Contacts

General Enquiries
UCL Email and Telephone Directory:
Website: www.ucl.ac.uk/directory
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7679 2000

Doctoral School:
Website: www.ucl.ac.uk/docschool
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7679 1422
Email: docschool@ucl.ac.uk

Student Enquiries Centre:
Floor 1, Student Centre, 27-28 Gordon Street
www.ucl.ac.uk/students/life-ucl/student-enquiries-centre

Departmental Graduate Tutors:
www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/essinfo/ddGradTuts.pht
Faculty Graduate Tutors:
www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/essinfo/facGradTuts.pht
Departmental PhD Administrators:
www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/essinfo/ddAdmins.pht

International
International Office:
Website: www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/international
Tel: +44 (0) 20 308 8520
Email: international@ucl.ac.uk

Finance
Scholarships and Funding Office:
Website: www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/scholarships
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7679 0004
Email: studentfunding@ucl.ac.uk

Tuition Fees and Expenses:
Website: www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate/research/
fees-funding
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7679 4125 or 4128
Email: fees@ucl.ac.uk

Accommodation
Student Accommodation:
Website: www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/accommodation
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7679 6322
Email: residences@ucl.ac.uk

University of London Housing Services Website:
www.housing.lon.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7862 8880
Email: housing@london.ac.uk

Careers
UCL Careers:
Website: www.ucl.ac.uk/careers
Tel: +44 (0) 20 3549 5900
Email: careers@ucl.ac.uk

Support and Wellbeing Services
Student Support and Wellbeing Website:
www.ucl.ac.uk/students/student-support-and-wellbeing
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7679 0100
Email: student.wellbeing@ucl.ac.uk

Student Disability Services:
Website: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/disability-support
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7679 0100
Email: disability@ucl.ac.uk

Student Psychological Services Website:
www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/student-psychological-services
3 Taviton Street, London WC1H OBT
Tel: (0) 20 7679 1487

Students’ Union UCL:
Website: www.uclu.org
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7679 2500 (Union Reception)
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7679 2998 (Advice and Welfare)
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7679 7862 (Volunteering Services Unit)

Student Central:
(formerly University of London Union)
Website: www.studentcentral.london
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7664 2000
Email: general.studentcentral@london.ac.uk

Nightline – Confidential Listening Advice and Support Service for Students:
Website: www.nightline.org.uk
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7631 0101
Email: listening@nightline.org.uk

UCL Postal Address and Telephone:
UCL, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7679 2000
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Map rear cover

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FAQs
Answers to all these queries and more can be found on our Doctoral School FAQ webpage.

What if I’m not getting on with my supervisor?
What is a thesis?
What is a PhD? What are the main milestones? What do I have to do?
I don’t know what’s expected of me in my programme.
I don’t have a desk. Where can I work on campus?
How do I open a bank account if I’m not British?
How do I get paid my stipend?
What if I run out of money?

What if I can’t find housing?
I’m new to London. How can I meet people?
How do I find a doctor (GP)?
Where can I find mental health support?
What if I get sick?
What if I get pregnant?
What if I need to pause my studies?
Where can I find career support, especially if I don’t want to stay in academia?
SECTION 1:
WELCOME AND KEY INFORMATION

“We want you to become ‘creative, critical, autonomous intellectual risk takers’ through your research degree at UCL.”

Daniyal Jafree | Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health
Welcome to UCL and to the Doctoral School Handbook. The Handbook outlines the support available to you as a research student on one of our PhD, professional doctorate, MD(Res) or MRes programmes at UCL. We at UCL are committed to ensuring that the quality of your research training is of the highest level. We believe that a high quality research environment informs high quality education and we are proud to have been judged to be one of the leading research universities in the world.

The world has been changed by the Covid-19 pandemic. This has had an impact on research with some of the changes proving beneficial and we will be making these permanent. Our research and research training has continued during the crisis using on-line communications even when buildings, labs and archives were closed albeit with inevitable changes. We are now working in different ways while maintaining the safety and well being of all our community.

Currently UCL has around 6,000 research students and over 6,000 academic and research staff involved in your supervision spread across our 11 faculties. UCL academic staff have some of the strongest backgrounds in their specialist fields in the world. UCL is a centre of innovative cross-disciplinary research and across the College the research students play a vital part in this stimulating research environment. Welcome to this community.

We want you to become ‘creative, critical, autonomous intellectual risk takers’ through your research degree at UCL. These characteristics are also sought in leadership roles in many areas beyond research and we hope to give you the opportunity to find out more about these too during your time here. Research is an international business so it is important that you gain experience communicating and defending your work nationally and internationally.

As a member of UCL we expect you to strive for the highest standards of integrity in your work and I encourage you to read the information, including UCL’s Statement on Research Integrity, on UCL’s research integrity web pages: www.ucl.ac.uk/research/integrity

The Doctoral School is here to ensure that your time at UCL fulfils your needs and expectations, equips you for leadership roles in the research world and elsewhere, and enables you to make the most of the excitement of research. We look after your interests through a Code of Practice for Research Degrees which sets out clearly the standards you can expect from UCL.

The Doctoral School online Research Student Log provides a means to manage your project and to track your research career at UCL. It gives a focus to help you develop skills which you can apply to both the academic and non-academic worlds to set you up for your future career.

Through courses, inter-disciplinary programmes and scholarships we encourage students to look beyond the boundaries of their chosen discipline, as well as sharing and broadening knowledge across disciplines through societies and competitions.

In this Handbook you will find details of activities and events to support you during your time here, and how you can benefit from them. More information and resources can be found on our regularly updated website – www.ucl.ac.uk/docschool

The strategy for doctoral education at UCL can also be found on the Doctoral School’s website at: www.ucl.ac.uk/docschool/strategy

We in the Doctoral School are here to give advice particularly on issues you may wish to discuss outside your department that may arise during your time at UCL – to help when things go wrong, as well as to celebrate your successes.

I would like to wish you the best for your research at UCL and encourage you to make the most of the rich and diverse research training environment at UCL.

I look forward to meeting you at some of our forthcoming events.

Professor David Bogle FREng
Pro-Vice-Provost of the Doctoral School
What is Research?

You have just embarked on a transformative journey as a research degree student – congratulations! But what do we mean by research in this 'research-intensive' environment? Research involves exploring fundamental questions through rigorous investigation and analysis. These questions can be about almost anything: natural phenomena, cultural understanding, the way people organise and operate, the ways we design new processes and procedures, about our understanding of who and what we are and how this defines the human condition, and so on.

Research involves learning the mechanics of doing experimental or theoretical work, but also in questioning the methods and tools used, and in developing new ones. Researchers work within a discipline and a tradition, but are also engaged in questioning its assumptions, re-conceiving and re-drawing its boundaries with other disciplines. Undertaking research is also then a process of defining what constitutes research itself, questioning and testing orthodox views and approaches as you go.

Your research degree is a unique chance to develop and lead your own project and follow it through to a conclusion which you can defend. You will have either proposed a topic yourself or been given a broad scope to explore but by the end it will definitely be your project albeit with some ideas from others who you discuss it with. There will be successes and false starts along the way: not all your ideas or investigations will lead anywhere, but both the fruitful routes and what turn out to be dead-end paths form a critical part of the learning process of research. Your project will be very much yours to defend and promote, and at the end you will have the skills to propose and plan other research projects.

Dafni Gyftaki
Division of Medicine

Karolina Dziemidowicz
UCL School of Pharmacy
What is research at UCL?

UCL has a proud tradition of thinking differently. Established in 1826 to open up education in England for the first time to students of any race or religion, UCL’s founding principles of academic excellence and research aimed at addressing real problems confronting the world and they continue to frame our approach today. UCL’s commitment to disruptive thinking remains profound, and we aim to encourage all our researchers to follow novel paths of enquiry that expand the limits of knowledge and to cross disciplinary and organisational boundaries.

