

Faculty Doctoral Strategies

The Bartlett – Executive Summary

Doctoral students join us from all around the world, bringing their knowledge and experience from a diversity of disciplines, to contribute to the melting pot that is the Bartlett. If the Bartlett is a crucible for innovation, then doctoral students are at the heart of the action: contributing significantly in terms of prestige, tangible research outputs, and collaborative added value to the research culture. Doctoral students contribute to ground-breaking research projects, and the production of publications – from co-authorship of project reports to authorship of peer-reviewed journal papers. Doctoral students play a pivotal role bridging between the staff community and the student community at the heart of the university.

The Bartlett is the top performing faculty in the UK for research power. The Bartlett has also achieved the distinction of being ranked second in the world in a recent global league table for Architecture and the Built Environment. Our aim is to aspire to a corresponding world-class level of attainment in terms of doctoral research.

There are over 300 doctoral students across the Bartlett (338 out of 5770 at UCL, or 6%); in the most recent REF return, this was entered as a total of 221.5 FTE PhD students enrolled across the faculty.

The Bartlett – as the Faculty of the Built Environment – has three distinctive characteristics that have a direct bearing upon doctoral research in this part of UCL. First, the faculty is particularly diverse in terms of the kinds of research undertaken here. This makes for an exciting intellectual culture – where creative design culture and a science culture could ‘interact in imaginative and scientific innovation, while preserving the excellence and integrity of each’. This also brings its own challenges in terms of cohesion, critical mass in particular areas, and the need to cross disciplinary boundaries.

A second feature is that the institutional structure of the Bartlett generally does not fall into neat disciplinary packages. While there is generally an intellectual continuum of knowledge, the faculty is necessarily divided into separate institutional sub-components (schools, units, centres). This poses challenges for cohesion, critical mass, networking and communication. This becomes not so much a matter of bridging between disciplines, as enabling core disciplinary knowledge to flow unhindered across institutional boundaries.

A third feature is to do with the profile of doctoral researcher at the Bartlett. Many ‘PGR students’ are already mature professionals in their own right, prior to commencing on their doctorate, and of course, in some cases continuing to practice while researching on a part-time basis. Such doctoral researchers may be already established in their fields professionally (if not academically) – this offers opportunities for in relation to practice, enterprise and impact; and doctoral students’ potential contribution to teaching – and collaborative research and publication in collaboration with staff – while engaged in their doctorate.

Our doctoral strategy addresses the challenges and opportunities arising from these distinctive characteristics of doctoral research at the Bartlett. We consider these under six strategic issues: space; time; funding; supervision and training; networking and achievement; in a rolling programme of procedures and initiatives updated on an annual basis.

Distinctive Features / Best Practice

Executive Sub-Committee

We have an Executive Sub-committee of our Faculty Research Degrees Committee, with representation of Departmental Graduate Tutors all across the faculty, whereby we meet every 3-4 weeks to discuss common cross-departmental issues and enact decisions relating to regulations, admissions, upgrades, appointments of supervisors and examiners, training, funding and other strategic and administrative matters.

Support & Monitoring of PhD Students through Upgrade and Completion

We have put in place a co-ordinated system for tracking and approving students for 'upgrade' within the expected timescales; tightened criteria for entering completing research student status; and introduced systematic monitoring and review of students whose research extends beyond four years to ensure continued positive endorsement of academic sufficiency or take remedial action, to encourage timely completion. We have introduced training for both research students and supervisors, for supporting the new system.

Bartlett Doctoral Networks

The Bartlett has funded ten doctoral networks which encourage research students and staff to network across common themes cutting across all parts of the faculty and linking to other faculties and universities. Those most active recently include: Bartlett Arts Club; Drawing Research; Energy Social Sciences; Film+Place+Architecture; Future Cities; Transport and Social Justice: www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett-doctoral-networks Promotion of events is supported via our Twitter account [@TheBartlettPhD](https://twitter.com/TheBartlettPhD).

Annual doctoral showcase events

In recent years we have had a Bartlett PhD Conference (with videos online); a Doctoral Network showcase (featuring presentations across the doctoral networks) and this year, a faculty Three Minute Thesis competition, with doctoral presentations recorded for online dissemination. Additionally, the Bartlett School of Architecture has an annual doctoral research conference.