thinking about the effects of the nominated person’s public activities. Please note that they are not exhaustive:

Has the nominee’s work changed the attitudes of staff and students to public engagement and public groups? Are the attitudes of the communities involved likely to have altered as a result of the nominee’s work?

Have UCL staff and students gained public engagement skills as a result of the nominee’s work? Has the community member gained skills that enable them to change their own lives and communities?

Have this person’s actions led to UCL staff being encouraged and empowered to carry out public engagement work? Have the communities or public groups involved been empowered? Have they had the opportunity to influence UCL research, teaching or culture? To influence society, culture or government?

4) What makes this individual/community partner stand out as someone committed to public engagement?
This question is designed to help the panel understand the wider value of this individual’s work and its strategic value.

How do the judges choose the winners?

A panel of judges with public engagement experience and understanding, including academics and professional services staff from across UCL, will choose prize-winners, taking into account a summary of the guidance above, as well as the following questions:

- Did the engagement activities have a strong focus on the communities’ needs?
- How effective were the public engagement activities described? And how do they know that they were effective (i.e. did any evaluation of reflection take place)?
- Were the activities described innovative or did they involve dialogue, providing support for, or creating knowledge in collaboration with, communities?
- Did the work described involve communities with whom UCL doesn't usually engage?
- Has the individual’s work lead to any changes? For instance, has it helped to create a culture among their colleagues at UCL of engaging with the public? Or, in the case of the Community Award, has the nominee influenced the culture at UCL or enhanced a public engagement project?
- Has the individual’s work allowed others at UCL to learn about, and gain experience in, public engagement?
- Has the individual used their initiative in organising or taking part in public engagement activities?

How will they be awarded?

All nominees will be informed whether or not they have been given an award as soon as possible before the ceremony takes place in February 2017. Nominators will also be informed of the success of their nominee.

I have another question. How can I contact the organisers?

The Provost’s Awards for Public Engagement are organised by the UCL Public Engagement Unit, UCL Culture. If you wish to contact us for any reason, please email the Unit at publicengagement@ucl.ac.uk.

Please note that no correspondence will be entered into regarding the selection process once the deadline has passed on Friday 2nd December.

Finally: Please remember to keep the completed document to no more than 2 sides of A4 paper (in 11pt Calibri). Nominations longer than 2 sides of A4 will not be considered.