**UCL Collaborative Social Science Domain**

**Social Science Plus 2024-25**

**Scheme Guidance & Evaluation of Applications**  
**Application Deadline: 11am, 4 June 2024**[**Download the application form**](https://form.jotform.com/233553652099362)

*Our scheme is funded by the IOE, and the Faculty of Social & Historical Studies*

**Scheme aim and characteristics**

1. The aim of the Social Science Plus scheme is to support pilot studies that seed new collaborations between social science and other disciplines across UCL in order to foster future (medium or large) interdisciplinary collaborative projects with a strong social science component
2. £10,000 for a social science led cross-disciplinary (social science and non-social science) pilot/seed research project that will lay the basis for an external funding application
3. Principal Investigators **must be** UCL social scientists, i.e., they need to be within the UKRI (ESRC) broad [definition of social science disciplines](https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/esrc/what-is-social-science/social-science-disciplines/#contents-list). They **must** also be based in faculties that are funding the scheme: IOE and the Faculty of Social & Historical Sciences

**Applications must:**

* be genuninely inter/cross-disciplinary, innovative and research based
* be for a minimum of 6 months duration. Funds **must be spent by 31 July 2025**
* include a coherent Early Career Researcher (ECR) Development Plan. See “Research Team Composition”, No.14 below for further details

1. The scheme **supports** the cost of employing a researcher and non-staff costs (e.g. travel and subsistence, equipment)
2. The scheme **does not support**: payment for faculty applicants’ time; the extension of previous activities; studies that do not have a social science lead; or studies that are not cross/inter-disciplinary
3. The scheme is competitive – we typically receive around 15 applications. This round of the scheme will fund at least two projects. Please take a look at the [pilot projects](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/domains/collaborative-social-science/social-science-plus/our-funding-scheme/pilot-projects) we have supported in the past

**Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator Eligibility**

1. Only Principal Investigators who are UCL social scientists based in the IOE or the Faculty of Social & Historical Sciences (our scheme funders) are eligible to apply
2. Co-Investigators/Additional Collaborators may be based in any UCL faculty
3. Principal Investigators and Co-investigators must be of post-doctoral standing or above and be employed by UCL during the life of the project (i.e., able to complete the proposed project within the terms and conditions of their current contracts)

**Research Team Composition**

1. These are small grants, and the team needs to be appropriate in skills and size. At a minimum, in addition to the Principal Investigator, the team must include a non-social science Co-Investigator
2. Up to two UCL Co-Investigators can be named on an application:

* One Co-Investigator must be a **non-social scientist** from across the disciplinary spectrum who **must not** be based in the same department as the Principal Investigator
* The second Co-Investigator can come from any discipline (including social science) and can be based in any department/faculty

1. The Principal Investigator will need to submit CVs (max. 2 pages) for themselves and the Co-Investigator(s). NB: applications with CVs longer than 2 pages will be returned
2. If a clear justification is made, Additional Collaborators may be included in the team, these may be UCL employees, honorary fellows, researchers at other institutions (UK/international), or non-academic partners (UK /international)
3. *Early Career Researcher (ECR) Plan*   
   Applications must include a coherent Early Career Researcher (ECR) Development Plan that will create subtantial experience and learning opportunities.
4. For the purposes of our scheme we follow the [UKRI definition](https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/developing-people-and-skills/esrc/early-career-researchers/) of an ECR who may be either doctoral; immediately post doctorate; or transitioning to being an independent researcher. ECRs can come from any discipline and be based in any UCL department/faculty

**Budget and External funding application**

1. If successful, the Principal Investigator's department, not CSSD, will administer awarded funds on behalf of the Principal Investigator
2. It is not necessary to submit a Worktribe costing with this application. However, applicants are advised to check if their departments have a requirement for them to complete a Worktribe costing for internal funding applications
3. This scheme aims to support small pilot studies to seed future medium to large interdisciplinary collaborative external funding applications with a strong social science component. The scheme does not support future individual fellowships or career development grants

**Please note these EXCLUSIONS from the scheme:**

* Payment for applicants’ time in completing their proposed activities
* Extensions of previous small grants activities
* Studies in science that are exclusively lab-based and/or are not cross-disciplinary in nature
* Where the main purpose of the application is to attend or organise conferences  
  Article processing charges (publication fees)
* Activities that will incur costs after 31 July 2025; use of awarded funds cannot be deferred to a later period

1. Successful applicants will be expected to:

* submit an Outcomes Report in the autumn following 31st July 2025
* acknowledge UCL Collaborative Social Domain in dissemination activities and publications

**Evaluation of Applications**

**Stage 1:** All applications need to meet the scheme’s eligibility criteria – please see the guidance on the scheme’s aims, Principal and Co-investigator eligibility, team composition etc. If you have any questions, please contact Michael Reade, Strategic Coordinator, CSSD, [m.reade@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:m.reade@ucl.ac.uk) **Applications that do not meet the criteria will be rejected**.

**Stage 2:** Eligible applications will be assessed on their relevance to the 8 evaluation criteria below which articulate the scheme’s aims and characteristics.

**A: Track records**1. Principal Investigator’s and Co-Investigator(s)’s track records relative to career stage

**B: The extent to which the project’s:**

2. Aims, objectives and Research Question(s) relate to the aims of the Collaborative Social Science Domain’s Social Science Plus scheme

3. Early Career Researcher Development Plan creates subtantial experience and learning opportunities

4. Design and methodology integrate disciplinary research expertise/ knowledge to generate innovative research

5. Outcomes and workplan are feasible and relevant

6. Budget is justified and offers value for money

**C: The potential of the project to:**7. Establish a new collaboration between social science and other disciplines

8. Provide a foundation for a future (medium or large) UCL interdisciplinary collaborative external funding application with a strong social science component

**Review Panel**A review panel of 5-7 members of the Collaborative Social Science Domain’s Steering Group/domain associates will be constituted and each application will be reviewed by a min. of 2 panel members. Applications will be ranked on each of the above criteria - from 0 (not met) to 4 (outstanding), and a holistic reviewer comment provided. Where scores vary significantly the CSSD Chair will serve as a third reviewer.

**Stage 3**: The application reviews will be collated and discussed by the panel and ranked. The panel decision making process will also consider the need to ensure potential future applications are spread across different fundersand to seed collaborative conversations across depts/Faculties.

Principal Investigators will be provided with reviewer scores and feedback.