

UCL East Engagement Awards Nomination Guidance

About the Awards

The East Engagement Awards celebrate the people, teams and community partners who are doing extraordinary things together. These awards recognise work that is genuinely collaborative — where UCL and east London communities have shared knowledge, shaped decisions and made something better, together.

There are six award categories. Whether you are nominating yourself, a colleague, a whole team, or a community organisation you have worked with, we want to hear from you. Every nomination is read carefully, and we are interested in the whole story — not just the highlights.

Nominations are open to all UCL staff, students, and community partners. You do not need to be in a senior position or to have completed a large or formally funded project. What matters is the quality, spirit, and intent of the work.

Nominations close on **Friday 18th September 2026**.

Summary of the Awards

This year's awards focus on **practice, relationships and change**. There are six categories:

- A. **Engagement Leader** – Recognises individual academic staff who demonstrate ongoing, creative leadership in public or community engagement and foster a collaborative culture in their field.
- B. **Engagement Rising Star** – Celebrates early-career individuals building impactful, innovative relationships and collaborations with creative and cultural partners or publics

- C. **Outstanding Engagement in Professional Services** – Honours professional services staff or teams whose efforts enable ambitious and equitable engagement with East London communities.
- D. **Community Partner Award** – Recognises East London community organisations whose partnership with UCL has transformed engagement practices and strengthened community outcomes.
- E. **Co-Creating New Ways of Working with Communities** – Recognises project teams that experiment with bold, imaginative collaboration methods, treating co-creation as a continuous learning process.
- F. **Knowledge in Action: Community Impact** – Recognises project teams who have converted shared research and expertise into tangible, positive change with communities, achieving clear public benefit and mutual impact.

Before You Nominate

All nominations must show that the work meets the following

Baseline requirement	What this means in practice
East London focused collaborations	The primary communities involved are based in East London and have co-created or collaboratively shaped the work.
Active UCL involvement	UCL staff or students held a contract of employment or active student registration during the period of work.
Mutually beneficial and ethical	The collaboration benefited both UCL and community partners, and was carried out respectfully with attention to power, access and equity. This includes accessibility, safeguarding and exercising a duty of care.
Non-profit community partner	The main external community must be a non-profit organisations. For-profit organisations are not eligible as the main partner.

Demonstrate learning and are intentionally impactful	Reflects on process as well as outcomes, and generates or works towards generating impact.
Time frame	Nominated activity should have taken place within the past 18–24 months (unless the nomination concerns long-term sustained practice – see Awards A and D).

Tips for a Strong Nomination

- **Be specific.** Concrete examples are far more powerful than general statements. Describe what actually happened, who was involved, and what changed.
- **Centre community voices.** Where possible, reflect what communities themselves have said about the impact or the relationship.
- **Celebrate the process, not just the outcome.** For several of these awards, how something was done matters as much as what was achieved.
- **Whole teams are welcome.** Awards C, E and F explicitly welcome nominations for whole teams. For A and B, please nominate one individual per submission.
- **Community partners can nominate.** External organisations and community members are warmly encouraged to nominate UCL colleagues or teams.
- **You can self-nominate.** Self-nominations are accepted and encouraged across all categories.

The Six Award Categories

In addition to fulfilling the baseline requirements, there are specific requirements to evidence against each award. Below we outline what the panel are looking for and the nomination questions for each award.

A. Engagement Leader

For **individual academic staff** who have shown sustained, creative leadership in public or community engagement and helped nurture a culture of collaboration within their department, faculty or area of practice. This award recognises long-term influence — from mentoring and

championing others to reshaping structures, policies or everyday habits so that engagement with communities, including in east London, is part of how work happens, rather than a one-off project.

The panel will look for:

- Evidence of **sustained practice over time** — not just a single project — including mentoring, championing or capacity-building of others
- Contribution to shifting **culture, policy or structures** to embed engagement more deeply within their department, faculty or discipline, with benefit to both UCL and communities
- A **ripple effect** beyond their own work — inspiring or enabling others to engage more meaningfully.

Nomination questions

A1. How has this person shown sustained leadership in community or public engagement — not just in their own work, but in how they have influenced others around them? (max 300 words)

Think about: mentoring, championing others, reshaping departmental culture, shaping policy or practice, enabling others to engage.

