

AWARDS OF RESEARCH CULTURE SEED FUND (RCSF)

2024/25

CRITERIA & GUIDANCE

What is the Research Culture Seed Fund?

- This is a new seed fund aimed at supporting grassroots¹ initiatives designed to foster a more positive research culture within UCL.
- Awards of up to £2,000 are available for each new project undertaken and completed by 31 July 2025 in the academic year 2024/25.

Who is eligible to apply for the Research Culture Seed Fund?

- We welcome applications from all UCL staff members in departments and research groups, including those in academic and research positions, and on professional services contracts. This invitation extends to individuals and teams across UCL's 11 faculties. However, it does not include honorary or visiting lecturers. We also encourage interdisciplinary applications.
 - Please note that Early Career Researchers are eligible and encouraged to apply.
 - Doctoral researchers are also eligible to apply in their own right.
- In line with UCL's commitment to equality and diversity, we encourage applications from a wide range of backgrounds regardless of career stage, age, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and religion.
- UCL staff applicants must have a UCL contract that extends to at least 31 July 2025. If an applicant has a fixed-term contract that does not extend to 31 July 2025, they can apply if their contract covers the dates in which the project is due to take place and must have a co-applicant who is a UCL staff member with a contract that extends to at least 31 July 2025.
- Doctoral researchers will need to be enrolled up until 31 July 2025, which includes any CRS, post-viva, and corrections periods up to the issue of the final award.

What can be funded by the Research Culture Seed Fund?

- Any project that supports positive change in one or more of the five key themes in Research Culture's 10-year Roadmap, as outlined below.
- Costings appropriate and relevant to the activity/project, including directly incurred staff costs
- Expenditure in line with UCL procurement policies and procedures

Applications should focus on removing barriers or optimising enablers to a positive research culture and clearly articulate the expected impact or outcome.

Research Culture Roadmap themes:

- **Transparent and fair career development**

Projects designed to help researchers understand various career paths, provide career development support, and promote a merit-based progression system.

¹ This funding is intended to complement the existing annual faculty allocation from the Research Culture Programme by enabling activity at departmental and research group level. Applications from departments and research groups will therefore be prioritised over faculty-level or VP Office applications.

- **People-centred leadership and management**

Projects designed to enhance leadership and management skills focused on prioritising team wellbeing, fostering a healthy research environment, and promoting research excellence.

- **Opportunities to collaborate and innovate**

Projects designed to create opportunities for collaboration across disciplines, geographies, and sectors, encourage innovative thinking, and facilitate continuous improvement through learning from failures.

- **Openness and integrity in research and innovation**

Projects designed to integrate Open Science principles and research integrity into practice, recognise non-traditional contributions, and enhance the overall value of research.

- **Supportive and inclusive environment**

Projects designed to create a diverse, inclusive, and psychologically safe research environment where all contributors feel valued and mental health and wellbeing are prioritised.

Example activities:

Examples of activities within a project might include:

- Creating a network
- Delivering mentoring or training programmes or workshops
- Initiatives that promote diversity, equity and inclusion within the research community, or that address systemic barriers faced by marginalised researchers
- Community outreach events that help researchers communicate their work to diverse audiences
- Research on research culture

The list is not exhaustive, and we understand that there may be other ways you wish to conduct the project.

You can read about [previous and current Research Culture funded projects](#) on the Research Culture website.

What cannot be funded by the Research Culture Seed Fund?

- Costs that are already included in a research or teaching grant.
- Teaching time buyout.

A Worktribe costing is NOT necessary for the Research Culture Seed Fund.

Assessment of applications

- Assessment panels will be comprised of representatives from the Research Culture Programme Board and Research Culture Community Steering Group
- Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
 - The strength of the project proposal, and its alignment with one or more of the five Roadmap themes.
 - The expected/potential impact on research culture.
 - Feasibility and sustainability of the project.
 - Clarity and completeness of the application.

We will take a balanced portfolio approach to ensure both a diverse range of projects across the five themes as well as representation of different career stages, demographics and faculty affiliations.

Award recipients will be asked to provide a short report on impact and outcomes of the activity at the end of the project. They will also be expected to be available to present at a future Research Culture showcase event.

The online application process

- All applications must be made using the RCSF application form and submitted via [the submission form](#) by **11:59 pm, Friday, 23 August 2024**.
- Only applications submitted via the online submission form will be considered.
- Applicants are required to submit a detailed proposal outlining:
 - The theme-related barrier(s) and/or enabler(s) their project will address.
 - The objectives, expected outcomes and impact of their project.
 - You should provide a breakdown of the costs you're seeking to cover in the relevant section of the application form.
 - A timeline for project implementation.

Ethical approval

Research requiring ethical approval should be accounted for in the timeline.

Key dates

- Applications must be submitted by 11:59 pm on Friday, 23 August 2024.
- Panel reviews: mid-September 2024.
- Applicants will be notified of panel decisions: late September 2024.
- Funding awarded: 7 October 2024.
- Projects completed and final reports submitted by 31 July 2025.

Award recipients will receive the Research Culture Seed Fund using the internal UCL transfer process. Full instructions will be provided at the point of confirming the awards.

Contact

If you have any questions about the Research Culture Seed Fund or the application process, please contact Ngozi Sagay at researchculture@ucl.ac.uk.