



## ***‘Campus spaces and places: Impact on student outcomes’***

### **Request for Proposals (RfP)**

#### **Introduction**

University Design Forum (UDF), AUDE (the Association of University Directors of Estates) and Willmott Dixon, one of the UK’s leading construction companies, have embarked upon an exciting research project *‘Campus spaces and places: Impact on student outcomes’*.

In February 2021, this group of organisations initiated a multi-year research project which aims to answer core questions about the impact of different types of campus places and spaces on student outcomes. We intend that this research should answer some fundamental questions, including **“How can we measure the value of the Higher Education built environment in terms of impact on students and student outcomes? What types of campus and what campus facilities deliver the most benefit for our students?”**

Pre-Covid, Universities were spending more than £3.5bn a year on capital developments because of a strong belief in the impact this has on the delivery of high-quality teaching, research and student experience; post Covid future investments will have to deliver even more value.

An initial literature review has been carried out by Professor Sonja Oliveira, Dr Mina Tahsiri, Dr Glynn Everett and team (UWE/University of Strathclyde),

<https://www.universitydesignforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Campus-Places-and-Spaces-Feb-2022.pdf>

Subsequently, a workshop was held in London on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to help scope out and define next stages of the project.

#### **Scope**

Two themes have been identified- please see below. Our group of organisations is interested in either pursuing one or the other and would also be keen to also see how the themes could be combined. We would also like recommendations of areas of further study after this work is completed as well as establishing the status quo.

***Theme 1- Curation of external/internal space for social learning experiences*** – Most of the discussions noted value of better understanding how spaces were ‘curated’ to enable different types of social learning experiences. Studies could focus on comparison of types of common spaces such as

'libraries', 'cafe', 'garden' across different university settings (historical buildings to those built in last 10 years for instance) and how those spaces were arranged, managed, used over different times of year and in different seasons by diverse students (for instance yr1 to postgrad. students). The number of spaces will need to be defined further. The spaces are to be located in the UK.

- Potential methods - Potential method to consider above theme could be a longitudinal ethnographic study drawing on mixed methods trying to understand how commonly found spaces are used, experienced, and managed by different users (estates, academics, students).
- Proposed duration – A longitudinal study necessitates observations over a longer time frame (16-18months) - to capture an academic year in its entirety it would be suggested that the study data collection phase takes a minimum of 10months – a further 6-8 months would be required to allow for an analytical overview, findings and dissemination.

**Theme 2 - Typologies of informality of internal/external space use** - In addition to above theme it was found important to better understand how a labelling and designation of space informs its use - specifically how informality of learning behaviours takes place in internal and external spaces. Such a study could compare use of the same space by different groups in controlled scenarios with different arrangements.

- Potential methods - Potential method to consider above theme could be a case comparison study- looking to understand behaviours in the same space with different types of arrangements – this could be preceded with a survey across the HE sector in the UK to better understand planning for certain spaces post Covid and how needs of students and academics for space use is being considered

Proposed duration – The study could be planned in stages- with initial survey taking 3 - 6months to conduct – this would call for existing datasets indicating how participant universities are planning use of key spaces post covid. The initial review stage would be followed by a 3 - 6month controlled study with final 3-6months to capture and conclude insights.

General requirements

As the University Design Forum is a charity, the organisation is keen to disseminate any findings as soon as possible to a wider audience. Please outline your work plan and timescale for the research pieces but also identify opportunity for short interim reports.

Please include time for 2 public events where the research would be presented.

**Timescale**

Activity	Due date
Request for proposals - call	10 July 2023
Opportunity for questions	28 July 2023
Submission	11 August 2023
Start of research activities	September 2023

## Application

Applicants are required to submit a written proposal for their research activity for both themes and possibly a hybrid proposal. Please identify which theme- or combination of themes- might be better suited to your research and why.

The application should include:

- An outline of the proposed research including research title or research question, methodology and expected outputs of the research.
- Timeline- the above outlined is guidance and should be verified by the applicant.
- Summary budget of project costs (Pound Sterling) and commitment of the proposed researchers. The financial proposal should include a breakdown and budget narrative.
- Details if partner organisations will contribute actively to the project through the provision of direct and in-kind resources (including finance, facilities, equipment, consumables, and technical expertise).
- Please identify potential research grant opportunities that may align with the outcomes of this topic for research.
- Names and affiliations of the research team (institution/school/faculty/discipline as applicable) and names and affiliations of the partner organisation. CVs of the main researchers.

Please submit potential questions and your application via email to [admin@universitydesignforum.org](mailto:admin@universitydesignforum.org)