UCL 2034, UCL’s highest level institutional strategy puts it like this: “London’s Global University: a diverse intellectual community, engaged with the wider world and committed to changing it for the better; recognised for our radical and critical thinking and its widespread influence; with an outstanding ability to integrate our education, research, innovation and enterprise for the long-term benefit of humanity”1.

What is research in my field?

Research varies enormously across different fields of enquiry. At its most basic level there are differences in the research methods, methodologies and materials employed, and in the day to day activities. You will notice that even within your department there are researchers using very different approaches and working in quite different ways.

Exploring your field, learning about its territory and methods and how these interconnect with other disciplines is all part of the excitement of research and a formative part of becoming a researcher as you develop your own approach.

Some research by its very nature sits across disciplines and UCL encourages all researchers to think about cross disciplinary approaches that are increasingly needed to address global challenges.

Your supervisory team is key to helping you understand the expectations of research in your field of study, as well as providing you with advice on selecting the practical methods and theoretical frameworks that fit your project best. As you become more experienced they will also assist you in becoming independent as researcher and thinker, one who is able to assess the merits of particular research methods, question them and find new ones with confidence. They will also help you to understand the context in which research takes place, the standards and requirements of professionalism in research, and the wider impact of research in society.

What is the outcome?

The main outcome of a research degree is a trained researcher – the thesis documents the evidence to support this. During your research programme you will produce a thesis which documents your original ideas about your chosen focused topic, the methods you have chosen, the evidence to support your ideas, the discussion and conclusions that arise, and all presented within the context of current and past developments. You will develop the research skills and experience for a range of careers, outside academia as well as inside, where tasks require creativity, rigour, and depth.

You will be given many opportunities to develop these skills through your research work but also through activities within your department or division, through attending and presenting at conferences, and through courses and opportunities available through the Doctoral Skills Development Programme.

You will find that undertaking a research degree is a very different experience to the taught undergraduate or postgraduate courses with which you are familiar, or from your recent professional environment if that is where you have come from. It will be demanding certainly, but also we hope rewarding. There are many people within UCL to help you, within your Department or Division but also within Professional Services as outlined in this handbook. In particular your supervisory team will assist, question, support and challenge you: they will help you develop as an independent thinker and ultimately someone who takes responsibility for your own personal and professional development.

1 www.ucl.ac.uk/2034

“Exploring your field, learning about its territory and methods and how these interconnect with other disciplines is all part of the excitement of research and a formative part of becoming a researcher as you develop your own approach.”
Research Integrity

UCL is committed to ensuring the highest standards of integrity in all aspects of its research activities and expects that all those involved with research at UCL maintain a similar commitment. As a researcher you are expected to read and abide by the UCL Statement on Research Integrity, which sets out the standards expected of those involved in research at UCL, including adherence to the UCL Principles of Integrity: honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, care and respect, and personal responsibility. www.ucl.ac.uk/research/integrity/integrity-at-ucl

As a researcher it is important to ensure your research is conducted, and the results of your research disseminated, honestly, accurately and in accordance with professional standards. Research integrity extends to your personal behaviour and how you conduct yourself in working collaboratively with others, during peer review, in declaring potential conflicts of interest, and in showing care and respect for other researchers and disciplines, research participants and their data, and the research record.

Acting professionally in your research covers a range of professional knowledge and behaviours including awareness of:

- methodology and analysis
- good data management;
- respect and confidentiality;
- research ethics and approval processes;
- legal requirements; conditions of funding;
- health and safety;
- declaring conflicts of interest; as well as a thorough knowledge of the principles of professional conduct and appropriate practice in your discipline;
- appropriate attribution of credit and authorship;
- citation/referencing and the avoidance of plagiarism;
- IPR and copyright;
- respect for equality and diversity;
- public engagement and global citizenship;
- principles of responsible innovation.

It is your responsibility to be proactive in seeking advice and support as well as keeping up to date with the latest standards and changes in guidance and legislation relating to your discipline area/s throughout your research career. These are not simple issues, but such concerns are an essential part of the rigours of academic research.

The Research Integrity website (www.ucl.ac.uk/research/integrity) acts as UCL’s living Framework for Research Integrity, and draws together information on all elements of research integrity, including ethical funding, research ethics and the relevant policies and guidelines, such as research data management, open access and conflicts of interest. It also provides guidance on areas such as research collaboration, overseas research, peer review, publication and authorship, and mentoring. There are also relevant training opportunities such as the Introduction to Research Support and Integrity Workshop – an introductory session relevant for all those intending to undertake research at UCL and applicable to all disciplines.

You should also read the UCL Code of Conduct for Research which sets out the general principles of conduct as well as signposting relevant associated UCL policies, for example the student IPR Policy, and Guidance for the Storage and Disposal of Data and Samples. It is designed to be read in conjunction with the Research Councils UK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct that sets out the expectations of our key funders and partners on research integrity: www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/research-integrity

Further information on UCL’s Research Governance Framework and the Code of Conduct can be found at: www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/governance-and-committees/resgov

Your supervisory team and other specialists at UCL will help you to gain the knowledge and confidence you need for your particular project and staff across UCL are available to advise and support you.

Referring and adhering to the Research Integrity Training Framework will assist you in identifying and fulfilling your knowledge and training needs in these areas: www.ucl.ac.uk/research/integrity/research-integrity-training-framework

You may also find this paper prepared by the American National Academies useful. Most of the discussion is relevant to researchers in all disciplines even though the title is “On Being a Scientist”: www.nap.edu/read/12192/chapter/1

“Excellence and integrity are inextricably linked.”

Foreword to the Concordat to support research integrity 2012
Ethics and Research

Research ethics forms an integral part of proper scientific conduct. UCL is therefore committed to:

• the promotion of excellent research practice and to maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of our research;
• developing our research staff and students to be ethical researchers;
• establishing a culture where integrity underpins all our research activities.

All research raises ethical issues and these will vary across research areas and discipline. It is very important that researchers consider the ethical implications of their research ‘early’ in the research planning process.

Stop and Think!
All research raises ethical issues. Consider the ethical implications of your research ‘early’ in the research planning process.

Keep in Mind
All research involving humans carries some degree of risk. Sometimes the risk might be very small or even negligible but you always need to consider if the research you are doing might raise issues related to privacy, equality, diversity, health and safety.

Protecting You
Ethical Approval ensures that you and your participants are protected if something goes wrong.

Why is ethics review important?
Ethical review ensures that a research project adheres to accepted ethical principles and standards (ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/accepted-ethical-standards.php) and is conducted in such a way that any potential adverse impact is in proportion to its expected benefit.

It also ensures that researchers are accountable for their work (having thought about the ethical implications of their research and pledging to conduct their research in an ethical way). This allows UCL to preserve the rights, health and safety, and privacy of all involved.

The aim of ethical review is to protect participants and/or their data. They are a valuable part of the research process and not merely a means of accessing data and we need to treat them and all their information with due respect. However, ethical review also helps to protect you as the researcher. In addition to and recognition by funding and publishing bodies, obtaining ethical approval demonstrates that you are undertaking a legitimate research study. Careful consideration of research ethics principles and potential risks may help inform your research methods or increase participant recruitment, and as a result, enhance the quality of your research.

Research that does not involve human participants and/or their data also has the potential to raise ethical issues i.e. environmental studies that have the potential to impact on or change the environment, archaeological excavations in disputed territories, studies involving access to sacred sites or the analysis of sacred cultural objects where access is restricted or where there are particular modern sensitivities or issues.

