

## Faculty Doctoral Strategies

# Faculty of Medical Sciences – Executive Summary

The Faculty brings together the UCL Medical School, Division of Infection and Immunity, Division of Medicine, Division of Surgery and Interventional Science, the Eastman Dental Institute and the Cancer Institute. Together they form an internationally-recognised powerhouse of medical science research and education.

Presently the Faculty has 350 full and part-time postgraduate research students, including 100 students from overseas. Research activity in the Faculty was supported by £86M of grant funding in 2017, with £40M coming from medical research charities. The [results of REF2014](#) shows that UCL enjoys the greatest amount of “world leading” research in Medicine and Biological sciences which reflects the research strength of the Faculty. All departments in the Faculty received the following score or higher in the REF: 80% 4\* (‘world-leading’) or 3\* (‘internationally excellent’).

## Our Vision for Doctoral Education

As the healthcare needs of today’s global population change – so to do the ways in which scientists and clinicians seek to tackle human disease and injury.

We are at the forefront of medical discovery and innovation – the design, development and clinical application of novel biomedical technologies and therapeutic interventions is at the heart of our research mission and our postgraduate research students are integral to this.

The six departments that make up the faculty each have a programme of innovative research reflecting our expertise in clinical and translational science. Recent examples of our work include: a new non-invasive test to detect bladder cancer, potentially eliminating the need for uncomfortable cystoscopies; the use of MRI scans to detect HIV in the brain; and the development of a pioneering technique using high-grade titanium stents and keyhole surgery to reverse deep vein thrombosis (DVT). These are some of the many reasons UCL is [Number 1 for Medicine in London](#) and [Number 1 in Europe for Medical Technology](#).

Our postgraduate research students work alongside leading clinicians and scientists at some of London’s major hospitals – University College Hospital, Royal Free Hospital, Eastman Dental Hospital, Whittington Hospital, Great Ormond Street Hospital and the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital. Each of our partner hospitals provide an unrivalled resource in terms of patient cohorts and specialist facilities. Our position at the heart of London also allows us to work closely with a number of world-leading academic centres and research institutes, such as the Francis Crick Institute, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the London Centre for Nanotechnology.

Innovative and entrepreneurial thinking is widely embedded and encouraged within the Faculty – our extensive connections with the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries offer postgraduate research students ample opportunities to access the knowledge and talent from our network of industrial partners.

We strive to provide the highest quality training and research environment for all our postgraduate research students, with supervision provided by researchers who are global leaders in their fields. Our well-funded research laboratories, with access to state-of-the-art facilities, provide our students with the best chance of successfully completing their degree in a timely fashion and to the highest academic standards.

## Distinctive features of doctoral training within the Faculty

### Thesis monitoring

Timely progress to completion of a research degree is vital. From 2018/2019 the Faculty plans to adopt a "Thesis Committee Model" which has been successfully implemented in one of the Divisions. The Thesis Committee is comprised of a group of expert academics, independent from the student's project supervisor, who meet with the student regularly to help ensure the research work and thesis development is on track and that the student receives appropriate training, develops transferable skills and acquires a broad understanding of their research.

### Mentoring and cohort building

To provide additional support for students in the early phase of their degree, a peer mentor scheme is being developed whereby new students will be paired with a more senior student. The aim is to help students integrate, increase networking opportunities and may be of particular benefit to international students. Students who act as mentors will receive appropriate training and recognition.

We recognised that building a cohort identity and a sense of belonging amongst our postgraduate research students is important. A program of social and academic events, some of which will be student led, is being developed to increase peer support, networking and learning opportunities for students across the Faculty.

### Skills training

In addition to the wide range of skills courses available to students via the UCL Doctoral School, students in the Faculty will have the opportunity to take modules from our MSc courses where this will help to develop skills and knowledge required for their research. The Faculty offers 50 postgraduate courses in a diverse range of subjects.

### Teaching opportunities

Many students are interested in gaining suitable training and experience in relation to teaching during their research degrees. This may be in the form of traditional teaching or supervision in the laboratory in respect to BSc and MSc students. The Faculty is developing a central on-line portal through which teaching opportunities will be advertised and students will be able to apply.