# Building a career as a Post Doc

Welcome to UCL! As a new Post Doc, your first priority is of course to get your experiments up and running. But in the longer term you will want to establish a career – possibly as a research fellow, an academic or as a teaching fellow. This guide is meant to give you a sense of the sorts of things which will help you build your case for any of these paths. The activities listed below are tailored for UCL’s criteria (more complete information is in the UCL Career Framework), but similar things will be applicable for any university.

Note that at UCL it is currently NOT possible to get promoted to grade 8 as a post doc solely through research activity. As a Post Doc you are expected to do excellent research and publish high quality papers, so these don’t add ‘extra’ to your case. In order to build a case for promotion, you need to think strategically about how and where you can contribute to the department or university (through institutional citizenship), through teaching (or education), and/or through reaching out to non-academics, including the public and industry (through enterprise and external engagement).

Of course research is critical – and we expect that will take almost all of your time – but it is also important to keep one strategic eye on your future career, and choose additional work carefully so that (ideally) it complements your research AND helps improve your CV for promotions or appointment as a lecturer.

# Promotion to Grade 8

This is a rough guide for how to meet the criteria for promotion to a new grade according to UCL’s Framework. This version is adapted for Grade 8. You will need to meet a subset of the criteria in each domain. It is helpful to the panels evaluating your application if you clearly indicate which criteria you are meeting for each domain, and what achievements you are linking to each.

(i) a Mixed academic portfolio, by demonstrating an ability to meet the **threshold** education and **threshold** research criteria at the next level as well as:

* **Several (>2)** of the core research AND core education criteria at the next level; and
* **Some** **(>1)** criteria at the next level in at least one of the other two domains (enterprise and external engagement or institutional citizenship) at the next level.

or

(ii) an Education-led academic portfolio, by demonstrating an ability to meet:

* at least the **threshold** education and **threshold** research criteria at the next level; and
* **most (out of 7)** of the core education criteria at the next level; and
* **some (>1)** of the specialist education criteria at the next level; and
* **some (>1)** criteria in at least one of the other two domains (enterprise and external engagement or institutional citizenship) at the next level.

or

(iii) a Research-led academic portfolio, by demonstrating an ability to meet:

* at least the **threshold** research and **threshold** education criteria at the next level; and
* **most (out of 7)** of the core research criteria at the next level; and
* **some (>1)** of the specialist research criteria at the next level; and
* **some (>1)** criteria in at least one of the other two domains (enterprise and external engagement or institutional citizenship) at the next level.

# Process

To go to Grade 8 one uses the Junior Promotions process. In Biosciences, this means an email goes out in Jan/Feb each year notifying everyone the process is about to kick off, and providing forms with templates for applications. Potential applicants (essentially everyone at grade 7) are encouraged to look at the criteria against their CVs and consider what they could do to fill out a case for promotion. The department aims to have 2-3 individuals who are experienced in Grade 8 applications, who will meet with anyone interested in applying to look for activities that meet different criteria. Completed applications are submitted to NPPeX where they are buffed and polished, and feedback given to applicant whether or not the case is ready to go to the division, and why. Successful cases are evaluated by the division and, if deemed ready, forwarded to the faculty, where a final choice is made (to be confirmed).

# Strategy

We strongly encourage all new members of UCL to have a look at the criteria for promotion from the UCL framework, and copied on the next few pages, and bear them in mind as they go. The criteria for Grade 8 are the same for PDRAs and Lecturers, meaning that a researcher maintaining a balanced contribution across criteria is much more likely to be able to successfully apply for academic roles when they are available.

# Research

Threshold:an individual on this grade will demonstrate establishing oneself as an individual with the ability and potential to produce internationally-excellent independent, original, significant and rigorous research contributions to a subject area or body of knowledge. All research outputs are available through Open Access wherever possible

## Core

## Effective supervision and mentoring of PhD students: Please note, it is possible for Post doctoral researchers to supervise PhD students if their contracts go beyond the end of the PhD, usually 3 years. If you are genuinely supervising (and not just training in techniques) it is worth taking the training at UCL training – which is currently migrating, but used to be EROS – and getting signed up officially. Unfortunately, unofficial ‘day to day’ supervision counts as much as a paper ‘in preparation’ on most CVs.

