



UCL

BEYOND BOUNDARIES

Realising the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Event Programme

19 - 29 October 2020



GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT



GRAND
CHALLENGES

WELCOME FROM PROFESSOR DAVID PRICE AND PROFESSOR DAME HAZEL GENN

It's no understatement to say that this year, our world has undergone monumental change in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Academia has had to change rapidly, shifting away from the way we have conducted research and teaching up until now, and the future landscape for how we move on from here is still uncertain. However, we know that bringing together different perspectives and diverse experience, whether in person or online, speeds up the process of discovery. That's why it's an honour to welcome you to this conference, which comes at such a pivotal moment for sustainability and brings together UCL academics and partners from across the globe to focus on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Goals are an excellent framework for all sectors to actively pursue the change that is so needed. Now more than ever. And arguably none will be achieved without the contribution of the university sector. The challenges presented by COVID-19, including addressing healthcare inequality, achieving global resilience and improving emergency preparedness, cast our research into sharp focus - but also mark an opportunity to ask and answer tough questions: *how can we ensure equality of access to healthcare provision? Can countries take bigger steps to address climate change? How can we use research to benefit global communities?*

Inspired by UCL's founding principles of openness and freedom of thought, we truly believe that, with the right mix of minds, we can rise to the challenge and create positive impact for people all around the world.

The challenges identified by the SDGs - inequalities, wellbeing, climate change, digital needs, and global engagement and security - are at the core of UCL's mission and its multidisciplinary approach. 2020 marks the start of the decade of action towards the UN General Assembly's Agenda 2030, and with this conference we aim to explore how to integrate the SDGs sustainably and equitably into our systems and to examine how partnerships and collaborations - irrespective of boundaries - can support governments and policymakers in achieving the Goals.



Professor David Price
UCL Vice-Provost (Research)



Professor Dame Hazel Genn
UCL Vice-Provost (International & Advancement)

INTRODUCTION

Beyond Boundaries: Realising the UN Sustainable Development Goals is a two-week virtual conference examining why and how universities should address the SDGs, particularly in light of COVID-19, hosted by the UCL Global Engagement Office and UCL Grand Challenges. The virtual conference consists of 12 sessions taking place across two weeks and is open to all to attend, with a particular target audience of the knowledge and policy sector.

COVID-19 has united countries, organisations and individuals across the world in addressing this extreme challenge. The pandemic has starkly highlighted the need to focus on interconnected solutions to global challenges – including inequality, wellbeing, climate change, digital needs, and global engagement and security – and to act against disunity.

2020 signals the beginning of the UN SDGs ‘decade of action’ on the 17 goals and 169 ambitious targets set out in 2015 by the UN General Assembly’s Agenda 2030. Entering this crucial decade, universities and the higher education sector have a vital role to play. The 2020 milestone is a marker for universities’ actions in helping the world to achieve, or go beyond, the ambitions of the SDGs. UCL’s virtual conference, open to all, aims to galvanise cross-disciplinary cooperation and beyond-boundary partnership – starting the 10-year countdown to achievement of the 2030 Global Goals.

Participants will share perspectives and knowledge, exchange good practice and develop ideas and innovative approaches. For existing collaborations, and for those yet to be formed, *Beyond Boundaries* provides a uniquely valuable opportunity for engagement, discussion and debate.

“For almost two centuries, UCL has brought together brilliant and diverse minds from across the world, committed to changing it for the better, to discuss and discover innovative solutions to a wide range of pressing global problems.

Through this conference, we aim to utilise the collective brilliance and expertise of our guest speakers, UCL staff, students and guests, to listen and learn how we as a university can help pave the way towards a more equitable, sustainable future - whilst acknowledging the plethora of challenges that lie ahead in light of the global coronavirus pandemic.

Only through engaging, exploring and critiquing the UN Sustainable Development Goals as a framework for humanity through a multi-disciplinary lens can UCL help to ensure that the Goals can be adequately addressed by the 2030 deadline. With our wealth of knowledge, and as London’s Global University, UCL is an excellent host for a conference of this kind, with the ability to integrate our research and education for the benefit of humanity whilst recognising that we do not hold all the answers - and only by working together can we achieve success.

I am greatly looking forward to seeing the outcomes of this hugely important and timely conference, and I thank you all for your interest in ‘Beyond Boundaries’. I would also like to extend a special thanks to our fantastic speakers joining us from around the world, helping to make this event truly special.”

Professor Michael Arthur
UCL President & Provost

SESSION PROGRAMME

click on the sessions to register on Eventbrite

WEEK 1: 19th October – 23rd October



Session 1: Sustainability in a COVID-19 World

Monday 19th October 9:00 – 11:00 GMT+1

Focusing on Sustainability in a COVID-19 World, the opening session of *Beyond Boundaries* will introduce the conference and set the scene for a two-week long series of events. This session will consider in more detail sustainability in the context of COVID-19 and the stark inequalities that have been highlighted and exacerbated by the pandemic. Throughout the conference, discussions will set out to strengthen the collective SDG movement and look to the future, beyond, or living with, COVID-19.



Session 2: Universities & the SDGs

Tuesday 20th October 9:00 – 10:30 GMT+1

This session will challenge universities to consider whether they should be implementing the SDGs or if the sector plays a different role. Discussions will ask: *does the current framework model favour Western institutions and what does the next generation of students expect from their institutions?* This session will act as a rallying call to the higher education sector to take a deeper look at how and why they seek to implement the SDGs and what the benefits will be to the institution, its staff and students, and wider society.



