**Guidance for Project Proposals**

**Introduction**

The Student Success Office established in March 2022 leads on the development and implementation of UCL’s strategies to support academic success and close awarding and retention gaps across UCL. The team works in conjunction with UCL Arena, the Academic Communications Centre, VP (Education and Student Experience) Office, Student Support and Wellbeing (SSW), and faculties and departments, to develop and deliver interventions to address disparities in outcomes.

The Student Success Office takes an institution-wide approach to delivering initiatives and resources for staff and students which lead to culture change. We have a strong focus on evaluation and research and take an evidence-led approach to on-course success for student groups where there are unexplained gaps.

The team is launching a new Student Success Fund to enable culture and behaviour change at UCL and to ensure the academic success, retention, and continuation of underrepresented UK domiciled undergraduate students i.e. the Access UCL cohort, Black, Asian and ethnic minority, mature, disabled, care experienced, and estranged students.

Projects and interventions must be aimed at increasing equity for the following UK-domiciled undergraduate student groups:

* [The Access UCL cohort](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/undergraduate/access-ucl-scheme)
* [Care Experienced and Estranged Students](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/resources-and-information/information-and-support-specific-student-groups/care)
* [Mature students](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/resources-and-information/information-and-support-specific-student-groups-0)
* [Disabled Students](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/support-disabled-students)
* [Black, Asian, ethnic minority students](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/additional-information/specific-student-groups/support-black-and-minority)

Please note that if you have already received funds from the Student Success Fund, you are still eligible to apply for further funds. For example, if you received funds for a seed project, you could apply for further funds to develop your project into a sprout or grow.

If you have already received funding from the Student Success Fund, this does not affect what you have already received.

**Application Timeline**

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| **31 July 2024** | Deadline to submit finished proposals |
| **Week commencing 16 August 2024** | Successful projects will be notified |
| **Week commencing 26 August 2024** | Projects begin |
| **Week commencing 27 January 2025** | Project reports due |

**The Project Proposal Application Form**

You can request an application form by emailing [smss.studentsuccess@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:smss.studentsuccess@ucl.ac.uk). The form is designed to give the Student Success Fund Panel the information they need to come to an informed decision on support and funding for potential projects. It is important that you give as much detail as possible when completing the form to help the Student Success Office in their decision-making.

**The Criteria**

1. **Measurable outcomes focused on the academic success, retention, and continuation of students from underrepresented groups identified above (UK undergraduate students)**

* Your project should have measurable outcomes focused on supporting academic success and closing retention and awarding gaps
* Measurable outcomes include (but are not limited to): student marks, survey satisfaction scores (for example, NSS or UCL Student Experience Survey), number of academic representatives from underrepresented backgrounds, engagement with project activities, and so on
* Projects focusing on belonging and interventions pre-arrival/during the induction process are welcomed

1. **Clear rationale behind the project using research and evidence**

* You should explain in your proposal the rationale behind your project, using research or evidence to support your project and its approach
* Supporting research or evidence can be quantitative or qualitative. This might include statistical data, evidence from research papers or reports, focus group findings, discussions with other institutions/colleagues, or discussions with Staff-Student Consultative Committees
* If your project includes funding for capital costs, such as equipment, or use of external experts, for example to deliver training, please explain the rationale behind these approaches, including any supporting research or evidence

1. **Intervention focussed**

* For Sprout and Grow projects there should be a focus on intervention and evaluation of interventions rather than research
* If research is required for Sprout and Grow projects, a maximum of 10% of funds per initiative can be allocated to research, the results of which will need to be reportable within a maximum of six months
* Whilst funding can be used to buy out staff time, please note that no new roles should be created with the fund

1. **Potential for scalability**

* Successful projects will be scalable. Explain in your proposal how your project can be scaled beyond its initial focus.
* For example, if your project involves redeveloping module content, how could the approach you have adopted be scaled to other modules or programmes? Will your project produce templates/resources that will enable the project to be scalable elsewhere?

