

## **Establishing a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network in the UK**

This UK guidance note should be read in conjunction with the UNESCO-produced “Guidelines and Procedures for the UNITWIN/ UNESCO Chairs Programme” 2009 (on which this document is based), which can be found at on the UNESCO website at

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001439/143918E.pdf>

This document is produced by the UK National Commission for UNESCO to provide an overview of the process in the UK for submitting a proposal for the establishment of a UNESCO Chair or a UNITWIN Network.

This document supersedes earlier UK guidelines and will assist all interested UK parties to take the necessary steps to become involved with the UNITWIN/ UNESCO Chairs Programme.

Interested parties should contact the UK National Commission for UNESCO at the earliest opportunity.



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Secretariat  
Suite 98  
3 Whitehall Court  
London SW1A 2EL  
[www.unesco.org.uk](http://www.unesco.org.uk)  
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### **INTRODUCTION**

The UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme advances research, training and programme development in higher education by building university networks and encouraging inter-university cooperation. Established in 1992, today over 600 UNESCO Chairs and 60 UNITWIN Networks are established within the Programme involving over 750 institutions in 125 countries.

UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Network projects undertake training, research, information sharing and outreach activities in UNESCO major programmes areas (education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, and communication and information). UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks provide an innovative modality for international academic cooperation and capacity building (particularly North-South and South-South), acting as think tanks and as bridge builders between the academic world, civil society, local communities, research and policy-making.

The majority of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Network projects are interdisciplinary and intersectoral. They involve all UNESCO programme sectors, with active cooperation of its Field Offices, Centres and Institutes.

Under its new strategic orientations for the Programme, UNESCO is creating a new generation of relevant, strategic and dynamic UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks closely aligned with the Organization's programme objectives and priorities and the Millennium Development Goals, and with a strong element of North-South, South-South and triangular North-South-South cooperation.

**UNESCO Chairs** Awarded each year to individual higher education institutions to initiate programmes that further research and training in one of UNESCO's fields of competence.

Chairs involve academics, scholars and graduate students, as well as key partners such as NGOs, foundations and public and private sector organisations.

There are currently 15 UNESCO Chairs established in the UK. For details, go to the UK National Commission for UNESCO website ([www.unesco.org.uk](http://www.unesco.org.uk)).

**UNITWIN Networks** Through the University Twinning and Network Scheme (UNITWIN), UNESCO matches colleges, universities and research institutions in industrialised countries with counterparts in developing countries to share information and knowledge in areas of need in the development context. Scholars who participate are often linked through web sites and portals, in addition to loaned faculty positions, training and conferences.

One example is the ORBICOM network established in 1994, which links UNESCO Chairs and associate members in the field of communication and communications technologies.

There are currently two UNITWIN Networks led by UK institutions. For details, go to the UK National Commission for UNESCO website ([www.unesco.org.uk](http://www.unesco.org.uk)).

*“Global higher education liaison, vital to the role universities traditionally and continue to play, is greatly enhanced by the UNESCO ‘label’ to facilitate and enable cross-border relationships.”  
UNESCO Chair, University of Bath*

## OVERVIEW OF UNESCO'S GUIDELINES FOR NEW UNESCO CHAIRS

### ***Established at Higher Education Institutions***

UNESCO Chairs can be established at universities, other institutions of higher learning and research institutions in higher education. UNESCO Chairs may also involve higher education NGOs, foundations, and public and private sector organisations. Chairs are established for an initial period of four years.

### ***UNESCO Chair as Teaching and/or Research Unit***

A UNESCO Chair may be established by reinforcing an existing teaching or research programme and giving it an international dimension, or one may be established as a new teaching and research unit. Such a unit should include:

(i) a chairholder as its academic head; (ii) a team of lecturers or researchers from the host institution and from other institutions, both in the country concerned and from abroad (particularly developing countries and those in transition) who are associated with the activities of the Chair; (iii) a number of students and researchers pursuing postgraduate studies or high-level training and research under the Chair.