How do I know if I need to apply for ethical approval?
All research proposals involving living human participants and the collection and/or study of data (to include tissue) derived from living human participants undertaken by UCL students or staff (to include honorary staff, affiliate academics and visiting researchers) on UCL premises and/or by UCL staff or students elsewhere requires ethical approval, be that through the UCL Research Ethics Committee (REC), a REC operating under the Health Research Authority (HRA), an overseas REC or a combination, to ensure that the research conforms with general ethical principles and standards.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Department as outlined in the Academic Manual: Duties and Responsibilities of Heads Of Department to ensure that staff and students of the Department are apprised of UCL’s arrangements for research governance and the associated procedures, the main components of which include UCL’s Statement for Research Integrity and associated research integrity website as well as the UCL REC: constitution, terms of reference and guidelines.

Ethical approval must be obtained prior to commencement of a study; retrospective approval will not be granted. You need to be certain if your research requires ethical approvals prior to commencement as:

• Funders often require this as part of their conditions of award;
• Publishers may require proof of approval for publication;
• Not obtaining the appropriate permissions could be classed as potential research misconduct under UCL’s Procedure for investigating and resolving allegations of misconduct in academic research (2017) and may lead to disciplinary action;
• Not receiving approval could impact on a research participant’s settlement in the event of a claim and could damage UCL’s insurance profile. The individual researcher bears personal responsibility for any claim.

For further advice and guidance please visit the UCL REC website: ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/ or email: ethics@ucl.ac.uk

Remember – It is expected that all studies that require ethical approval have that approval in place prior to the start of the research. Ethical approval will not be granted retrospectively.
Communicating your research to the outside world

Contributing to the advancement of your discipline and developing novel lines of enquiry are fundamental to doctoral research, but all researchers at UCL are also expected to disseminate the results of their research through appropriate channels, including publication, teaching, commercialisation and engagement with policymaking and the public.

Public Engagement: UCL has one of the most established and largest Public Engagement teams in the country. The UCL Public Engagement Unit is situated within UCL Culture and provides advice, training, funding, resources and activities to help UCL researchers listen to and engage with communities and to embed public engagement within all stages of the research cycle: www.ucl.ac.uk/culture/public-engagement

Innovation: UCL Innovation and Enterprise is a team based at BaseKX in King’s Cross who offer students training and support to encourage creative and entrepreneurial ideas and mindsets. www.ucl.ac.uk/enterprise/

Public Policy: UCL Public Policy connects UCL researchers, staff and students with policy professionals to inform policy with evidence. www.ucl.ac.uk/public-policy

Volunteering: The Volunteering Services Unit is based in the Students’ Union UCL and funded directly by UCL. It is one of the biggest volunteering departments in the UK and aims to help you get involved in exciting community volunteering opportunities across London: studentsunionucl.org/content/volunteering

Impact: All doctoral theses at UCL now include a requirement to write an impact statement. This will allow you to gain some experience in writing about the potential impact of your work and convincing others of its importance – a vital skill in many areas of future work, not just academic careers. There is a course on how to write impact statements available via the Doctoral Skills programme.

Martha Sainsbury | Bartlett School of Planning

Bruna Caridi | Institute of Ophthalmology
Open Science & Scholarship

Open Science, Open Scholarship or Open Research – what name is used is less relevant than the grouping of principles and practices which this term encompasses, these include:

**Principles and Practices**

Open Science is about increased transparency, re-use, participation, cooperation, accountability and reproducibility for research. It aims to improve the quality and reliability of research through principles like inclusion, fairness, equity, and sharing, which extend across all disciplines.

Open Science introduces different approaches to the way research is done— including opening access to research publications, data-sharing, open notebooks, transparency in research evaluation, ensuring the reproducibility of research (where possible), transparency in research methods, open source code, software and infrastructure, citizen science and open educational resources.

A commitment to openness is a fundamental attribute of UCL’s culture and much is done within the institution to support open approaches to all academic endeavours. Within the research environment significant progress has already been made to embed open principles and practices in our research culture, open access to research publications being a prime example.

Other areas such as open data, open software, citizen science and open education are actively supported by the institution and are embedded in the research practices of numerous disciplines. Recognizing the will to drive forward the Open Science agenda, UCL’s Open Science Policy Platform (a senior grouping of UCL academics, researchers and support service owners) have oversight of and drive forward the innovations and developments necessary to foster a culture of open science.

Key to making open science the norm within the research environment is engagement with early career research, as a result an active (and growing) programme of training and development opportunities is delivered via the Doctoral School Development Programme and UCL Organisational Development. Alongside this are a number of support services that are provided collaboratively by Library Services, Research IT Services, and the Office of the Vice-Provost Research (OVPR); these offer support and advice and training to researchers at all levels on aspects of open science.

**Services supporting researchers provided by UCL Library Services include:**

**Open Access Support**

Advice and assistance on all aspects of making research publications openly available, including use of the UCL Research Publication Service (RPS) and UCL Discovery (our institutional repository), advice on funder requirements and APC (article processing charge) payments.

For more information, visit their website: [www.ucl.ac.uk/library/open-access](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/open-access)

**UCL Research Data Repository**

An online repository where you can deposit data you collect in the course of your research, as well as other research outputs like software or code. It also enables you to find data resources published by others at UCL. The repository supports open access and enables you to make your data formally citable by means of a Digital Object Identifier.

For more information, visit their website: [www.ucl.ac.uk/library/research-support/research-data-management/ucl-research-data-repository](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/research-support/research-data-management/ucl-research-data-repository)

Access the repository: [rdr.ucl.ac.uk](http://rdr.ucl.ac.uk)

**Research Data Support**

Advice and training on best practice in managing research data and optimising for storage, including the creation of data management plans and advising on funder requirements. For more information, visit their website: [www.ucl.ac.uk/library/research-support/research-data](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/research-support/research-data)

**Bibliometric Support**

Guidance and support for UCL authors and colleagues on how to use and interpret bibliometric measures effectively and responsibly. For more information, visit their website: [www.ucl.ac.uk/library/research-support/bibliometrics](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/research-support/bibliometrics)

**UCL Press**

UCL Press is the first fully open access university press in the UK. It publishes high-quality scholarly monographs, textbooks and journals, and makes them freely available online through UCL Discovery and other open access platforms.

For more information, visit their website: [www.uclpress.co.uk](http://www.uclpress.co.uk)

**Open Access Student Journals**

UCL Press also supports open access student journal publishing by providing an online platform for students to set up, run, and publish their own journals using Open Journal Software: [ojs.lib.ucl.ac.uk/](http://ojs.lib.ucl.ac.uk/)

For more information, about running a journal on the platform, or to find out more about what is involved in running a journal, visit the website: [www.uclpress.co.uk/pages/student-journals](http://www.uclpress.co.uk/pages/student-journals)
Key Documents and Tools for all Research Students

Having a clear picture in your mind of the regulations and requirements of your research programme from the outset, and of where to start in making the most of the huge range of opportunities open to you at UCL, is vital. Your plans and goals will change as you grow and develop as a researcher, but clear short and long term aims and regular review of progress is key to actively managing your research project and your time at UCL.

The wealth of information and opportunities can be somewhat overwhelming however, particularly when you are just starting out. This page lists the four key documents and tools for all UCL research students to assist you in the successful management and completion of your programme.

**Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees**

The Code of Practice sets out what you as a research student can expect from your supervisory team and from UCL, and what your supervisors and others in UCL can expect from you. The Code provides an invaluable and user-friendly map of the landscape of your research degree, together with signposts to key policies, procedures and the roles of key personnel such as Supervisors, Departmental Graduate Tutors and Faculty Graduate Tutors.