A2. Can you point to a moment or example where their influence has had a lasting effect — on a colleague, a team, a project or a way of working? (max 200 words)

A3. What makes their approach to engagement genuinely collaborative and mutually beneficial — for communities as well as for UCL? (max 200 words)

B. Engagement Rising Star

For **early-career individuals** affiliated with UCL — including researchers, postgraduate students and professional services staff — who are beginning to build meaningful relationships and collaborations with creative and cultural partners, and to weave public or community engagement into their work in distinctive ways. This award celebrates emerging practitioners whose projects involve publics as active participants in shaping and making work, not just as audiences. It recognises those who are reflecting on what they have learned, thinking about their next steps,

and developing a sustainable engagement practice that shows future leadership promise in engaged, socially rooted research and activity.

The panel will look for:

- Clear **initiative and originality** in developing an engagement practice, especially for someone early in their career
- Evidence of building **meaningful, ongoing relationships** with creative, cultural and community partners
- Use of **imaginative or participatory methods** that go beyond conventional consultation, with genuine mutual exchange
- **Potential and ambition** — an emerging vision for what engaged practice could become, alongside a willingness to reflect and learn

Nomination questions

B1. How is this person beginning to bring community or public engagement into their work in a way that feels distinctive or imaginative? (max 300 words)

Think about: the methods they use, the relationships they are building, the roles publics play in shaping the work, and what makes their approach feel different.

B2. How is this person beginning to develop their engagement practice over time – for example, how they build sustainable relationships, consider mutual benefit, or plan their next steps? (max 200 words)

B3. Has this person shown an ability to reflect and learn from their engagement work — not just celebrate what went well, but think carefully about what it means and where it might lead in the future? (max 200 words)

C. Outstanding Engagement in Professional Services

For **professional services staff or teams** who have gone above and beyond in their roles to make meaningful engagement with east London communities and partners possible. This award shines a light on the often less visible organisational, logistical and relational work — from funding and communications to safeguarding, accessibility and care — that enables ambitious, equitable and inclusive engagement to flourish.

The panel will look for:

- Evidence of going **beyond their formal role** to create conditions for excellent, inclusive engagement
- **Relationship-building** with community partners that demonstrates trust, responsiveness and sustained support
- **A collaborative and enabling approach** that builds the capacity of others as well as their own

Nomination questions

C1. What has this person or team done that goes beyond what their role formally requires, in order to make community engagement possible or better? (max 300 words)

Think about: the behind-the-scenes work that others often don't see — logistics, communications, accessibility, safeguarding, relationship-building, funding, care.

C2. Can you describe a specific moment where their contribution made a real difference to the quality, reach or equity of an engagement activity? (max 200 words)

C3. How has this person or team helped build the capacity of others — inside or outside UCL — to engage more effectively with communities? (max 200 words)

D. Community Partner Award

For east London **community organisations, collectives or groups** that have built an outstanding partnership with UCL through shared planning, delivery and mutual learning over time. This award celebrates partners whose collaboration has influenced how engagement or research is done at UCL — recognising work that strengthens community outcomes and opens up new ways of working, imagining and making change together. We are especially interested in partnerships that have spanned multiple projects or had a lasting effect on UCL's approach.

The nominated organisation must be primarily based in east London and must not be a for-profit organisation. This award can recognise a whole organisation or a specific team within it.

The panel will look for:

- A **sustained and evolving partnership** with UCL — ideally across more than one project or activity — that has been genuinely two-way
- Evidence that the collaboration has **shifted something at UCL** — in how research is designed, how engagement is carried out, or what questions are asked
- **Tangible benefits for the community**, with the partner holding real voice and agency in shaping the work.

Nomination questions

D1. How has this organisation or group built a partnership with UCL that has been genuinely two-way — where both sides have shaped and gained from the relationship? (max 300 words)

Think about: shared planning and decision-making, mutual learning, the organisation's influence on how UCL works, what UCL has contributed to community goals.