### ***Relevant and Effective***

Relevance and effectiveness at national, regional and global levels are among the prime goals of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme. UNESCO Chairs should be sustainable and must support UNESCO programme objectives and priorities, particularly as outlined in the Organization's Medium Term Strategy ("C4" document), as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

### ***Clear Objectives and Appropriate Activities***

The activities undertaken by a UNESCO Chair vary according to the Chair's objectives and available resources, but might include: programme development in non-traditional areas at under- or post-graduate levels; exchange of lecturers; lectures on relevant topics; research; study abroad; workshops, seminars, national, regional and international meetings/conferences; publications. Chairs should cooperate closely with ongoing UNESCO activities and programmes.

### ***Excellence and Results-Based Management***

Quality performance is of paramount importance to the Programme. UNESCO expects host institutions to take a results-based management approach. The intention is for Chairs and Networks to form poles of excellence and innovation along North-South and South-South axes.

### ***Strong Institutional Support***

**It is important to note that an Agreement for the establishment of a UNESCO Chair is between UNESCO and the host institution and not with an individual intellectual. Strong institutional commitment is therefore paramount.**

### ***Chairholder as Head***

A Chairholder is responsible for the programming, organisation, fundraising and promotion of activities. The chairholder should have: i) academic reputation – be a renowned specialist in the domain(s) to be covered; ii) have the capacity and experience to promote cooperation at national, regional and international levels; iii) be willing and able to mobilise resources from the private and public sectors. The host institution makes individual proposals for a chairholder and any appointment is subject to approval by UNESCO. The appointment of a chairholder does not necessarily entail the creation of a specific post and does not always constitute an employment opportunity. A chairholder will not be appointed until the UNESCO Chair has been officially established (i.e. after the relevant Agreement has been signed by all parties and has therefore entered into force).

### ***UNESCO as Catalyst***

UNESCO, not being a funding agency, cannot be a major donor for the Programme. The Programme is a joint undertaking in which UNESCO plays the role of catalyst for the interested institutions. For this reason UNESCO encourages institutions to mobilise financial partners at the time when they are preparing Chair proposals and also offers its services in helping mobilise resources.

## OVERVIEW OF UNESCO'S GUIDELINES FOR NEW UNITWIN NETWORKS

### *Established at Higher Education Institutions with Designated Host*

UNITWIN Networks can be established at universities, other institutions of higher learning and research institutions in higher education. Usually an institution, or co-institutions, takes the lead as host, acting as a focal point to develop the Network. UNITWIN Networks may also involve higher education NGOs, foundations, and public and private sector organisations. Networks are established for an initial period of six years.

### *UNITWIN Network as formal multilateral partnership agreement*

A UNITWIN Network is established through a formal multilateral partnership agreement. A group of higher education institutions (HEIs) in developed and developing countries (North-South, South-South or North-South-South) may come together to address a need in the development context; existing inter-university networks may gear their activities towards UNESCO's priorities and the needs of HEIs in the developing countries; HEIs already twinned with another HEI may decide to expand their existing bilateral agreement into a multilateral UNITWIN one; inter-university cooperation programmes may be turned into a more stable mechanism of cooperation with participating institutions agreeing to associate their network activities with the objectives of the UNITWIN UNESCO Chairs Programme.

### *Relevant and Effective*

Relevance and effectiveness at national, regional and global levels are among the prime goals of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme. UNITWIN Networks should be sustainable and must support UNESCO programme objectives and priorities, particularly as outlined in the Organization's Medium Term Strategy ("C4" document), as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

### *Clear Objectives and Appropriate Activities*

The activities undertaken by a UNITWIN Network vary according to the Network's objectives and available resources, but might include: programme development in non-traditional areas at under- or post-graduate levels; exchange of lecturers; lectures on relevant topics; research; study abroad; workshops, seminars, national, regional and international meetings/conferences; publications; information sharing portals; virtual communities of practice. UNITWIN Networks should cooperate closely with ongoing UNESCO activities and programmes.