## Publish research findings and proposals: This one should be obvious!

## Disseminate research findings at conferences and similar: If your supervisor gets lots of invitations to talk, ask them if they are willing to suggest you when they cannot accept an invite.

## Participate in research-related enabling activities, for instance adding value to a cross-disciplinary network, journal reviewing: If your supervisor asks you to review a paper, as them to email the editor and have the review formally transferred to you. This gives you a track record reviewing and will get some editors familiar with you (never hurts to have grateful editors out there!)

## National and/or international engagement: This would involve attending National and international conferences, but not necessarily as an invited speaker.

## Engagement with UCL Public Policy strategic activities e.g. policy round tables, the production of Research Insights briefings; the production of policy-focused outputs; evidence of building networks or partnership with policy stakeholders; testimonials from policy professionals; adopting co-production methods: these are all pretty specialised, but if you are asked, realise that it all counts!

## Specialist

* Broader or more in-depth core research activities; or some core research activity at next grade level
* Effective supervision of student affiliates and undergraduate students
* Provide peer review, e.g. by serving on peer review committees
* Work towards an independent research reputation (or the research reputation of a collaborative team) and recognition of achievement nationally/internationally
* Significant contribution to external engagement with a view to enhancing research impact
* Enabling scientific input (and output) on research Platforms

Indicators that can be used to show criteria have been met:

* Proactive engagement with research development issues across the faculty
* Supervisor or second supervisor experience of research students
* Findings supported/invitations extended to disseminate these at conferences and similar
* Academic references from across discipline community
* Paper co-authored with collaborator with evidence of impact within the discipline
* Significant cultural, artistic or design outputs, as appropriate to the discipline
* Conference speaker invitations, including as a consequence of submitting proposals to conference panels
* Regular reviewer for research-focused journals
* Collaborator in research grant application
* Successfully co-organised event aimed at an external audience.
* Personal contribution to initiative to contribute to equalities and diversity objectives within field
* Contributions to Open Source software, large scale computing projects

# Education:

Threshold: an individual on this grade will demonstrate evidence of successful participation in education activity with students at any level, and of engagement with the implications of current research for programme delivery and design. All teaching activity is of a consistently high standard.

Note: as a researcher – funded to do research – you are most likely to go the research route, and will only need to meet the Threshold for education. This involves working with MSc, or Undergraduates (PhD students are research, not teaching). Volunteering to give a lecture, Taking on tutorials or workshops, or giving students tours of the lab, are all relatively easy ways to get a bit of teaching experience. Ask your supervisor if you can ‘adopt’ a lecture, or other teaching. Be aware that marking takes time!

For those who are more heavily involved in teaching, these are the official UCL Criteria:

## Core

## Significant contribution to curriculum planning and course design to ensure excellence and student learning, including through collaborative working as required

## Significant contribution to education-related enabling activities, for instance teaching committees, exam boards, admissions

## Proactive and effective engagement with education development and student-centred issues through relevant committees

## Effective management of teaching staff and other delegated education resources.

## Successful course delivery at taught graduate level

## Engagement with the Liberating the Curriculum initiative, demonstrating impact

## Supporting students as a personal tutor

## Specialist

* Participating in educational audits and teaching quality assurance
* Active participation in subject and/or crossdisciplinary networks in relation to education
* development
* Embedding education change and innovation, including through the use of new technologies
* Sustained engagement with the implications of research-based education leading to changes in practice
* Broader or more in-depth core education activities above; or some core education activity at next level

Indicators that can be used to show criteria are met:

* Introduction of new, or substantial revision of old modules in response to student feedback or to update content and/or delivery modes
* Accreditation by the Higher Education Academy as UCL Arena Fellow
* Winner of Provost’s Teaching Award and/or Student Choice Teaching Award
* Membership of departmental or other teaching-related committee, with evidence of personal contribution
* Adoption of Open Access dissemination processes and routes
* Recipient of grants to support innovation in teaching
* Evidence of innovative teaching practices that impact positively on diverse groups
* Evidence of impact as a personal tutor, including student testimony
* Reviewer for education-focused journal or book series
* Authorship/delivery of conference presentations, book and book chapters, peer-reviewed publications and citations focused on teaching and learning

# Enterprise and External Engagement

You only need one of these! Do a science day at a school or a Pint of Science evening – that is plenty! Alternatively, if it is your thing, reach out to a company to see about funding for small side projects. Or if you find something that will cure Alzheimer’s and all other disorders – submit your invention disclosure to UCLB – ASAP, but definitely within a year of any public disclosure (including in PhD theses).

## Core

1. Significant contribution to work that promotes the impact of UCL research, for instance sustained engagement with a collaborator outside of academia (such as industry/policy/civil society organisation)
2. Making a significant and substantial contribution to the design and delivery of short courses for professional development
3. Making a significant contribution through collaborative activity to provide specialist advice through expert contribution to clients or other beneficiaries outside academia
4. Substantial engagement with professional body; substantial engagement with public policy stakeholders; member of national committees and working groups; involvement with setting standards of practice in the UK or abroad, where applicable
5. Participation in public engagement activity in which non-academic communities are consulted on the direction or findings of research
6. Sustained contribution to media as an expert
7. Mentoring/sponsorship of diverse individuals to enhance innovation
8. Knowledge exchange activities that support UCL’s inclusive vision and values

## Specialist

* Successful contribution to enterprise and external engagement activities with significant institutional benefit to UCL
* Broader or more in-depth core enterprise or external engagement activities above; or some core enterprise or external engagement activity at next level
* Significant contribution to the commercialisation of UCL research findings where applicable

Indicators that can be used to show criteria have been met:

* Securing funding for knowledge exchange projects
* Significant involvement in the establishment of a sustainable spinout company or evidence of other forms of commercial success
* Demonstrable development of a successful professional development activity from concept through to delivery and external feedback
* References/feedback characterising personal role and impact from relevant collaborators/participants/audiences
* References from media commissioners or invitations to contribute
* Leadership role in UCL Culture activities or similar public engagement activity (e.g. Bright Club, engagement with faculty
* PEU Coordinator, Recipient of UCL PEU Beacon Bursary)
* Leadership of a festival or public performance (Bloomsbury Theatre/Studio or similar) related to research
* Leadership role in successful delivery of exhibition in Octagon, UCL Library or UCL Museum spaces with relevant Library or UCL Culture team
* Documentary evidence of public/policy external engagement (e.g. case studies)
* Other evidence of the actual benefits realised by those outside of academia (such as testimonials, reports, activities, evaluations or other evidence of change)
* Adoption of Open Access dissemination processes and route
* Significant demonstrable success (quantified where possible) realised by beneficiaries outside of academia

# Institutional Citizenship

Again – you only need to do one! Sit on a departmental committee (Leaf, Athena Swan, etc), put yourself forward for Academic board (very easy, and can be dangerously interesting).

Core:

1. Effective personal contributions through membership of departmental committees, including selection committees and other departmental administrative roles
2. Co-ordinating successful internal academic processes (e.g. admissions, quality assurance)
3. Making a significant contribution to departmental or university projects or working groups, including through collaboration with/furthering of work of CALT
4. Contribution to UCL’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion groups and committees
5. Contribution to departmental recruitment and widening participation activities

Indicators that can be used to show criteria have been met:

* Admissions Tutor with evidence of impact NSSLO with evidence of effective working (e.g. improvements in survey response rate)
* Appointed member of departmental Teaching Committee, with evidence of impact
* Evidence of impact on university projects or working group
* Appointed member of major departmental committee with evidence of impact
* Evidence of proactive role in equalities action planning
* Activities in schools to encourage students from under-represented groups to apply to higher education, and/or to encourage students to apply to UCL, with evidence of impact