It is important that you read this document carefully at the outset of your time at UCL and keep it for reference. You will receive a hard copy of the Code from your department, and it is also available online on the Doctoral School’s Essential Information webpage: [www.ucl.ac.uk/docschool/essinfo](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/docschool/essinfo)

**UCL Academic Manual**

The UCL Academic Manual brings together in one location the academic regulations, policies and procedures for UCL research students. It details the regulations for our research degrees from admission to the final completion of the degree together with the formal processes and requirements at each stage. Here you will also find full details of the requirements of your final thesis – its length, writing and presentational conventions, but also the criteria by which it will be judged.

The Academic Manual is available online via the Doctoral School’s Essential Information webpage: [www.ucl.ac.uk/docschool/essinfo](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/docschool/essinfo)

**Research Student Log**

The Research Student Log is an online project management tool designed to assist you throughout your degree programme at UCL. Its use is mandatory for all UCL research degree students and it provides a framework for planning and recording your research progress and scheduled supervisory meetings, together with help in analysing, planning and charting evidence of your academic and generic skills development. See page 19 for further details on the Log.

**The Doctoral School Website**

[www.ucl.ac.uk/docschool](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/docschool)

The Doctoral School website is the place to find out about all the support provided for you as doctoral students. It is updated regularly.

- Essential Information
- Strategy, Governance and Policy
- Support & Advice
- Funding & Scholarships
- Events & Competitions
- Networks & Societies
- Representation & Surveys
- Postgraduate Teaching Assistants
- International Study

Contact Details for the Doctoral School
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7679 1422
Email: docschool@ucl.ac.uk

“The Code of Practice sets out what you as a research student can expect from your supervisory team and from UCL, and what your supervisors and others in UCL can expect from you.”
SECTION 2: SUPPORT AND ADVICE
Support and Advice

There is a wealth of advice and support for doctoral students at UCL covering your academic and professional development. There is also support in instances where you might need specialist help with more personal issues that arise.

**Supervisory Team**
Key to your academic and professional development as a researcher, your supervisors should be your first port of call for advice and support on almost any matter: if they can't help directly, they can help you find out who can.

**Departmental Administrators**
Have a wealth of experience to help you navigate successfully through your time at UCL. Some departments have named PhD Administrators, but all will have administrators with detailed knowledge of your department and the administration of your programme.

**Departmental Graduate Tutors**
Often referred to by the acronym DGT, each department has an experienced member of academic staff from whom you can seek independent advice on both academic and pastoral care matters if you need to talk to someone beyond your immediate supervisory team.

**Faculty Graduate Tutors**
Each department sits within a faculty and each faculty also has an FGT, a senior and experienced academic whom you can contact if you wish to seek advice outside your department.

**Student Enquiries Centre**
A central office for all student enquiries, including: confirmation of registration/award, updating your student details, enrolment, ID cards, Immigration and visas, etc. If the Student Centre can't assist directly, they will signpost you to the correct person to help you. You can also contact them online via askUCL, our new online student enquiry system.

**Student Support and Wellbeing**
A team of expert wellbeing, disability and mental health advisers provide a safe, confidential and non-judgmental space, in which you can discuss any issues that may be affecting your ability to study. There is a range of services, including:

- **Student Disability Services**
  Providing information and advice for all disabled UCL students. Organising support services such as note-taking, communication support, mentoring and study skills tuition. They can also assist students in applications for Disabled Students Allowance and other funds, and can provide assessments of dyslexia and other learning difficulties.

- **Student Psychological Services**
  They provide an accessible and effective professional resource for students who are facing emotional and psychological problems. You can contact them online, via phone, or visit 3–4 Taviton St on campus.

  Doctoral students can also access the Employee Assistance Programme and online CBT for issues such as stress and anxiety via Silvercloud.

- **Support for specific student groups**
  Information and advice for a range of communities, including LGBTQ+ students, mature students, student carers, BME students, distance learners, and students of faith.

**UCL Cultural Consultation Service**
The UCL Cultural Consultation Service (CCS) aims to enhance learning and teaching outcomes for students and staff facing cross-cultural and social conflicts.

At present, the service is run by two members of academic staff who both have experience and expertise in this area. A team of consultants from across UCL teaching and student community is also available for advice.

The CCS can help people in a number of ways, usually offering a one-hour initial meeting during which the person seeking advice will have the opportunity to discuss their situation in detail, in an informal and friendly atmosphere. You may be given a follow-up appointment and asked to complete a small exercise for ‘homework’ before coming to the next meeting. All meetings are confidential.

**UCL Doctoral School**
Provides advice to students and supervisors on informal matters concerning the supervisory relationship.

**Students’ Union UCL Advice Service**
Based in the UCL Students’ Union building on central campus, the Students’ Union Advice Service provides information and advice on a wide range of issues including: immigration, housing and finance. You can also talk to them about any academic issues you are facing: as part of the Students’ Union they are independent of UCL’s formal structures.

**UCL Student Mediator**
Responsible for advising and assisting UCL students with the resolution of complaints, involving staff or other students or services of UCL which the student has been unable to resolve through informal means.
Scholarships

The UCL Graduate Scholarships Programme has been developed to support graduate students who can demonstrate the potential of their research.

How many awards are available?
There will be up to 35 awards available in 2020/21.

Graduate Research Scholarships (GRS)

Who is eligible to apply? The Graduate Research Scholarships are open to incoming and current research students from any country. The scholarships are offered across all UCL departments for students pursuing studies on either a full-time or part-time basis.

Online, Non-resident PhDs and Professional Doctorate students are not currently eligible for this scholarship programme. Successful candidates will normally hold, or be expecting to achieve, at least an upper second-class Honours UK undergraduate degree or equivalent qualification.

What does it cover? The scholarships consist of tuition fees equivalent to the standard postgraduate UK/EU rate plus a maintenance stipend of £17,285 per annum (2020/21 rate) for full-time study (benefits are calculated 'pro rata' for part-time students). The scholarship also includes additional research costs of up to £1,200 per year for the stated duration of the programme. Awards are normally tenable for years 1, 2, and 3 of a full time research degree programme (or years 1-5 of a part-time programme), subject to annual review and renewal.

The maintenance stipend will normally be subject to an annual inflationary increase. Funding will be extended to a 4th year if students are on a 1+3 programme or if their programme is of 4 years duration (excluding the writing-up year). Where awards are made to continuing students, they will apply to the remainder of the programme only. Any extension to the period of study beyond the standard programme dates is not included in the duration of the award. If granted, funding begins at the start of the next academic session.

How many awards are available?
There will be up to 30 awards available in 2020/21.

Other details/criteria: Scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic excellence and research potential. GRS applicants from overseas will automatically be considered for a UCL Overseas Research Scholarship (ORS) which consists of fee funding to cover the difference between overseas and UK/EU tuition fees.

UCL Overseas Research Scholarships

Who is eligible to apply? The graduate Overseas Research Scholarships (ORS) are open to incoming and current research students with an overseas tuition fee status. The scholarships are offered across all UCL departments for students pursuing studies on either a full-time or part-time basis.

Online, Non-resident PhDs and Professional Doctorate students are not currently eligible for this scholarship programme. Successful candidates will normally hold, or be expecting to achieve, at least an upper second-class Honours UK undergraduate degree or equivalent qualification.

What does it cover? The scholarships consist of tuition fees equivalent to the standard postgraduate overseas rate. Awards are also considered where a student has already secured partial funding from a sponsor. Awards are normally tenable for years 1, 2, and 3 of a full time research degree programme (or years 1-5 of a part-time programme), subject to annual review and renewal.