### *Excellence and Results-Based Management*

Quality performance is of paramount importance to the Programme. UNESCO expects host institutions to take a results-based management approach. The intention is for Chairs and Networks to form poles of excellence and innovation along North-South and South-South axes.

### *Strong Institutional Support*

**It is important to note that an Agreement for the establishment of a UNITWIN Network is between UNESCO and the host institution(s) and not with an individual intellectual(s). Strong institutional commitment from participating institutions is therefore paramount.**

### *Led by Network Coordinator*

A UNITWIN Network coordinator is responsible for the programming, organisation, fundraising and promotion of activities. The network coordinator should have: i) academic reputation – be a renowned specialist in the domain(s) to be covered; ii) have the capacity and experience to promote cooperation at national, regional and international levels; iii) be willing and able to mobilise resources from the private and public sectors. The host institution makes individual proposals for a coordinator and any appointment is subject to approval by UNESCO. The appointment of a coordinator does not necessarily entail the creation of a specific post and does not always constitute an employment opportunity. Appointments may also be made on a rotating basis among partner institutions. A coordinator will not be appointed until the UNITWIN Network has been officially established (i.e. after the relevant Agreement has been signed by all parties and has therefore entered into force).

### *UNESCO as Catalyst*

UNESCO, not being a funding agency, cannot be a major donor for the Programme. The Programme is a joint undertaking in which UNESCO plays the role of catalyst for the interested institutions. For this reason UNESCO encourages institutions to mobilise financial partners at the time when they are preparing Network proposals and also offers its services in helping mobilise resources.

## PROCEDURE FOR APPLYING FOR A UNESCO CHAIR OR UNITWIN NETWORK IN THE UK

**(Please note that the UK deadline for proposals is *before* the UNESCO Headquarters deadline).**

- The role of the UK National Commission, as directed by UNESCO, is to carefully consider and evaluate proposals for the establishment of **new UNESCO Chairs in the UK** and to select a small number of high quality proposals each year to put forward to UNESCO, with its endorsement, for consideration. In addition, the UK National Commission also considers and evaluates proposals for the establishment of **new UNITWIN Networks led by UK institutions** and selects high quality proposals that it will give its endorsement for UNESCO's consideration.
- In the 2010 cycle, the UK National Commission is **only** considering proposals in the underrepresented areas of **culture and communication & information**.

### Stage One Contact the UK National Commission for UNESCO

- **UK institutions looking to establish a UNESCO Chair in the UK or to establish and lead a UNITWIN Network should contact the UK National Commission for UNESCO Secretariat at the earliest possible opportunity to give an expression of interest** before developing and submitting a proposal by the UK deadline given below.

**UNITWIN Network proposals should also be prepared in consultation with UNESCO staff responsible for the area of focus.**

### Stage Two Submit Outline Proposal to UK National Commission for UNESCO (Deadline 15 December 2009)

- Interested eligible institutions in the UK must **prepare an outline proposal according to the UK outline proposal proforma** available on the UK National Commission for UNESCO website ([www.unesco.org.uk](http://www.unesco.org.uk)) and submit a completed outline proposal to the UK National Commission for UNESCO before the **UK outline proposal deadline (15 December 2009)** for its consideration.

Completed Outline Proposals should be sent electronically to: Natasha Bevan, UK National Commission for UNESCO Secretariat - Email: [nbevan@unesco.org.uk](mailto:nbevan@unesco.org.uk); Tel: +44 (0)20 7766 3468.

