

Complaints about COVID-19

In line with guidance from the UK Government's Department for Education (<https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/04/09/university-students-covid19-faq/>), **students will not receive any tuition fee refunds as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, as long as they are receiving adequate online learning and support.**

For details of the steps taken by UCL, please see the “Background” section below. In addition, individual departments are taking further steps to ensure that adequate online learning and support is provided for specific programmes, in order to ensure that the student experience during term 3 is as similar as possible to what it would have otherwise been.

WHAT IF I AM UNHAPPY WITH THE LEVEL OF ONLINE LEARNING AND SUPPORT OFFERED?

UCL is **unable to give consideration to prospective claims** for compensation. This in no way restricts or limits your right to raise **any other genuine concerns** with UCL through the Student Complaints Procedure. Rather, it reflects the fact that we can only consider complaints about what has happened, not about what you expect is going to happen. Therefore, complaints relating to the impact of coronavirus cannot be formally considered until UCL in general and the relevant department in particular have had an opportunity to put in place measures to address the situation.

Once the impact of all the steps taken by UCL and the department are known, if you feel that you are not receiving adequate online learning and support you can submit a complaint via the Student Complaints procedure (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/chapters/chapter-6-student-casework-framework/section-10-ucl-student-complaints-procedure>).

In submitting a complaint, you must provide details which demonstrate how and why you think UCL's response and actions have not been sufficient or reasonable. Please pay particular attention to how and why the student experience was substantially different to what it would have been had the coronavirus outbreak not occurred. A simple statement that you are dissatisfied with UCL's response (without details) and/or a statement that there should be a refund of tuition fees (without explanation) will not qualify as a formal complaint.

One of the steps taken by UCL to maintain reliable assessment is the introduction of a **capstone assessment** for all first year undergraduates. The introduction of the capstone assessment is an academic decision which the Office for Students (<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/>) – the independent regulator of higher education in England – has formally recognised as “**effective practice**” in maintaining teaching quality and reliable assessment. Therefore, any complaint which simply questions or disagrees with the use of the capstone assessment in principle is likely to be classified as questioning academic judgment and viewed as ineligible.

Finally, please bear in mind that, where appropriate, you may at any stage request help with resolving your complaint informally. This can be done by contacting the UCL Student Mediator (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/student-mediator/>). The Student Mediator can also advise on the submission of formal complaints where mediation is not an option.

BACKGROUND – STEPS TAKEN BY UCL

UCL has provided regular updates to all students on steps being taken in relation to coronavirus (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2020/mar/advice-staff-and-students-who-may-have-concerns-about-outbreak-coronavirus>) and provided initial details of planned changes to teaching and assessment in term 2 and term 3 (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2020/mar/changes-teaching-and-assessments-term-2-and-term-3>) on 13 March 2020.

All students have been advised to check UCL email accounts and Moodle regularly as well as visiting UCL's main coronavirus page (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2020/mar/advice-staff-and-students-who-may-have-concerns-about-outbreak-coronavirus>). Students have been informed that they will be contacted by their departments through their usual communication channels to outline new arrangements as soon as they have been confirmed.

Further details on teaching and assessments during the coronavirus outbreak have been provided (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/teaching-and-assessments-during-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>), including a statement on why UCL is continuing to conduct assessments in summer 2020, confirmation that UCL has adopted a “no detriment” principle, details of amendments to the extenuating circumstances procedure, and an explanation of how the summer 2020 alternative assessments will operate.