Funding will be extended to a 4th year if students are on a 1+3 programme or if their programme is of 4 years duration (excluding the writing-up year). Where awards are made to continuing students, they will apply to the remainder of the programme only. Any extension to the period of study beyond the standard programme dates is not included in the duration of the award.

If granted, funding begins at the start of the next academic session.

Other details/criteria: Scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic excellence and research potential. GRS applicants from overseas will automatically be considered for an UCL Overseas Research Scholarship (ORS) which consists of fee funding to cover the difference between overseas and UK/EU tuition fees.

Graduate Research Scholarships for Cross-Disciplinary Training (One-Year)

Who is eligible to apply? These scholarships are open to current UCL MPhil/PhD and EngD students.

They are awarded to students who want to spend an extra year of their research degree in a department other than the one in which they are registered. The duration of the scholarship is one year which can be taken at any point during the research degree programme, although preference will be given to students in their second or third year of study. The purpose of this scholarship is to encourage cross-disciplinary training, which provides the student with relevant research skills and knowledge to enhance their research.

Applicants should already be in receipt of at least three-years’ funding to complete their programme. Self-funding students will need to provide evidence that they have full funding for the remaining years of their PhD.

What does it cover? The scholarships consist of fees equivalent to the applicable graduate rate (UK/EU or overseas) plus a maintenance stipend of £17,285 per annum (2020/21 rate) or – in the case of recipients who already hold a research council grant a stipend that will match their current maintenance award. The scholarship also includes an additional research allowance of up to £1,200.

How many awards are available? In 2020/21, there will be up to 4 one-year scholarships available. Further information: www.ucl.ac.uk/scholarships
Financial support and the Doctoral School Fellowship

The aim of the Doctoral School Fellowship is to support research students who, due to unforeseen circumstances, have their funding interrupted or completely withdrawn.

Who is eligible to apply?

- Current UCL research students only (excluding students on CRS), from any country/UCL department
- Must demonstrate circumstances have changed since registration such that, due to unforeseen difficulties, they are unable to complete their programme without financial assistance
- Must be progressing well academically and demonstrate that without financial assistance they would not be able to complete their studies/research.

What does it cover?

Up to a full year’s maintenance stipend (at UCL standard stipend rate), depending on need. Any outstanding tuition fees need to be covered by departments.

How many awards are available?

Award numbers are not fixed, although funding is limited.

Other details/criteria:

Candidates cannot apply directly for a fellowship. They must be nominated for support by their Head of Department. Full details are available via: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/funding/financial-support/doctoral-school-fellowship

Other sources of support:

UCL also offers help with living costs through its Financial Assistance Fund: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/funding/financial-support/financial-assistance-fund

Funded students may also be entitled to parental or sick leave. See further information on the Research Services webpage: www.ucl.ac.uk/research-services/research-studentships/studentship-interruptions

Student funding advice and guidance is also available via: www.ucl.ac.uk/students/funding/financial-support/welfare-adviser

Further funding opportunities for research students, including information on ‘doctoral loans’, can be found here: www.ucl.ac.uk/scholarships/

Rohit Pradeep Lahoti
Bartlett Development Planning Unit
SECTION 3:
PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Louise Oates | Slade School of Fine Art
Research student log

The Research Student Log is UCL’s online project management and development tool specifically designed for our research students.

The Log provides a framework for students to reflect on and record their progress and development, both personal and professional, throughout their research project. The Research Log includes more review points at the beginning of your journey to ensure you are on track, and then has 6-monthly check-ins thereafter. It also helps you time and plan your two research milestones: the upgrade and the thesis submission. It does not record the more frequent ‘informal’ meetings that often occur several times per week/month, but it ensures that objectives are set, recorded and monitored at key points.

At each of these points, you will use the Log to record:

1. Progress since your last review
You and your supervisory team will review the progress against the objectives you set at your last review point. Have these been achieved? Was it necessary to change any and if so how? Do any of your objectives have to be continued into the next period?

2. Objectives for the next period
You and your supervisors will agree and record objectives for the coming period. Research is uncertain so it may be necessary to modify objectives as you proceed, but it is important nonetheless to have a plan that everyone is clear about.

3. Skills required to complete objectives
The skills you need will change over time. This section allows you actively to consider the skills you do not currently possess and those you need to further develop as you move through your programme.

4. Personal training and development planning
This section helps in identifying areas in which you need to develop. The Log provides a facility for students, together with their supervisors, to devise a training and development plan against the Researcher Development Framework (RDF). The RDF helps researchers identify the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of successful researchers, allowing them to plan their development activities in order to suit their individual needs. You will be asked to reflect upon and assess your skill levels across a range of areas throughout your research.

Research Integrity training is the only training which is currently mandatory for all research students. UCL seeks to ensure that all of its academic research is underpinned by the highest standards of rigour and integrity. This training can be achieved through either a local course offered by your department or the ethics/integrity courses run centrally via the Doctoral Skills programme.

How to use the Research Log
Use of the Log is mandatory for all MPhil/PhD, Professional Doctorates, EngD and MRes programmes. It is intended to be used in a flexible manner to allow for different research processes between different disciplines. It is the responsibility of the students to maintain their Logs for their own long-term benefit. The Departmental Graduate Tutor will confirm that the UCL Log has been satisfactorily completed at the upgrade and thesis submission milestones. Further training is offered at 3 times during the year on how to use and get the most of your Research Log.

Jacob Reich
MRC Laboratory for Molecular Cell Biology
Doctoral Skills Development Programme (UCL Doc Skills)

UCL Doctoral Skills (UCL Doc Skills) is a comprehensive researcher development programme for all postgraduate research students at UCL. The purpose of the programme is to give research students the opportunity to expand their research and personal transferable skills in order to support research, professional development and future careers. We offer a wide range of opportunities including face-to-face training, e-learning, competitions and internships. Courses are designed and taught using the expertise and specialist knowledge of the UCL community, complemented by input from employers and external consultants.

UCL research students also have the opportunity to take skills development courses at other institutions in the Bloomsbury area as part of the Bloomsbury Postgraduate Research Network (BPSN).

UCL Doc Skills is mapped to Vitae's Researcher Development Framework (RDF), the national professional development framework that describes the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of successful researchers.

UCL Doc Skills offers comprehensive coverage of the RDF and each offering is mapped to the individual domains of the framework.

The UCL DocSkills programme offers courses in a range of areas including Academic Writing, presentations, critical thinking, and research ethics. You can find the complete list of courses offered on our website (www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/learning-and-development-portfolio/researcher-development/doctoral-skills) or via the Inkpath app.

We also offer opportunities such as the Researcher-led Initiative Awards and with affiliations outside of UCL such as the Brilliant Club and BioNews.

Training Requirements

All research students at UCL are expected to take full advantage of the training on offer and should be aiming to complete a minimum of 10 days per year for full time students, or 6 days per year for part-time students.

All Research Council funded research students are required by their funding bodies to participate in skills development training to a degree equivalent to two weeks per year of their funded studentship (i.e. 3 years for 3-year MPhil/PhDs and 4 years for 4-year PhDs, EngDs etc).

Each training activity is assigned a number of points: a point is worth approximately ½ day of training. Ten days of training is therefore equivalent to 20 points per year.

Research students are expected to identify their training needs in discussion with their supervisors.
Opportunities for International Research

Research is global – international journals and conferences are key for effective knowledge transfer and for career progression. It is important that you gain experience and confidence in communicating and defending your work nationally and internationally. Meeting people and building international networks will help in your future career. This is, of course, all part of the excitement of research.

At UCL there are a number of opportunities for students to develop their research internationally. This includes support for attendance at conferences, as well as opportunities to study/research abroad, allowing you to spend time at a laboratory, archive or site off campus. While funding is always an issue, there are sources available within UCL and outside, which could help you develop an aspect of your research at another location. You could really gain a stimulating new outlook on your research and the world of research in another culture.

