

University College London – University of Toronto Strategic Challenges Fund 2024

Deadline for Applications:
October 4, 2024, 11:59 PM (BST) / October 4, 2024, 6:59 PM (EDT)

University College London (UCL) and the University of Toronto (U of T) are contributing matching funds to a joint call for proposals for collaborative research and education projects. The Strategic Challenges Fund has been established to facilitate and support joint initiatives that will strengthen the two universities' strategic priorities as well as develop multi-disciplinary innovative research to create academic and societal impact.

Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals for innovative and sustainable projects built around bilateral research linking the U of T and UCL. The call is open to applications in all disciplines, but we particularly welcome proposals in the areas of:

- Social sciences and humanities
- Child and youth health
- Urban inequalities
- Climate change mitigation

Proposals that take a cross-disciplinary approach and include investigators from different fields are strongly encouraged.

1. Projects

To be eligible, a single proposal must be submitted by a team of researchers, including at least one PI at each institution. PIs with existing collaborations and who propose to extend or diversify the scope of their collaborations are encouraged to apply. Investigators may be researchers of any seniority. We encourage early career researchers (ECRs) to apply.¹

Up to four (4) joint projects will be selected for a funding period of up to twelve (12) months. Proposals are encouraged to demonstrate the potential for sustainability and scalability beyond the initial funding period, including the potential to leverage external funding and extend the scale and scope of the project team.

Proposals demonstrating strong relevance to strategic priorities at the participating institutions are strongly encouraged. These include [UCL's Grand Challenges](#) and U of T's [Institutional Strategic Initiatives](#).

Proposals must make the case for how the collaboration would improve the impact, reach, and/or quality of the research than if it were undertaken independently. **Proposals may include, but are not limited to, workshops, symposia, faculty exchanges, research seminars/presentations, joint publications, and the formation of a collaborative network in virtual or physical formats.**

In addition to research outputs, proposals should consider outputs engaging public audiences through, for example, conferences and media articles.

¹ UCL: Using the definition of UKRI ECR stages, from doctoral students to researchers with experience up to 5 years from PhD award; U of T: an individual who is within five years of their first faculty appointment. This duration excludes any period of career break.

2. Eligibility

- 2.1. Eligibility to **submit proposals**: faculty members in continuing UCL and U of T appointments are eligible to submit proposals.
- 2.2. Eligibility for the **exchange activities**: faculty members in continuing UCL and U of T appointments, and students and fellows under their supervision at UCL and U of T, are eligible to participate in exchange activities.
- 2.3. Principal Investigators from UCL should be aware of **changes made to the 2024/25 GE Partner Fund** process relating to the number of applications that can be submitted per Investigator across all calls, the number of awards that can be received, and eligibility for award holders from the 23/24 round. **See further details in the information text box of the Partner Funds webpage [here](#).**

3. Value and Eligible Costs

Up to four (4) successful proposals will be selected with funding to be allocated on the following basis:

- UCL will provide each approved project up to £10,000 to support UCL applicants.
- U of T will provide each approved project up to \$15,000 to support U of T applicants.

Eligible Costs	Ineligible costs
Eligible costs include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Travel costs including flights, hotels, and subsistence• Costs associated with organizing workshops and meetings• Research costs, including consumables and research assistants (up to 25% of the total requested budget)• For other costs not listed above or as ineligible, please check with international office to validate if they are eligible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Replacement research/teaching costs• Directly incurred staff except for research assistants.• Directly allocated costs including applicants' time• Indirect costs/estates costs• Equipment• Scholarships• Conference attendance• Tuition fees• Honoraria

All UCL travel must comply with the [UCL travel policy](#).

UCL applicants must confirm that all activity and expenditure on the UCL side of the project will be completed between **November 2024 and July 2025**. Any funding remaining after this period will be reclaimed.

All anticipated costs included in the application must be calculated according to any required UCL/U of T expenses policy. UCL applicants do not require Worktribe costing.

4. Timeline

Call for proposals	Sep 06, 2024
Deadline to communicate intention to apply	Intention to Apply Form Sep 20, 2024, 11:59 PM (BST) / Sep 20, 2024, 6:59 PM (EDT)
Deadline for submission of proposal	October 04, 2024, 11:59 PM (BST) / October 04, 2024, 6:59 PM (EDT) /
Communication of Results to applicants	November 2024
Start date of Awards	November 2024

5. Submission of Proposals

Applicants must complete an [Intention to Apply form](#) by September 20, 2024. Those unable to meet this deadline must request and receive approval by emailing PIs' names and project title to elina.tulla@utoronto.ca and abel.dorantes@ucl.ac.uk before submitting a full application.

After communicating an intention to apply, a single, joint application should be submitted online via the following [link](#)

The **full proposal** comprises the following elements:

- A. Proposal Coversheet through the JotForm portal that includes PI and faculty members' contact details and affiliations from each Institution.
- B. An application form with the **project description and budget**, of a maximum of five (5) pages (excluding bibliography if included) following this [form template](#).

6. Assessment

- Applications are received by the U of T Office of the Vice-President, International, and UCL Global Engagement Office, and forwarded to a respective internal review committee along with a template for ranking applications.
- **Selection Criteria:** The internal review committee will assess each proposal against the following criteria:
 - **Project design and rationale (10 points):** How clearly presented and justified is the basis for, and design of, the project? How do the proposed activities assist with establishing new and emerging research collaborations? What is the added value of conducting this research collaboratively between UCL and U of T rather than independently?
 - **Potential impact (10 points):** What outcomes do the planned activities set out to achieve? How will they advance knowledge in the field and what are the anticipated benefits of the activities to local or international communities? How does your proposal connect to the strategic priorities of UCL and U of T?
 - **Project team and structure (10 points):** How well placed are the PIs to deliver the activity proposed? Have development opportunities for ECRs and postgraduate researchers been considered (where applicable)? Are the activities appropriately balanced between UCL and U of T?
 - **Capacity for future collaboration/funding (20 points):** What is the potential for this project to foster ongoing collaboration and to develop in scope and scale? What is the potential to leverage further external funding?

- Respective reviews will be returned to the UCL Global Engagement Office and the U of T Office of the Vice-President, International, and results/scores are tabulated to rank proposals.
- A Joint Committee will convene to select up to four (4) final proposals.

7. Communication of Results

Results will be announced via email to the successful faculty members.

8. Reporting After Project Completion

All awardees must, as a condition of receiving an award under this call, complete a narrative report (of between 1 and 2 pages) that describes the outcomes, nature of collaboration, project impact, trainee involvement (where applicable), and opportunities for future collaboration that evolved from their project. The final report will be due three months after the project ends.

9. Information about this Call

All questions related to this Joint Call for Collaborative Projects should be directed to:

At UCL:

Abel Dorantes, Global Engagement Manager
Global Engagement Office
Email: abel.dorantes@ucl.ac.uk

At U of T:

Elina Tulla, Regional Lead, Europe & UK
Office of the Vice-President, International
Email: elina.tulla@utoronto.ca