

Faculty Doctoral Strategies

Faculty of Population Health Scs – Executive Summary

UCL's Faculty of Population Health Sciences is one of the largest academic groupings of its kind in the world. Alongside academic and research staff in seven institutes, our 400 research students play an integral part in projects focused on all areas relevant to population and lifelong health, including:

- the biological sciences and genetics
- sexual and reproductive health
- child health and rare diseases
- infectious disease epidemiology
- mental health and ageing
- global health
- risk factors in disease, such as individual behaviours and the social, political and economic determinants of health.

We prioritise capacity building in early stage researchers, providing clinical and health research skills training across the core disciplines in the basic, clinical and applied health sciences. In addition, we are explicitly contributing to new and emerging disciplines in population health sciences such as health informatics, genetic epidemiology and implementation science.

The Faculty is one of the two leading Population Health schools in the UK and top among the Russell Group universities as demonstrated by the Research Excellence Framework 2014 results. We are also the UK leader in terms of research income and this is reflected in the excellent funding support of our PhD students from RCUK, Wellcome Trust, British Heart Foundation, and other sources. The Faculty also prides itself in having particularly strong links to enterprise in its research, with many research students benefiting from joint funding by industry.

We deliver global impact through a network of innovative international activities, collaborations and partnerships. We are also particularly attuned to addressing global challenges through our disciplinary excellence and distinctive cross- disciplinary approach – made possible by the multi-faculty nature of UCL. For example, health informatics has close relationships with engineering; epidemiology and population health works strongly with geography; and we play an active role in UCL's Grand Challenges, especially the Grand Challenge of Global Health, which maintains a diversity of links across UCL's faculties. Our students also have unparalleled opportunities to engage with partners outside UCL, including at Great Ormond Street Hospital, through major NIHR networks in the fields of primary care and public health, and via institutions such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

Our outlook therefore engenders a very outward looking, global stance in our students. They are encouraged to be publicly-engaged, excellent communicators and be fully aware of the impact of their own research. These students have unparalleled opportunities to establish themselves in the diverse disciplines of population health sciences and we pride ourselves in generating the future leaders in this arena.

Distinctive Features / Best Practice

Expanding the boundaries of population health

The UCL Faculty of Population Health Sciences encompasses researchers working at the level of molecules and genes to those analysing the structures of entire societies. It is at the cutting edge of advances in global health, cardiovascular sciences, children's and women's health, epidemiology, clinical trials and health informatics, and uses UCL's power as a multi-faculty university to bring disciplines together to expand the boundaries of population health.

Peer-level Mentoring for first year students

The Faculty is the first to have developed a Peer-Level Mentor Scheme for research students in UCL. Now in its fourth year, we have mentors taken from our later-years research student cohort across the faculty. The mentors provide support and advice for incoming research students helping with settling in and integration within UCL and complementing the help provided by Tutors. The mentoring scheme generates better networking of students within Institutes and can be a particular help to international students.

Skills training and personal development

Our largest Institute, the ICH, has a history of driving forward best practice in skills development and was central in UCL's development of its skills programme. In the most recent national student survey, the Faculty therefore scored particularly well in our provision of skills training and opportunities for personal development in its students. We strongly encourage engagement with the student eLog and the central skills training programme, but we also provide our own training in specific areas of strength, in particular statistics where we are the strongest within UCL.