



London Urban Research Network

PART 1: PRINCIPLES OF THE NETWORK

Background

1. The London Urban Research Network is a network for research collaboration in London whose aim is to support participating London HEIs develop research collaborations and act as an outward promotor of, and champion for, the research excellence that resides among London HEIs
2. The network is established under Terms of Reference approved by the London Research Excellence Group on 2 February 2017.

Definitions

3. 'The network' is the collective group of organizations that subscribe to this Memorandum of Understanding.
4. 'London Higher' is a membership organization working with higher education institutions (HEIs) in London; it is a Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable status.
5. 'Members', 'network members' or 'Members of the network' are individual institutions that subscribe to this Memorandum of Understanding (see Annex 2).

The Proposal

6. This initiative is intended to create a tangible and sustained nexus for research collaboration among London's higher education institutions (HEIs).
7. The project establishes a network for research collaboration in London whose aim will be to support participating London HEIs develop research collaborations and act as an outward promotor of, and champion for, the research excellence that resides among London HEIs.
8. In particular the network will:
 - a) Take as its scope the challenges facing large urban regions in general and London in particular;
 - b) Tie-in to existing urban research themes identified by its members and/or specific disciplines in which participating London HEIs possess outstanding research capacity (whether through personnel, infrastructure or connections);

- c) Provide a mechanism whereby research funding opportunities that match the agreed focus and criteria can be efficiently evaluated and, if appropriate, progressed by a group of London HEIs;
 - d) Establish an outward-looking platform to promote and amplify London's collaborative research expertise in these areas to funders, stakeholders and external collaborators with a view to increasing transactions and making the case for greater research investment in London.
9. It is important to note that this initiative is not intended to duplicate or undermine existing research collaborative activity. Rather it seeks to develop new collaborative opportunities that are not currently being undertaken.
10. Further it is not anticipated that the initiative will prepare or write funding applications. Rather it will identify prospective opportunities, test feasibility for collaborative action, assemble the relevant partners and facilitate the early stages of discussion up to a point whereby a lead institution is identified and prepared to take on the project.
11. In terms of outputs it is anticipated that the initiative will lead to an increase in collaborative funding bids involving the partners, development of the partners research capacity and a corresponding increase in the volume of research funding awarded to London HEIs.
12. Outcomes are likely to include wider appreciation of the collective research power of London (in particular in regard to regional devolution and the competition of resources).

PART 2: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Intention to Participate

13. In order to operate effectively members of the network understand the following:
- a) Members of the network wish to **develop collaborative research proposals** with other London HEIs; further, members are willing to be active participants and to contribute and respond to requests arising from the network;
 - b) Members of the network intend to appoint a network **Point of Contact (PoC)** to be their gateway into the network; further they are willing to support this individual in fulfilling this task (for example by, from time to time, allowing them time to attend PoC meetings to discuss the development of the network);
 - c) It is understood that London Higher will act as the **moderator for the network** and members of the network are willing to following any guidelines London Higher may determine are required for the effective and efficient running of the network (following discussion with by the PoC Group);
 - d) Members of the network intend that in all interactions with the network they will adhere to **academic standards, integrity and ethics**. This includes the disclosure of information and intellectual property. Members of the network who decide to develop proposals outside the network (e.g. in *ad hoc* Working Groups) will make such arrangements in this regard as they see fit;



- e) London Higher intends to **support meeting costs** for the express purpose of developing proposals. We understand that London Higher has discretion to determine when and for how long to support discussions in this way; we also understand that any other costs discussed by members of the network are expected to be met by members of the network;
- f) Members of the network intend that they will progress the business of the network in a **timely and efficient manner**.
- g) Members **may join or leave the network at any time**.
- h) In order to promote and amplify the research associated with the network, it is understood that some **promotional activity** will be undertaken. Members of the network are encouraged to support this activity by offering cases studies and examples of public benefit arising from urban research.

Disclaimer

- 14. This document is a Memorandum of Understanding and is not intended to create binding or legal obligations on the either party.

PART 3: GUIDELINES FOR THE OPERATION OF THE NETWORK

Scope of the Network

- 15. The network takes as its scope the **challenges facing large urban regions** in general and London in particular. These may tie-in to existing urban research themes identified by its members and/or specific disciplines in which participating London HEIs possess outstanding research capacity (whether through personnel, infrastructure or connections).
- 16. To guide participants in determining what research projects fall within the remit of the network it is proposed to use as defaults, the **UK Government's Industrial Strategy** and the **Mayor of London's London Plan** as benchmarks. As a rule of thumb: i) if an opportunity corresponds to an objective in one or both of these documents; *and* ii) matches one of the axis headings on the grid below then it is appropriate to put the opportunity to the network.
- 17. The matrix in Annex 1 is intended as a guide for PoCs on research opportunities that may usefully be submitted to the network. *N.B. in the grid the terms and boxes that have been populated are by way of example; it is expected that individual PoCs may wish to maintain their own versions of this grid.*

Submitting an Opportunity

18. It is the expectation that **only the designated PoC**, or London Higher, may submit research opportunities to the network.
19. Once an opportunity is submitted to the network members are expected to **register an interest in the opportunity within five days**.
20. London Higher intends to schedule a meeting in relation to the opportunity **within three weeks**. Further meetings may be scheduled if so agreed by the participants.
21. If a lead for a project is identified it is intended that that institution will undertake further development (and cost) of the opportunity.

Further information

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Annex 1: Example of how research themes can be identified to go into the network

1. Urban Themes in UK Government Industrial Strategy					
2. Network Themes	A. History	B. Making	C. Living	D. Future	E. Brexit
Transport		Demand modelling		Automated vehicles	<u>Eurocontrol</u>
Economic development		Innovation districts		The London Plan (MoL)	ERDF
Housing			affordable		
Health & Social Policy	Understanding inequalities (MoL)	Public health	Pollution	Managing care (MoL)	
Creative & cultural	Olympics	Festivals	Art / culture		

1. Mayor's London Plan

Annex 2: Current Membership of the London Urban Research Network

Birkbeck, University of London
Guildhall School of Music & Drama
Kingston University
London School of Economics
London South Bank University
Queen Mary, University of London
University College London
London Higher