You should enquire with your local administrators or supervisors as to what conference funds are available to you. Some examples are:

- Bartlett Conference Fund
- SLMS Graduate Conference Fund: for all research students who are in a department within SLMS
- History Research Funds
- SELCS Conference Fund
- IoE Conference Fund

UCL’s Global Engagement Office – can offer advice on region/ country-specific concerns regarding international study visits.

Yale UCL Collaborative Student Exchange Programme

Yale and UCL have entered into a unique partnership called the Yale UCL Collaborative.

This is an exchange scheme for doctoral students giving you the chance to apply for the opportunity to have a period of research study at Yale under the supervision of an identified Yale Supervisor.

Places are limited and offered on a competitive basis: as ambassadors for UCL, exchange participants will be expected to make the most of their time at Yale by engaging as fully as possible with Yale’s research community. Exchanges will normally be for a period of three months, and it is hoped that the experience will allow UCL’s doctoral students to forge enduring links between the two institutions and within their research areas.

Here is what a couple of our previous exchange participants have said:

“I am extremely grateful for the help of UCL in making the most of an opportunity to study at Yale for a term and I cannot recommend it highly enough to anybody else who might be interested. Everybody at Yale was very friendly and helpful and they provided the perfect environment for me to do some excellent work.”

“My exchange at Yale University was a great experience I would not have wanted to miss. I gained new knowledge, was able to be a part of another academic environment, meet new people and get new ideas for my project and my future career. I am very thankful that I have been given this opportunity.”

Bogue Fellowships

Generous fellowships to support postgraduate research students and postdoctoral researchers working in the Life and Biomedical Sciences to visit North America.

Vasilios Mavroudis
Computer Science
UCL Innovation and Enterprise: Entrepreneurship

Some of the most innovative and transformative ideas from UCL come from our community of doctoral students and research postgraduates – who have gone on to establish highly successful companies and social enterprises. At UCL Innovation & Enterprise we help to fulfill the potential of these ideas, but also assist you in developing entrepreneurial skills and ways of using your research to develop a career outside of traditional academic pathways.

We believe that to solve some of the most pressing scientific, societal and technological challenges requires researchers at all levels to explore the potential of their ideas. That’s why UCL Innovation & Enterprise offers a wide range of interactive programmes designed to enrich your time at UCL and prepare you for the world beyond. These include dedicated doctoral workshops, challenges and competitions, networking events, boot camps, one-to-one business advice and the opportunity to join our free startup incubator space at BaseKX, our thriving entrepreneurial community in the heart of the Knowledge Quarter.

We run entrepreneurship training specifically for doctoral students in order to help you think like an entrepreneur and develop skills such as spotting opportunities, maximising resources, generating ideas and improving personal effectiveness. You can also learn how to set up your own business.

The training courses tend to run in three stages, from introductory to advanced, with workshops over one or two days.

In the introductory workshop the aim is to help you better develop projects and ideas using a new “enterprising lens”, highlighting how this approach can be beneficial both within, and outside of, academia. The skills, attributes and behaviours engendered from this training contribute to your overarching development and employability as a UCL doctoral student.

More advanced workshops meanwhile, delve deeper into business language and entrepreneurial thinking. You’ll learn about key concepts for early-stage enterprise creation, including ideation, prototyping, testing, building networks, sales, marketing and raising finance.

Should doctoral students then want to take their entrepreneurial journey further, we offer our 8-week ‘Explore’ and ‘Launch’ programmes, open to all UCL students. Over eight evening sessions, participants either ‘Explore’ a business idea, or get ready to ‘Launch’ their enterprise. The programmes culminate with the opportunity to pitch for substantial cash prizes.

Find out more at ucl.ac.uk/enterprise
Follow us on twitter: @UCLEnterprise
Like us on Facebook: @UCLEnterprise
Connect with us on LinkedIn:

UCL Innovation & Enterprise

Doctoral Entrepreneurs

Two very different ventures founded by doctoral students at UCL – a technology startup and transformative social enterprise – have benefited from the support received from UCL Innovation & Enterprise.

As a PhD student in UCL’s Department of Computing, Leo Wossnig was exposed to a range of different technologies and techniques – including quantum computing algorithms. Leo was inspired to come up with a new approach to quantum computing, by incorporating machine learning. He saw the potential of this approach in solving problems in industry such as the design of future batteries, advanced materials and therapeutic drugs. He created the startup, Rahko, which was officially incorporated in 2018 at UCL’s startup incubator space – where they received advice and mentoring on everything from recruitment to contracts.

Since then, the company has attracted significant interest and has partnered with some major players in the field including Microsoft, Nvidia and IBM. In 2019 Rahko raised £1.3 million in investment in a seed funding round lead by European venture capital firm Balderton Capital.

While studying for her PhD in Neuroscience, Rebecca McKelvey had an idea to combine her prior experience as a secondary school science teacher, and her role as a research scientist, to give young people from low income backgrounds opportunities in STEM. Rebecca entered the UCL Bright Ideas Award competition (now the ‘Launch a business startup programme’) and won a £10,000 prize. Gaining space at UCL’s business incubator for startups and new enterprises – and with other support from UCL Innovation & Enterprise, she was able to turn her ideas into reality by launching a non-profit organisation, in2scienceUK.

In2ScienceUK provides mentors from universities, arranging science placements, and giving careers guidance to more than 1000 young people. In October 2019, In2ScienceUK launched a partnership with the Royal Society to pilot a work placement scheme for disadvantaged and underrepresented groups.

“UCL’s support and guidance has enabled me to create something that has a transformative effect on young lives.” Rebecca says.
Postgraduate Teaching Assistant Scheme and UCL Arena

You may be asked by your department to contribute to undergraduate or Master’s level teaching as a Postgraduate Teaching Assistant (PGTA). The tasks you will be asked to undertake vary between department and discipline, but typically can include demonstrating in laboratory classes, leading tutorial groups and marking essays. This can be a very valuable experience: it can contribute to your intellectual development and grasp of the subject, and can also provide an additional source of income to help support your studies. The skills you acquire from teaching, demonstrating and facilitating can readily be applied to future careers in many fields, including academia, education, industrial research, or management.

Some departments offer Teaching Assistantships, whose holders are paid a stipend and have a responsibility to undertake a limited amount of teaching as well as research for a PhD. Other departments will employ you to undertake some paid teaching work as and when necessary. Your related duties (including teaching, preparation and training) must not compromise the time you can commit to your core research activities. Your department will provide guidance on what is expected from you in your particular teaching activities and clear workload allocation to ensure you are not overloaded.

All PGTAs must undertake appropriate development activities to support their teaching practice.

UCL’s Arena Centre for Research-based Education offers a scheme for such training and development of PGTAs, called UCL Arena One.

Arena One begins with an introductory Gateway Workshop, which is designed to prepare you as a new teacher for your teaching responsibilities, introduce you to methods in and approaches to teaching and learning, and provide an opportunity to meet Arena Centre staff and fellow PGTAs as you enter the postgraduate teaching community at UCL. Attendance at this session is required for all postgraduates with responsibility for any teaching and / or assessment at UCL. If you have already attended a similar introductory training, please contact us at arena.one@ucl.ac.uk to find out whether you still need to attend a Gateway Workshop.

PGTAs also have the option of attending an extended course, the UCL Arena One Teaching Associate Programme (TAP), and then submitting an application for the nationally recognised Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy / Advance HE.

PGTAs with a substantive teaching role are strongly encouraged to attend TAP.

Further information can be found on the UCL Arena website: www.ucl.ac.uk/arena/one and through the Doctoral Skills Development Programme.