Session 3: Sustainability & the Water Cycle

Wednesday 21th October 9:00 – 10:30 GMT+1

This session will look at how the water elements of SDGs 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life Below Water) and 15 (Life on Land) are being delivered and whether the targets linked to water are sufficiently comprehensive. Discussions will explore key trade-offs and nexi between the water needs of people, food production, the economy and the environment and ask how we can develop a future knowledge and innovation agenda that could help speed up the delivery of relevant SDGs.



Session 4: Global Inequalities in a COVID-19 World

Thursday 22nd October 14:00 – 15:00 GMT+1

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated and exacerbated the punitive effects of global inequalities in health, wealth, education and infrastructure, drawing mainstream attention to the relationships between poverty, race, gender and wellbeing. This session will invite global thought-leaders to discuss how COVID-19 will shape global efforts to confront inequalities and to reflect on how government, civil society and universities could and should work together towards achieving the SDGs in a post-pandemic landscape.



Session 5: Positive Partnerships: Assistive Technologies

Friday 23rd October 14:00 – 15:30 GMT+1

In this session, a panel of eminent speakers drawn from a diverse range of sectors will discuss partnership opportunities and development, focusing on assistive technologies. With a focus on SDGs 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), the session will bring together speakers from across different sectors to share their experiences in developing successful partnerships and overcoming challenges. They will also discuss cross-industry partnerships and building partnerships locally, nationally and internationally.



WEEK 2: 26th October – 29th October



Session 6: Transforming Infrastructures: Energy

Monday 26th October 12:30 – 14:00 GMT

This session will address the role of local governments, workers, communities and entrepreneurs in achieving energy transitions. The session will include talks from the London Borough of Camden on their experience of a Citizen's Assembly to address the climate crisis, UCL research to support renewable energy innovation in Africa, community and worker-led energy planning in London, and long-term perspectives on how the climate crisis is changing how energy fits within development planning.



Session 7: Behaviour: The Climate & Sustainability Crises

Tuesday 27th October 12:00 – 13:30 GMT

Human behaviour lies at the heart of the causes of the environmental degradation and climate change that has led to the current crises. This panel discussion with interactive breakout sessions will consider the contribution of behavioural and social sciences to addressing the environmental crises facing the world and demonstrate the contribution of inter-disciplinary and international collaborations in bringing new perspectives, research and translational methods and knowledge.



Session 8: Students Beyond Boundaries

Tuesday 27th October 15:00 – 16:30 GMT

This session will explore the role that students play in advancing UCL's agenda on the SDGs and sustainability more widely. Beginning with a conversation between Professors, sabbatical officers, students, and recent graduates, discussions will ask how the SDGs offer a stimulus for activism and explore the ways students are creating impact beyond their taught curriculum. Students will be invited to imagine 'what's possible' as well as where disruption is needed in order to have a meaningful engagement with the SDGs both at university and beyond.



Session 9: Cross-Border Translational Research Post-COVID

Wednesday 28th October 9:00 – 11:00 GMT

In this interactive session, both the panel and audience will discuss the importance of partnerships for enabling the effective delivery of translational research – applying knowledge from science and clinical trials to address critical medical needs. Focusing on SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), the panel will debate the barriers and requirements needed to ensure research can deliver meaningful impact, particularly in light of COVID-19.



Session 10: Engaging Communities for Sustainable Cities

Wednesday 28th October 13:00 – 14:30 GMT

SDG 11 calls on action to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. This session will showcase actions and research that place the voices of diverse communities at the heart of sustainable urban development. Through presentations from expert practitioners and researchers, the session will explore development challenges in Havana, London, Kisumu and Delhi, and reflect on how collaborative research with communities and local authorities can help respond to them.



Session 11: Achieving Inclusive Wealth

Thursday 29th October 12:00 – 13:30 GMT

This session will bring together world-leading intellectuals on ecology, macroeconomics, digital democracy and health to discuss the world's most pressing political, economic and ecological challenges. Discussions will explore key questions, including: *how can we account for the environment as an economic asset? Which environmental strategies offer the best hope of addressing the SDGs? Is the new digital revolution our main hope for sustainability? How can we build a macroeconomic system which places sustainability first? What is an equitable approach to health improvement? and ultimately, is inclusive wealth achievable?*



Session 12: Next Steps for UCL

Thursday 29th October 13:40 – 14:40 GMT

This session will draw the two weeks to a close, exploring the key discussion points from across the conference's 11 sessions, and will be critical in determining the future UCL strategy for sustainable development. With a focus on the future, both for universities and the SDGs, the session will reflect on 'next steps' for UCL and collective action towards the Goals and will act an opportunity for UCL staff and students to identify how UCL can contribute to this vision.



CONFERENCE TIMETABLE

click on the sessions to register on Eventbrite

WEEK 1: 19th October – 23rd October / GMT+1 (BST)

	MONDAY 19	TUESDAY 20	WEDNESDAY 21	THURSDAY 22	FRIDAY 23
9	Session 1: Sustainability in a COVID-19 World	Session 2: Universities & the SDGs	Session 3: Sustainability & the Water Cycle		
10					
11					
12					
13					
14				Session 4: Global Inequalities in a COVID-19 World	Session 5: Positive Partnerships: Assistive Technologies
15					
16					
17					

CONFERENCE TIMETABLE

WEEK 2: 26th October – 29th October / GMT

	MONDAY 26	TUESDAY 27	WEDNESDAY 28	THURSDAY 29	FRIDAY 30
9			Session 9: Cross-Border Translational Research Post-COVID		
10					
11					
12					
13	Session 6: Transforming Infrastructures: Energy	Session 7: Behaviour: The Climate & Sustainability Crises	Session 10: Engaging Communities for Sustainable Cities	Session 11: Achieving Inclusive Wealth	
14				Session 12: Next Steps for UCL	
15					
16		Session 8: Students Beyond Boundaries			
17					



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**SUSTAINABLE
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