When Winterwood Tutors approached SMILE in 2011, they were expanding at an alarmingly fast rate. While this was brilliant for the company, it presented the young directors with a host of problems to tackle that they had no experience with previously.

Winterwood Tutors are a high-end private tuition agency based in north London providing tutors of exceptional quality (all are educated to a postgraduate level and have significant teaching experience) run by Co-directors Dr Thomas Parkinson and Jade Everingham. To help them manage their rapid growth, Tom and Jade turned to UCL Advances and SMILE.

Recognising that they needed guidance in running their expanding business, SMILE was able to introduce Winterwood Tutors to Jolyon White, a life sciences professional with experience as both a general manager of a large corporation and with SMEs.

The mentor advised Winterwood Tutors on management technique, how to structure the business, how to delegate, project executive authority and how to increase the remit of the business.

“His advice has been of huge benefit to the business, and we have often turned to him at times of crisis, or when we needed an experienced second opinion.”

When the business was offered a partnership by one of their Russian clients in the autumn of 2012, it seemed like a daunting process. Unsure of how to proceed, Tom and Jade were able to call upon the knowledge of their mentor, who helped them make financial assessments, weigh up the pros and cons of the offer, and instil confidence in the directors to strengthen their position of negotiation.

“This sort of advice [was] of immense benefit to [us], and really helped build confidence, making the transition from an inceptive business to a mature, stable, profit-making entity.”

Tom Parkinson, Director, Winterwood Tutors

Since collaborating with a SMILE mentor, new positions have opened with the company and turnover has increased by nearly 400% in 12 months. Winterwood Tutors is still growing incredibly fast, but with the support and backing of SMILE and UCL Advances, the directors are better equipped to handle the challenges that this presents.
About UCL

UCL (University College London) was established in 1826 and is ranked as one of the world’s top-ten universities. The university is a modern, outward-looking institution, with more than 4,000 academic and research staff committed to engaging with the major issues of our times. It has a global reach, with 34% of its students coming from outside the UK, from almost 140 countries.

About UCL Advances

The centre for entrepreneurship at UCL, UCL Advances, offers training, networking and business support for staff, students and external entrepreneurs to encourage and enable new enterprises to get going. Unique in the UK Higher Education sector, its primary role is to promote a culture of entrepreneurship on campus and engagement with entrepreneurs and small businesses beyond UCL’s boundaries, and currently delivers over 30 activity programmes.

UCL Advances is affiliated with UCL Enterprise, which provides UCL’s structures for engaging with business for commercial and societal benefit.

www.ucl.ac.uk/advances
www.ucl.ac.uk/enterprise

About Business Support

UCL Advances provides direct business support for internal and external organisations through a variety of programmes and activities such as 1–1 advice, problem solving through student consultancy, student internships, mentoring and others.

• We help London-based businesses grow and develop by analysing business needs and connecting them to relevant interventions such as industry mentors;
• Through pairing teams of UCL and LBS students with businesses we deliver short-term consultancy projects addressing specific organisation needs;
• We broker relationships and fund exchanges between new and aspiring entrepreneurs with experienced entrepreneurs in another member state of the European Union;
• Individual angel investors connected to UCL provide seed investment to SMEs engaged with UCL Advances programmes; and
• We offer fully funded SME Internships where UCL students spend eight weeks in a London SME working alongside the director(s) to deliver real results and lasting impact in the host organization whilst learning about enterprise.

www.ucl.ac.uk/advances/business/support