D2. Has this partnership changed something about how UCL approaches engagement or research — even in a small way? What shifted? (max 200 words)

D3. What has this partnership made possible for the community that would not have happened otherwise? (max 200 words)

E. Co-Creating New Ways of Working with Communities

For **UCL project teams** — any mix of academic staff, professional services staff, students and community partners — who have experimented with imaginative ways of working with communities to shape ideas, projects or spaces together. This award recognises bold collaborative methods that redistribute voice, agency and decision-making — whether through shared governance arrangements, co-design tools, collaborative storytelling, public labs or creative making activities. It celebrates teams that treat co-creation as an ongoing practice of learning together, rather than a one-off consultation.

Whole team nominations are strongly encouraged. Please include all team members in question E4.

The panel will look for:

- A **genuinely innovative or experimental approach** to collaboration that pushed beyond standard engagement formats
- Evidence that **decision-making and agency were meaningfully shared** with community partners, and a **reflective account** of what was tried, learned and would be done differently
- **Transferable potential** — the method could inspire or be adapted by others working in community-engaged practice

Nomination questions

E1. What was imaginative or experimental about the way your team worked with communities on this project? What made it different from a more conventional approach?

(max 300 words)

Think about: participatory methods, shared governance, co-design tools, collaborative storytelling, public labs, creative making activities — and how power and decision-making were redistributed.

E2. What did you try that didn't quite work, and what did you learn from it? How has that shaped your practice? *(max 200 words)*

E3. How could the approach you developed be useful to others working in community-engaged practice — at UCL or beyond? *(max 150 words)*

E4. Please list the team members you wish to include in this nomination *(names, roles and organisations)*

F. Knowledge in Action: Community Impact

For **UCL project teams** — any mix of academic staff, professional services staff, students and community partners — who have turned shared research, expertise and lived experience into tangible, positive change with communities. This award honours collaborations that have sparked new or reshaped services, resources, cultural practices, policies or environments, with clear public benefit and a strong sense of community leadership. It recognises projects where creative and cultural engagement has had meaningful impact for communities, artists, researchers and

other partners involved – strengthening relationships, practice and ways of working, and demonstrating mutual benefit and shared ownership.

Whole team nominations are strongly encouraged. Please include all team members in question F4.

The panel will look for:

- Clear **evidence of positive change** directly attributable to the collaboration — in services, resources, practices, policies, environments or opportunities
- Strong **community leadership** throughout — communities as co-authors of the change, not recipients of it
- Evidence that the change has **taken root** — communities have taken ownership of outcomes, or impacts continue beyond the project period
- Signs of mutual benefit for all partners — for example shifts in practice, relationships, skills or perspectives for artists, researchers and community collaborators

Nomination questions

F1. What changed as a result of this collaboration? Please describe the most significant positive outcomes — for communities, practitioners, researchers and other partners involved. *(max 300 words)*

Think about: new or improved services, resources, policies, environments, cultural practices or opportunities. Be as specific as possible.

F2. How did community members help lead or shape the change? *(max 200 words)*

F3. Is this change still happening, or has it taken root beyond the original project? What has continued, evolved, or spread, and how are partners sustaining or developing this work? *(max 200 words)*

F4. Please list the team members you wish to include in this nomination (names, roles and organisations)

Shared Nomination Fields

These fields appear on every nomination form, regardless of category.

About the nominee

- Full name(s) or organisation name
- Job title / role (if applicable)
- Department, faculty or organisation
- Email address

About you (the nominator)

- Your name
- Your relationship to the nominee
- Your email address

Summary statement *(max 75 words)*

In one or two sentences, why does this person, team or organisation deserve this award?

This is the nomination summary that may be read aloud at the ceremony. Write it as if you are speaking directly about the nominee to an audience that doesn't know them yet.

East London connection *(max 100 words)*

Which East London communities, groups or places has this work involved?

Timeframe

Roughly when did this work take place?

- Ongoing / sustained practice
- Specific period (please give dates)

Questions?

Can I provide my nomination in a format other than written? Yes – we welcome video recordings answering the nomination questions, but please make sure you caption your recordings or provide a transcript and provide a link to the video.

If you are unsure which category to nominate in, or have any questions about the process, please get in touch with the UCL East Cultural and Community Engagement team on engagement-east@ucl.ac.uk