Challenge Us!

The Open Societal Challenges Competition for UK Charities

2024

Open for submissions from the 15th March 2024

The Open University

Who We Are

The Open Societal Challenges Programme at The Open University (OU) is a research initiative that aims to tackle some of the most important challenges of our time through impact-driven research. The Programme's aim is to apply the research excellence of OU academics to some of the most pressing societal challenges facing people across the UK and worldwide to transform lives. The Programme's focus on the themes of Tackling Inequalities, Living Well, and Sustainability aligns with our mission to be open to people, places, methods, and ideas.

You can learn more about the Programme and our current Research Challenges by visiting Open Societal Challenges.

Challenge Us!

We are running a competition open to UK Charities to find the most exciting research ideas tackling real-world problems.

Who Can Enter

We are accepting submissions from registered UK Charities. Charity submissions must be related to the central mission of the Charity. For more details regarding eligibility, please check our Competition Rules. There is also a separate competition stream for businesses based in the Milton Keynes area.

The Open University

What We Are Looking For

We are looking for research ideas that aim to tackle real-world problems. If you are looking for ideas of challenge-led research, you can peruse the Open Societal Challenges website to see what this can look like. While we are open to all ideas, we are especially keen to hear about research ideas that tackle problems in the broad thematic areas of Tackling Inequalities, Sustainability, Living Well, and International Development.

In selecting our winners from the finalist's pool, we will be looking for **entries where the expertise of OU researchers can make a difference**. To learn more about the research expertise at the OU, you can explore the Research at The Open University webpages.

Our Commitment

We will announce our finalists at the end of May 2024. Finalists will have a chance to have their entry published on the Open Societal Challenges Online Platform and may be invited to pitch their idea.

We will select at least one winner per stream, and we will announce the winners on the 12th September 2024 at the Open University Research Awards.

The Winners

Winning Challenges will be assigned to an OU Research Team to take on the research idea and this team will receive a baseline of £25,000 in research funding to cover the direct cost of the research. Winning Charities will be invited to co-design the specifics of the research project with the research team, and to contribute their perspective, knowledge, and experiences to the project.

The winning Charity will also receive an optional paid internship for one of its employees, trustees, or volunteers with the research team to help build research capacity (hybrid or in-person). For more details, please consult our Competition Rules.

How do I Enter?

You can enter the competition at any time between 15th March 2024 and 15th May 2024. You can do this by visiting our website at Open Societal Challenges and filling in the online form. Entries are limited to one entry per charity.

The submission form is composed of 3-4 questions, for a total of approx. 300-400 words. We highly recommend you read through our Competition Rules before starting your submission.

We are keen to support any interested charities with submitting an entry. If you would like to find out more about the competition and the support available, please reach out at societal-challenges@open.ac.uk.