Here is what some of our previous TAP participants have said about the course:

“It has been nice to see I am not the only one with certain worries when teaching, like not knowing the answer to some questions or giving proper feedback to the student.”

“It was insightful to hear about different styles of teaching and has challenged me to think about my own future teaching.”

“It has helped me to reflect about the teaching I have done so far but mostly I feel more confident in planning and assessing future teaching.”

Daniel Hewitt | Chemistry
UCL Careers – Find Your Future

An important part of the development of a skilled researcher is the ability to manage their own professional and career development (as specified in the national Researcher Development Framework). The UCL Doctoral School actively supports research students to become career self-managing through a collaborative programme with UCL Careers. At UCL Careers, we provide an extensive, bespoke menu of personal support, careers information and employer engagement opportunities which can be accessed via our researcher – dedicated webpages at: www.ucl.ac.uk/careers/researchers.

Specialist Support
A cornerstone of this programme is the work of our specialist Careers Consultants. The Consultants work closely with employer engagement professionals, employers, academics and other staff training and development professionals to design and deliver a careers programme that is relevant to, and meets the needs of, UCL’s research student community. They are ideally placed to provide impartial advice and guidance for individuals wishing to discuss their long term thoughts and plans for an academic career. They are also well placed to support students who wish to move beyond the academic environment. The work of the consultants is conducted through both one to one consultations and a programme of workshops.

Qiyu Wang | Bartlett School of Architecture

Engagement with External Organisations
We have a long running and extensive programme of employer engagement designed for, and open only to, research students and research staff which stands UCL apart from most other universities in the UK. This is in addition to our annual ‘mainstream’ events programme that we provide for all UCL students.

The Researcher Employer Programme aims to provide research students with comprehensive knowledge of the wide range of organisations and occupations where both the subject specific and more ‘transferable’ skills gained through a research degree can be applied. This takes the form of a series of sector-specific forum, more general Q&As and networking opportunities, alongside employer-led skills sessions and career tasters. Apart from the events, employers contribute to blogs and interviews to offer a range of different engagement options.

Information & Vacancy Provision
We believe that an essential part of effective career management is to learn how others have managed their careers successfully. We provide researchers with the opportunity to learn about the post – PhD career paths of people within academia and beyond, not only through our previously described events programme but also through our online collection of career case studies of UCL doctoral graduates and doctoral graduates of other institutions. Research students also have access to our online databases of internships, and part time and full time job opportunities from employers targeting UCL students, including opportunities where research skills and experience may be essential or desirable.

Ana Sofia Garcia | Biochemical Engineering

Click here to book an appointment with a career consultant >>

Click here to book an internship opportunity with a career consultant >>
SECTION 4: COMMUNITY AND CAMPUS

Emilie Hayter | Institute of Archaeology
Researcher Communities, Networks and Collaboration

As a researcher, you will be a member of a number of communities beyond your supervisory team or immediate working environment: a research group, a department, a seminar group or journal club, a professional society perhaps (many of which are headquartered or hold meetings in London), and international communities. Researcher Communities and Networks are in essence groups of people that interact with each other. They can involve a rich menu of support, advice, events, projects, collaboration, outputs and publications – and are constituted and operate in many different ways both face-to-face and/or online.

Conferences, meetings, fairs, journals and books are still central to the dissemination of research results and for engaging with others, but the development of information technology and social media is changing the way research is conducted and communicated, and the way we interact with others. Established scholarly networks and societies have created virtual communities for their members, and new academic virtual communities are now important vehicles for researchers to interact. Engagement with research and with researchers is increasingly through educational and research email discussion lists (for example JISCMail), and academic oriented social networks (like Mendeley, Research Gate, Academia.edu) but also blogs, vlogs, tweets etc. You will need to explore what tools are appropriate for your aims and in what way you might use even familiar tools such as Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn or Twitter in a research context.

We’ve gathered together on these pages only a small selection of what is available to you at UCL as a starting point: your colleagues and peers are the best way to find out more, particularly of what is available in your department and in your field. Get in contact with the existing areas that interest you, explore your own discipline and other cognate ones. If there is no group or network in an area that interests you, then think about setting it up yourself. This is part of you forging the future of your discipline and your career, and of finding the right support for you and your work.

There may even be some funding available from the Doctoral School, OVPR, your Department/s, or the Students’ Union to help you do so.

UCL Research Domains and their Early Career Networks

UCL’s Research Domains are large, cross-disciplinary research communities (staff and students) that span UCL and our partner organisations, fostering interaction and collaboration. Each Research Domain includes a number of more specific research Themes which are of strategic importance to the Domain and UCL.

In general, the Domains and Themes aim to bring together researchers from across UCL to share experience and perspectives, increase the impact of their research and explore the exciting range of opportunities available within and beyond UCL. They provide much vital information on events and seminars, and key mailing lists and newsletters to get plugged into the latest developments.

The current UCL Research Domains are listed below, and additional Domains will be coming in the future:

- Neuroscience
- Personalised Medicine
- Populations & Lifelong Health
- Cancer
- Environment
- eResearch
- Collaborative Social Science
- Food, Metabolism and Society
- Space
- Microbiology

For more information, please see: www.ucl.ac.uk/research/domains

UCL Academic Research Networks, Societies and Groups

There is a wide range of academic and research networks, from the small to the large at UCL, reflecting the breadth of our research. A small number are listed below, the majority student-led, to give you a flavour of some of the exciting groups out there.

Your department, Supervisor and fellow students will have detailed information on what is organised within your department/ faculty and particularly useful in your field.

There is a wide range of academic and research networks and societies at UCL, reflecting the breadth of our research community. The majority are student-led. See a list of our networks and societies on the Doc School pages: www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/societies/

UCL Public Engagement Networks

A combination of regular meetings and monthly newsletter, the UCL Public Engagement Network brings together UCL staff and students interested in public engagement whether they are an old hand of a complete novice: www.ucl.ac.uk/culture/projects/public-engagement-network

Organised by the UCL Public Engagement Unit, Volunteering Services and one or more partner organisations, Creating Connections is a regular networking event that brings UCL staff and postgrads together with social enterprises, residents’ groups, charities and other community organisations. The aim is very simple – to explore ways of working together with mutual benefit: www.ucl.ac.uk/culture/projects/creating-connection
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

UCL is proud to celebrate the cultural diversity of its community. Key to UCL’s success are the talents and experiences of our diverse population.

UCL is considered a sector-leader on equality, diversity and inclusion, as evidenced by the number of external charter marks we have gained such as the Race Equality Charter (bronze), Athena SWAN (silver), and the Stonewall Workplace Index (Top 100, 2018). We are proud to celebrate the diversity of our community. Key to UCL’s success are the talents, experiences and contributions of our diverse population.

Six percent of UCL postgraduate students identify as disabled and those studying at the University are drawn from 150 Countries, representing a rich and widespread international heritage. The University Council has agreed to take positive action measures, where appropriate, to redress historic patterns of discrimination in tackling barriers experienced by women, the LGBTQ+, disabled, Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities.

We take great efforts to ensure that UCL provides a welcoming environment for all who study, work and socialise here. We are putting in place an ambitious new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion plan in time for the academic year 2020-21.

Key objectives are focused on ensuring all students feel a sense of belonging at UCL, that we develop inclusive curricula that better speaks to the diversity of our community and that our academic and research staff profile is more representative of the diverse profile of our student body.

UCL has a number of staff and student networks, both face-to-face and virtual, offering opportunities for those with shared identities to socialise and work collaboratively. For more information about these please visit www.ucl.ac.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion/equality-diversity-inclusion-committees-and-networks

RaceMatters@UCL is a forum on race equality at UCL.