### Stage Three Invited Applicants Submit Full Proposal to UK National Commission for UNESCO (Deadline 1 March 2010)

- All outline proposals will be evaluated by the UK National Commission for UNESCO and **selected institutions will then be invited to submit a full detailed proposal** to the UK National Commission for UNESCO before the **UK full proposal deadline (1 March 2010)** for its consideration. Institutions invited by the UK National Commission to submit a full detailed proposal should prepare one according to the full proposal proforma included in **UNESCO's "Guidelines and Procedures for the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme" 2009**, available on the UNESCO website.

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001439/143918E.pdf>

(Invited) Full Proposals should be sent electronically to: Natasha Bevan, UK National Commission for UNESCO Secretariat - Email: [nbevan@unesco.org.uk](mailto:nbevan@unesco.org.uk); Tel: +44 (0)20 7766 3468.

### Stage Four

- Full proposals will be evaluated by the UK National Commission for UNESCO. The UK National Commission will identify a small number of proposals to put forward to UNESCO each year and successful proposals will be sent to UNESCO, by the UK National Commission for UNESCO with its endorsement, for UNESCO's consideration by its 30 April deadline.

- **Proposals must fulfil the requirements set out in UNESCO's "Guidelines and Procedures for the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme" 2009 available on the UNESCO website. It is expected that UK proposals be of the highest quality.**
- In particular, interested institutions must carefully review UNESCO's major priorities in education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, and communication and information (referring in particular to **UNESCO's Medium Term Strategy 2008-13** ("34 C/4" - <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001499/149999e.pdf>)) prior to preparing and submitting an outline or detailed proposal.

The UK National Commission for UNESCO will give priority to areas not covered by existing UNESCO Chairs in the UK and UNITWIN Networks, and **in 2010 the UK National Commission is only considering proposals in the underrepresented fields of culture and communication & information.**

- Any agreement for the establishment of a UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network is between UNESCO and the host institution. Strong institutional commitment is therefore paramount. **At the outline proposal stage, applicants should have informed senior management within their institution of their intention. If the applicant is then invited by the UK National Commission for UNESCO to submit a full proposal, a full proposal will need to be submitted to the UK National Commission for UNESCO under the signature of the institution's Vice Chancellor or Principal.**
- **UNESCO Chair and UNITWIN Network proposals must be submitted to the UK National Commission for UNESCO by the UK deadlines given above. Proposals cannot be considered outside of these deadlines due to the high interest in the Programme from UK institutions.**
- The submission of an outline proposal and/or the UK National Commission's invitation to submit a full proposal does not constitute the agreement of the UK National Commission to submit the proposal to UNESCO.  
**Proposals submitted directly to UNESCO will be returned to the UK National Commission and will not be processed.**
- The UK National Commission for UNESCO will consider outline proposals and invited full proposals by peer review. Approved nominations are sent to UNESCO for the Organization's consideration in time for the UNESCO Headquarters' deadline of 30 April each year.
- The criteria used by the UK National Commission for UNESCO to consider proposals is available on the UK National Commission's website and can also be obtained from the UK National Commission for UNESCO Secretariat.
- It should be noted that UNESCO will pay particular attention to proposals from: least developed countries (LDCs), Africa, small island developing states (SIDS), post-conflict countries and E-9 (high-population developing countries); countries having no UNESCO Chair/UNITWIN Network or only a few UNESCO Chairs; those which involve future-orientated research in the various UNESCO sectors; and those which are educationally innovative in terms of new paradigms (future challenges) and forms of intervention (e.g. open universities). In its efforts to promote gender equality, UNESCO also encourages the nomination of women as UNESCO Chairholders and UNITWIN Network Coordinators.
- Prospective institutions whose proposals are selected and put forward to UNESCO should note that because of the large volume of applications UNESCO Headquarters receives, the UNESCO Secretariat review process takes some months depending on the workloads of the professional panel which will be reviewing each nominated proposal.

**Prospective UK applicants should contact the UK National Commission for UNESCO at the earliest opportunity to give an expression of interest.**

Enquiries and for further information, contact Natasha Bevan at the UK National Commission for UNESCO Secretariat.  
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