



# Eugenics Legacy Education Network (ELEN): Principled Space Policy (DRAFT)

Please note that this is a working document and is currently in draft format. The policy has been developed from the [BARC Principled Space Policy](#). During Summer 2023 we will be working with colleagues across UCL asking them for feedback and discussion around this policy).

## About ELEN

The Eugenics Legacy Education Project (ELEP) runs from 2022-2025 and will carry out a range of activities designed to support staff and students at UCL to engage with UCL's historic links to eugenics and the contemporary implications for education activities. This means working together to think about how critical engagement with eugenics might be incorporated into teaching and learning activities in a way that is congruent and attends to recommendations outlined in [UCL's Eugenics Inquiry Response report](#).

The role of the Eugenics Legacy Education Network (ELEN) is to explore the educational implications of UCL's eugenics legacy. The Network aims to explore the dynamics of UCL's history of eugenics, teaching difficult knowledge in higher educational contexts and innovation and providing a space to:

- Discuss current pedagogic research in the field of difficult knowledge – such as eugenics histories and legacies;
- Link professional practice to current theories and thinking the teaching of complex, controversial and/or contentious curriculum areas;
- Support debate and critical thinking around teaching and learning scholarship;
- Foster solidarity between academics, community members, and educational professionals on issues of social justice, healing and harm in education;
- Devise an events programme on an annual basis to foreground issues related to education as a practice of social justice.

Given that the starting point for this network is a scholarly engagement with educational injustices and critical engagement with historical links to eugenics, it is of vital importance that harm is not done to those taking part in ELEN's activities.

Reading about, talking about, and reflecting on historical harms in education contexts and the contemporary implications of continuing educational injustices is difficult. While considering issues of respect, dignity, discomfort and challenge in relation to educational theory and practice, we will also need to consider these aspects in relation to our own practices and behaviour. This policy is designed to outline some general principles around ELEN's activities and to support learning and challenge that is respectful and productive. We also hold in tension that this will also constitute an important opportunity for learning about mistake making in education and acknowledging our discomfort both personally and educationally.

## ELEN's key principles

- All communication, be it online or in person, will be appropriate for a professional and academic audience and be considerate of people from different cultural backgrounds.
- ELEN will support members to contribute to discussions constructively and positively.
- Convenors/presenters will be supported to lead discussions in ways that are inclusive, can hold challenge, and support discussion effectively through ELEN's preparation activities.

- Where experiences (either personal or professional) are shared they may be deeply personal and should be treated in the strictest confidence.
- By taking part in ELEN's activities and events, we will believe people's accounts of their experiences of marginalisation by not disputing their lived experience. Questions designed to learn/further understanding may be appropriate, provided they are respectful and not overly intrusive.
- Harassment and exclusionary jokes will never be appropriate at ELEN events (please see Glossary below for our definition of harassment).
- We ask ELEN members to make efforts to be aware of our privilege(s) and respond constructively to opportunities to learn more about our privilege(s) if we are challenged. If our privilege is pointed out or acknowledged by others, we commit to taking the time to reflect and respond constructively rather than denying or defending our position. Open conversations lead to greater understanding.
- We will ensure that the use of social media is agreed and clear for the events we hold. For some events it will never be appropriate to share information on social media, however, if sharing experiences on social media, we will respect other participants. For example, we will not make derogatory comments or posts about any person in the discussion, or share experiences that are not ours without explicit consent.
- If you experience harassment or negative behaviours because of ELEN events or activities, please contact Helen Knowler (ELEN convenor) to discuss your concerns in confidence ([h.knowler@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:h.knowler@ucl.ac.uk)).

## Glossary

- Privilege: when we refer to 'privilege' in the context of this policy, we are specifically discussing the concept of 'identity privilege', which is any unearned benefit or advantage or lack of disadvantage one receives or experiences in society by nature of their identity.
- Marginalised: this term (and variations thereof) is used by this policy to refer to people or groups of people who are not well represented or included in society or the spaces we typically operate in. We use this term instead of minoritised as it is sometimes the case that marginalised people are not in the mathematical minority.
- Oppression(s): this term refers to the experience of unjust treatment experienced by many marginalised people/groups.
- Lived experience: is personal knowledge about the world that is gained through first-hand involvement in everyday events.
- Harassment: offensive verbal comments and/or imagery related to gender, gender reassignment, gender identity and expression, age, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sex, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, and/or technology choices. Other examples of harassment include sexual images in public spaces, deliberate intimidation, sustained disruption of talks or other events, and inappropriate physical contact. All examples of harassment are equally important.