GEN is a UCL virtual network that allows any member of our community who is interested in gender equality to find out more.

Out@UCL has developed network to give LGBTQ+ staff, students and visitors an inclusive environment.

Ander Biguri | Division of Medicine

Malica Schmidt | Chemical Engineering
Students’ Union UCL

Students’ Union UCL exists to make more happen at UCL, and they’ve been doing it for 125 years. UCL is a majority postgraduate university and the Union has more than 20,000 postgraduate members. They know that postgrad life is different and are set up to support you throughout your time here.

While everything we do at the Union is open to all students, we do understand that the needs of postgraduate students are different to other students and therefore require more specific representation, which is why we have a dedicated elected Postgraduate Students’ Officer, Jim Onyemenam, and a Faculty Representative in each faculty specifically representing the interests of research students.

Many students, particularly those focusing on research, say it can be difficult to meet their peers and feel a part of the UCL community. We work hard to bridge the gap between your academic and non-academic life. Conferences, events, sports, arts and society activities, and volunteering opportunities in London are all organised by us. We also find ways for you to share your work with your peers from a range of disciplines; look out for the 3 Minute Thesis competition. We also have a strand of activities under our Project Active programme which are specifically for postgraduate students, check these out on our website to stay active during your time at UCL.

As a Union of more than 40,000 students, we give you the power to shape the elements of the university that affect you. We believe that having your voice heard within your faculty and department is the key to improving the quality of education and research at UCL. You can have a say in the decisions that will affect your time here by becoming research student representative.

It’s not just the university you can change. The Union is for students and led by students and you can get involved with making it as good as it can possibly be. Twice a year we elect the students who will run the organisation, and you will always have the chance to stand to be one of those leaders or vote for the students you want to do the job for you. The first round is in October, so keep an eye out for it.

There’s more to the Union that we can cover here, so keep in touch with us via our fortnightly PG email (you’re automatically signed up) or any of our social media channels.

facebook.com/studentsunionucl
facebook.com/UCL.Postgrads/
Instagram.com/studentsunionucl
Twitter.com/theunionucl

Ana Margarida Neves
Cancer Institute
Representation and Feedback

Being part of UCL’s doctoral community means being engaged in a dialogue with us about your experience at UCL – letting us know what you particularly value and things that you would like to see improved. Research students have different needs to other communities of students, in some ways much closer to early career research staff.

It’s important that your voices help shape and influence the work of departments, faculties, and UCL as a whole.

There are many ways of letting us know your views, for example by speaking to your supervisory team and members of your department and faculty staff, for example your local Administrators or Departmental Graduate Tutors. There are also structured and formal ways of feeding in your views to the way UCL works and supports research students.

**Research Student Academic Representatives**

Student academic representation at UCL is conducted in partnership with our Students’ Union. Each department and faculty appoints Research Student Representatives to ensure all views across the research student community are represented.

Staff-Student Consultative Committees (SSCCs) are local meetings between students and academics where students have an opportunity to share feedback with staff, to develop solutions to students’ concerns, and to prioritise areas for improvement.

You should find out from your local administrators how your local SSCC operates and who the rep is for your area so you can feedback or volunteer to be a rep yourself!

You can find further information on Academic Student Representatives, including contact information for the Research Student Representatives in your area, more on what the reps do, and how to get involved yourself, on the Students’ Union website.

**Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)**

Every two years UCL takes part in the national Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) usually from early March until May. PRES is a national survey, co-ordinated by the national body for improving teaching and learning in Universities, Advance HE. The survey is a crucial opportunity for our research student community to tell us about their experience; it asks questions about key areas such as: supervision; resources; research skills and professional development.

The results are published on the Doctoral School’s website and discussed by the key UCL committee looking after the standards of research degree provision, Research Degrees Committee, and with the various stakeholders (for example UCL’s faculties, the UCL Student Union) to make sure we identify and implement actions. The Doctoral School uses the information gained to consider how to make improvements at UCL, and also to inform our work for the wider research student community through national bodies like Vitae, or LERU (the League of European Research Universities).

The next PRES will be held in 2021. You will be emailed a link directly so that you can participate and let us know what you think.

Please see the Doctoral School survey pages for the results and action plans.

Matthew Crowe | Mathematics

Click here for the Students’ Union website >>
Competitions

The Doctoral School runs competitions each year, offering you the chance to share your research and win some generous prizes. These include: the Research Images as Art/Art Images as Research Competition, the Research Poster Competition and the UCL Three Minute Thesis.

Research Images As Art/Art Images As Research Competition

The Doctoral School runs a competition for researchers and artists, both students and staff, who are invited to submit images associated with their work, which have an aesthetic appeal. Selected images are used to illustrate this handbook and other UCL publications.

An exhibition of the images is held centrally in College and assessed by a panel of judges. Pictures are selected by the panel on the basis of their aesthetic appeal, the nature of their subject matter and technical quality. The panel is particularly interested in images that effect a transformation in the eye of the viewer in translating or communicating the subject that they portray and which have the potential to alter the way that we view the world. Prizes are awarded for the best images and all the images are presented in an online gallery on the Doctoral School website.

A selection of images from the 2019/20 Research Images as Art competition is featured throughout this handbook.

Research Poster Competition

The Doctoral School organises an annual Research Poster Competition for all UCL research students.

Students are invited to display their posters centrally in College and these are then judged by a panel of UCL academics. Prizes are awarded for the best posters.

The posters exhibited should convey the essence of a student’s research to an audience of both colleagues and non-specialists.

The exhibition attracts interest among UCL staff, students and visitors. The competing students have in the past found it a valuable way of focusing on their own research, and learning about the research of others.

UCL Three Minute Thesis (3MT®)

Your PhD thesis will be tens of thousands of words long when you submit it. Could you explain it in three minutes?

The Doctoral School and Students’ Union UCL run a Three Minute Thesis competition at UCL in the summer term, the winner of which is eligible to enter the national semi-finals, and hopefully the finals.

Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) celebrates the exciting research conducted by research students. Originally developed by the University of Queensland, the competition focuses on students’ academic, presentation, and research communication skills. The competition supports students’ capacity to effectively explain their research in three minutes, in a language appropriate to a non-specialist audience – it is also great fun.

Further information on all our events and competitions can be found on our website at: www.ucl.ac.uk/docschool/events

Malgorzata Dawidek
Slade School of Fine Art
Spaces for Graduates

All UCL learning spaces are available to graduate students. The following study spaces are available for use by graduate students only.

Student Centre (A)
The new Student Centre is designed from the ground up with student needs and the student experience at its heart. The Student Enquiries Centre is located on floor 1 and has 1,000 new study spaces, radically improving the way you move and learn on campus.

Science Library Postgraduate Cluster Room (B)
A PC cluster exclusively for graduates situated in the Science Library (DMS Watson Building) alongside other clusters.

Research Grid in the Science Library (C)
This study suite located on the 4th floor of the Science Library provides a contemporary 74-seat space to study either collaboratively or in private.

Graduate Hub
A space for graduates to meet on central campus, comprising a seminar room for group discussion and presentations, a breakout space with integrated kitchenette, 9 individual study carrels and a common room with Desktop PCs and comfortable seating. The room is located in the South Wing basement opposite the Print Room Café.

Senate House Hub
The Hub includes 160 quiet and social spaces, PCs, Print@UCL and four student bookable meeting/training rooms.

Please see our Library Study Spaces page for full information on availability of these spaces throughout the coronavirus emergency. You can also book study spaces here: www.ucl.ac.uk/library/libraries-and-study-spaces
We need your help to say **Full Stop** to bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct.

Help to create a supportive and inclusive environment at UCL.

[report-support.ucl.ac.uk](http://report-support.ucl.ac.uk)