

Grand Challenges Guidance for Facilitators 2023

1. What is Grand Challenges?

Grand Challenges is a hands-on, high energy project week, which will take place 5th-9th June 2023. Grand Challenges Week is open to all undergraduate students, regardless of discipline or year of study. This year, all of the Challenges will be running face to face.

The Challenges will engage students in innovative learning experiences working in cross-disciplinary groups to address some of the most significant issues facing society in the 21st Century. Students will hear from top academics and invited speakers, as well as designing an innovative and creative project that tackles a real-world challenge. This year's topics include climate change (Streatham and Penryn), sustainable food (Streatham), mental health (Streatham), social inequality (Streatham), and tomorrow's world (Streatham and Penryn) and Each group will present their work to other students, academics and invited guests at the end of the week.

2. What is the role of a facilitator?

Facilitators are an essential part to the overall success of the Grand Challenges programme. The facilitators work closely with undergraduates, academics and external guests/speakers to ensure that the experience is well co-ordinated and that all students maximise their educational experience and potential. It is likely that every Grand Challenges group will be different in focus, content, dynamics and experience of the students and staff alike.

The definition of facilitate is "to make easy" or "ease a process". What a facilitator does is help plan, guide and manage a group to ensure that the group's objectives are met effectively, with clear thinking, good participation, time management and full buy-in from all students involved. It is not the same as traditional 'transmission' teaching, and facilitators are not expected to teach subject content to students in their groups.

Facilitators will be the first point of contact for students; coordinating and facilitating small group work. Facilitators on the same Challenge will share ideas and discuss their work. In this role, you need to understand more about how people learn than about the subject the students are investigating.

Your responsibilities will include the following:

a) Before Grand Challenges week:

- Attending training sessions in March
- Attending planning meetings between March and May with the academics running the Challenges
- Working closely with academics to support setting up a week-long programme for their Challenge, in accordance with the Grand Challenges Principles
- Independent preparation following the trainings and meetings
- Providing content to Central Team for communicating with students who have signed up

b) During Grand Challenges week (5th-9th June 2023):

- Being present on Grand Challenges Week activities for the duration of the Week.
- Facilitating group activity and supervising students throughout the week.
- Supporting students to work in a 'research like' way, making sure students understand evidence-based approach
- Ensuring that an enquiry-based learning approach is adopted in the Challenge activities
- Supporting Student Programme Assistants in ensuring that correct administration is performed (e.g. registers taken; resources required available, consent forms signed, risk assessments done etc.)
- Ensuring that the group is prepared to present outputs at the end of Challenge week

c) After Grand Challenges Week

- Helping with the write-up of Grand Challenges after Grand Challenges Week.
- Attending a discussion session of their experiences to help evaluate the programme.

3. Skills/Person Specification

To facilitate effectively in Grand Challenges, you must be objective. It really means that, for the purposes of the group, you will take a neutral stance with regard to the subject. You will be happy to step back from the detailed content and away from your own personal views/expertise and focus on the group process. The "group process" is the approach used to ease discussions, aiming to get the best from all members and bring the event through to a successful conclusion in term of outputs, however these are defined. How you design this depends on many factors, and we'll explore this in more detail in the training. The secret of great facilitation is a group process that flows, and with it will flow the group's ideas, solutions, creativity, capacity, capability and decision-making.

Your key responsibility as a facilitator is to create this group process and a positive and constructive environment in which it can flourish.

Person specification

Highly Desirable Criteria

- Good facilitation skills and experience;
- Completion of LTHE Stage 1;
- If you are applying for the Future Food Challenge, you should have relevant research experience and expertise in this area;
- If you are applying for the Social Inequality Challenge, you should have some skills in textual analysis, an ability to analyse images, and to engage critically with culture and politics.

Desirable Criteria

- Ability to work effectively with a wide range of staff, students and external contacts with diverse interests and needs to deliver multiple objectives;
- An understanding of the benefits of interdisciplinary, employability, research-led education and student-led learning in a university education;

- Ability to engage the interest and enthusiasm of students and inspire them to learn;
- Excellent organisational skills, including time management and planning within the framework of the agreed programme;
- Excellent team working skills;
- Proactive 'can do' attitude with good problem solving skills.
- Creative and innovative
- A good listener/observer

4. Recruitment process

For some Challenges, applications will be judged solely on this application form. For other Challenges, there will also be an interview stage.

The recruitment process for each Challenge will take place separately. So if you are invited to interview for multiple Challenges, these will be separate interviews taking place with different people on different dates.

You should expect to hear back on the outcome of your application by the end of February.

5. Training and remuneration

Successful applicants will attend training sessions, covering detailed information about the Grand Challenges Week. The role of the facilitator and the facilitation of enquiry-based learning will be explored in more depth, equipping you with the skills and knowledge you'll need in order to support students taking part in the programme.

The rate of pay is £19.08 an hour. Facilitators will be paid £667.80 for Grand Challenges Week, for 35 hours work. Due to visa restrictions, those on Tier 4 visas would only be able to work for 20 hours and so would be paid £381.60 for the week. If, for any reason, a facilitator works less than this number of hours during Grand Challenges Week, they will be paid for the number of hours worked.

The role of the facilitator outside of Grand Challenges Week will depend on the requirements of the individual Challenge but will likely involve between 5-10 hours of work which will include training, meetings and individual preparation.

Facilitators should be able to commit to working throughout the whole of Grand Challenges, and have availability for scheduling training, meetings, and individual preparation between March-May.

Facilitators will claim on an hourly basis so they will need to help track of their hours, including during the Grand Challenges Week.

Applications for the Facilitator 2023 role close on 30th January 2023.

6. How will Challenge content be designed?

Content will be designed by the academic teams, in conjunction with facilitators.

7. Contacts

The main contacts for Grand Challenges queries are the Grand Challenges team (challenges@exeter.ac.uk). During the Grand Challenges Week, your Challenge academic will be your first point of contact as a group facilitator. You will also be working with student programme assistants allocated to your Challenge, who will be your first point of contact for practical, logistical, and technical queries.