Finding out what you love to do
Not long after Ejiro Okorodudu arrived at UCL (MSc Neuroscience, 2012), she discovered that she had a passion for social entrepreneurship. She got involved with UCL’s Student Volunteering Services unit and created a project that took university students into schools to motivate and inspire sixth formers.

The project was based on her own experience at school – Ejiro wanted young people to have access to much better support than she did. Getting them to think about their options is a way to make a big impact on them at this crucial stage.

“It was all about getting young people to think big,” she says. “I wanted to get the idea of failure out of their minds.”

Passion finds a way
After going back to her old secondary school, The John Roan School in Greenwich, to deliver a series of inspiring talks to students, Ejiro’s idea went from a project to a business within a year. She met with the UCL Advances Student Business Advisors to explore her options. By testing out her ideas to find out what would be the most viable social enterprise, JumpStart a career guidance service evolved.

A business that provides young people with real advice from real people for real life, JumpStart reflects Ejiro’s passion for helping others to make the most of their opportunities. As Lillian Shapiro, Student Business Advisor, says,

“Ejiro is a bright, professional, joyful individual whom I have had the pleasure of advising since 2012. Ejiro’s passion for her business is infectious and she enthuses and motivates everyone around her.”

Jumpstarting her business
To give JumpStart a solid foundation, Ejiro took some further UCL Advances courses. These included the Social Entrepreneurship Workshop, part of the UCL Advances CPD Courses; How to Start a Business with guest speaker Fleur Emery, who became a mentor to Ejiro, and the London Entrepreneurs’ Challenge, which introduced Ejiro to other student entrepreneurs.

Ejiro has now turned her project into a full-scale business. The John Roan School is the incubator for the project and she hopes to scale it up following this exciting first iteration. She’s already made a difference for John Roan sixth-formers by helping students with their CVs and personal development and by bringing in guest speakers.

In 2014 Ejiro stepped up her involvement in entrepreneurship by becoming a Student Entrepreneurship Ambassador for UCL Advances. “Initially, I had a choice to do a PhD or to do medicine,” she says, “but entrepreneurship has made me see I can have a great time doing so many other things.”
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.

www.ucl.ac.uk

UCL Advances
UCL Advances, UCL’s centre for entrepreneurship and business interaction, helps anyone who wants to learn about, start or grow a business. It’s primary role is to promote a culture of entrepreneurship on campus and engagement with entrepreneurs and small businesses beyond UCL’s boundaries. It works to support start-ups and small businesses across London by helping them to access the technical and business expertise of UCL’s staff and students through a series of programmes to help support ambitious young companies.

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 Student Engagement
UCL Advances helps students learn about business, start their own enterprise or help them grow an existing venture by offering a complete programme of support which includes access to training, mentoring, one-to-one business advice from our in-house business advisors access to loans and the use of our Hatchery space.

One of the initiatives developed to help students learn about business is the London Entrepreneurs’ Challenge, a workshop programme and business plan competition open to all members of UCL, SOAS, Royal Veterinary College, Birkbeck, the School of Pharmacy, and the London Business School that aims to show participants the process of starting a business by helping them do it for themselves. The competition is part of a programme of events designed to enhance UCL’s reputation for entrepreneurship and build deeper relationships between UCL and partner institutions.

www.ucl.ac.uk/advances/e-challenge