

## Faculty Doctoral Strategies

# Faculty of Arts & Humanities Faculty of Social & Historical Sciences Joint Faculty – Executive Summary

The faculty of Arts and Humanities and that of Social & Historical Sciences together embrace an area of knowledge where science meets the arts and humanities. The joint faculty forms a renowned centre of excellence where research of world-leading quality feeds directly into programmes of study within traditional discipline-based departments as well as those with an area focus (e.g. the Institute of the Americas and the School of Slavonic and East European Studies) or a consciously cross-disciplinary approach (e.g. the Centre for Multidisciplinary & Intercultural Inquiry). The close practical collaboration between the two faculties facilitates agile and effective administration and leadership for staff, promoting the enhancement of the research student experience. Our Joint Faculty Research Students Committee provides a forum for the sharing of good practice and organisation of training for staff (academic and administrative) and for the active participation of research students in shaping the future of doctoral education.

The joint faculty contributes to meeting the Global Challenges that UCL has identified as priorities by enabling the cross-disciplinary interaction that renders our subject-specific expertise greater than the sum of its parts. Our various departments play a major role in UCL's growing network of cross-disciplinary research centres, which bring together varied disciplinary expertise and different theoretical perspectives. Major interdisciplinary projects are run by the UCL China Centre for Health & Humanity, the Centre for Transnational History, the Institute of the Americas and the UCL Centre for Medieval & Renaissance Studies, offering excellent opportunities for innovative and interdisciplinary research training for students.

Based in the heart of London, our students benefit from the immediate accessibility of the internationally significant resources of the British Library and British Museum and the rich collections of the nearby University of London School of Advanced Study, including the Institutes of Classical Studies, of Historical Research, of Philosophy, and the Warburg Institute. Individual departments benefit from the London advantage through strong relationships and special agreements with a range of industry-specific contacts, businesses, governmental and non-governmental organisations, including the House of Lords, Marie Curie Cancer Care, the Wellcome Trust, the Imperial War Museum, the National Gallery, and the Tate, the Institute of Fiscal Studies, along with a number of embassies representing countries from Colombia to China and across the Middle East.

In addition to the regular research seminars organised within our departments and by members of our departments for the institutes of the University of London's School of Advanced Study (IAS), the joint faculty has a direct role in fostering the research culture through sponsorship of the UCL Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences, with its series of lectures, seminars, workshops, conferences, and public engagement events, and also funds such initiatives proposed by postgraduate students themselves through the Octagon programme. At the joint faculty level, the UCL IAS 'Common Ground' provides an additional enhancement to the work space facilities available to our research student community and the Postdoctoral fellowship scheme established by the IAS offers opportunities for the vital next step after the PhD.

Our two faculties are also part of three major Research Council UK-funded Doctoral Training Centres/Partnerships, all of which involve staff at departmental level in cross-disciplinary and cross-Faculty working to deliver the training and supervisory needs of these cohorts of research students. The joint faculty hosts both the London Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) Doctoral Training Partnership, which offers doctoral training in combination with five other London universities (Birkbeck, Brunel, King's, Queen Mary, Royal Holloway) and three London-based research institutes (Institute of Zoology, Kew, Natural History Museum), and the UCL Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Training Centre, and is also a partner in the Arts & Humanities Research Council-funded London Arts and Humanities Partnership (LAHP), a Doctoral Training Partnership comprising UCL, King's, and the University of London's School of Advanced Study. In addition, the Yale-UCL Collaborative student exchange programme provides our PhD students with the opportunity to study at Yale University for a defined period of research.

Our joint faculty doctoral education strategy and plan confirms our commitment to:

- The facilitation of opportunities for academic leadership
- Ensuring appropriate training and career development, including teaching experience
- The development of practice-based routes for PhD, in response to increased student demand.

## Distinctive Features / Best Practice

### Leadership, interdisciplinarity, and network building

The Octagon Programme (formerly Joint Faculty Institute for Graduate Studies) funded by the joint faculty provides sponsorship for research and public engagement events that may be proposed by academic staff and/or postgraduate students, including our termly themed Friday Fora days, in which the emphasis is on interdepartmental and interdisciplinary co-operation. These give research students the opportunity to take the initiative in the planning and running of events related to their research interests and build networks with students and staff with shared interest beyond their own departments.

### Teaching experience opportunities

We are committed to producing research students who are equipped with a wide range of transferable skills, including teaching experience. In departments with little or no undergraduate student body, accessing the opportunities can prove problematic. Conversely departments with no research student programme have teaching needs for which there is no obvious pool of graduate students to meet. Accordingly the joint faculty hosts a Postgraduate Teaching Assistant vacancy exchange, which is designed to match departments seeking PGTAs with research students across the two faculties seeking teaching experience.

### Public Engagement

The annual UCL Festival of Culture, sponsored by the joint faculty, is a public showcase for research from across the arts, humanities, and social sciences, a tangible realisation of the UCL 2034 principle to be an accessible, publicly-engaged organisation. Academic staff and research students devise and run free events and activities (talks, panel discussions, film screenings, walking tours, and exhibitions) designed to draw members of the public on to our Bloomsbury site. In 2016 the five-day festival, comprising more than 70 events, attracted more than 1600 visitors.