1. **Student-centred**

* You will need to show that your projects are student-centred
* We strongly recommend you engage with students in the development of your proposal, for example via your Staff-Student Consultative Committee
* Explain in your proposal how your project will seek to embed material change for the benefit of future students
* Projects designed in collaboration with other areas such as Students Union UCL are also welcomed

1. **Forward UCL’s commitments**

* UCL’s Access and Participation Plan 2020/21-2024/25 outlines how the institution aims to effect institutional change to address retention and attainment gaps that appear once students are studying with us. A specific aim in UCL’s Access and Participation Plan is to create an inclusive learning environment where a student’s background, ethnicity, age, or disability is not an indicator of their success or progression. Student success is one of the principal themes of UCL 2034, UCL’s 20-year strategic vision, which outlines UCL’s objective to be a university that reflects its community, ensuring equality of opportunity for all those wishing to enter and succeed
* Projects should forward the commitments outlined in UCL’s Access and Participation Plan 2020/21-2024/25 and support the strategic aims of UCL 2034
* Copy and paste relevant statements/objectives/aims/dimensions from these documents and speak directly to them in your proposal
* Thinking through your proposal in line with these documents should help you clarify your project aims and outputs and speak persuasively about how your project will close gaps and create change

1. **Align with the themes that support student success**

* There is evidence to show that the causes of exclusion of in protected characteristic groups, typically falls into several areas. By addressing policy and practice in these areas, staff can improve the experience, skills, and attainment of all students, by ensuring that regardless of background they are able to participate fully and achieve at equal rates
* The five key themes are: inclusive curriculum, belonging, creating safe spaces, inclusive teaching, and learning and assessment.
* In your proposal, outline how your project will speak to one or more of these themes

1. **Impact**

* Successful projects will seek to effect long-term change and make a significant impact. Projects that demonstrate the potential to impact large cohorts, particularly first year students and/or core modules are preferred

**Reporting requirements and support**

Successful projects will need to meet the following reporting requirements:

* Submit a Project Update Report every 6 months
* Submit an End Project Report at the close of your project. This will help the Student Success Office assess how the project performed against the project proposal
* Projects that are 6 months or under in duration will only be required to submit an End Project Report
* Reporting documents will be provided by the Student Success Office

**Successful projects can expect to receive access to the following support and networks:**

* The Student Success Office will facilitate discussions on project progress with teams across faculties and hold informal Q&A sessions
* Project teams will be supported in the collection of relevant programme and/or module(s) data where available
* Project teams will be invited to join an online platform to share ideas, experiences and best practice with colleagues working on projects across the institution

# Academic regulations

If your project involves changes to a module or the development of a new programme and/or module, you will need to factor UCL academic regulations into your project plan and proposal.

Module amendments:

* Module amendments fall into two categories, major amendments and minor amendments, and require the completion of a Module Amendment Form ([Annex 7.5.1 in the Academic Manual](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/chapters/chapter-7-programme-and-module-approval-and-amendment-framework))
* Please refer to [Chapter 7, Section 5](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/chapters/chapter-7-programme-and-module-approval-and-amendment-framework/section-5-module-amendment) of the UCL Academic Manual for further information and guidance on module amendments
* Amendments to modules that are compulsory for a programme of study will trigger the programme amendment process where individually, or in combination with changes to other modules, they represent a programme amendment. Please refer to [Section 4.2, Chapter 7](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/chapters/chapter-7-programme-and-module-approval-and-amendment-framework/section-4-programme#4.2) of the Academic Manual for definitions of programme amendments
* Module amendments submitted from 1 December 2020 – 30 November 2021 will take effect from 2022-23

New modules:

* New modules require the completion of a Module Proposal Form ([Annex 7.3.1 in the Academic Manual](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/chapters/chapter-7-programme-and-module-approval-and-amendment-framework))
* Please refer to [Chapter 7, Section 3](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/chapters/chapter-7-programme-and-module-approval-and-amendment-framework/section-3-approval-new) of the UCL Academic Manual for further information on new module approval
* New module proposals submitted from 1 December 2020 – 30 November 2021 will take effect from 2022/23

Programme amendments:

* Programme amendments fall into three categories, major amendments, moderate amendments, and minor amendments. All programme amendments must be requested on the Programme Amendment Form ([Annex 7.4.1 in the Academic Manual](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/chapters/chapter-7-programme-and-module-approval-and-amendment-framework/section-4-programme)). Please refer to [Chapter 7, Section 4](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/chapters/chapter-7-programme-and-module-approval-and-amendment-framework/section-4-programme) of the UCL Academic manual for further information and guidance on programme amendments
* Programme amendments submitted by 11 June 2021 will take effect from 2022-23