



# Welcome pack for our early career researchers (ECRs)

Welcoming  
our new  
researchers  
to the UCL  
Faculty  
of Brain  
Sciences

[www.ucl.ac.uk/brain-sciences](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/brain-sciences)



# Your first five steps to get started

The Faculty ECR Committee has done a lot of work figuring out what you will need to do, who you will need to know, and how you can be best connected.

So, here are the five things you can do to give you the best possible start as an early career researcher at the Faculty of Brain Sciences.

# 1

Visit the UCL Brain Sciences website, especially our early career researchers (ECR) portal.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/brain-sciences/research/early-career-researchers>

# 2

Look out for emails from our new ECR Mailing List. The Faculty has a mailing list to which all ECRs are automatically added. Occasional messages will be sent out, for example alerting you to new opportunities.

# 3

Work on your IRIS profile (researcher profile page) to make sure it's giving a great impression of you. Lots of researchers in UCL, and more outside, use IRIS to find out about our research staff. Your profile can be replicated in many different websites so it's important to keep it up-to-date. Your IRIS profile will show your publications automatically by pulling them from your RPS account (see below).

<https://iris.ucl.ac.uk/iris/>

# 4

Get to grips with Research Publications Database (RPS). When you first start at UCL, you will need to configure your RPS account to harvest all of your publications. It will then send you email notifications when it finds any. You then need to log in to accept the correct publications and to upload the final submitted version of any papers that are accepted to publication (this is to meet your funder's requirements and to be compliant for the research excellence framework - REF). The Queen Square Institute of Neurology Library has a great help page for RPS.

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ion/library/links/researchers/publishing-publications/research-publications-database-rps>

# 5

Stay in the loop and follow us on social media. Your Institute or Division will probably have a Twitter feed, as will your research department and your PI. But we also recommend that you follow the Faculty Twitter account:

[@UCLBrainScience](https://twitter.com/UCLBrainScience)

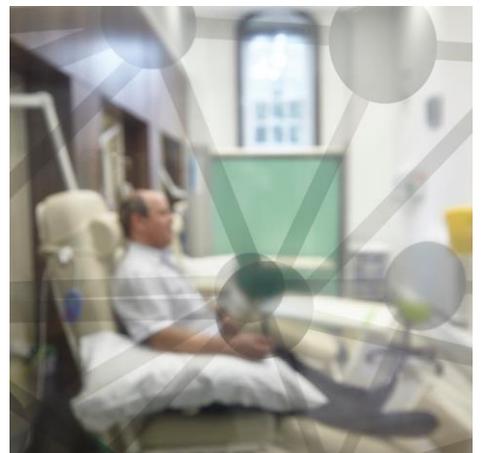
# Welcome from the Dean



As Dean, I believe that staff development is integral to our success. Staff who know that they are supported in their professional development will have the ambition and confidence to achieve, whatever their area of expertise.

We are a Faculty who recognises the importance of personal and professional growth, to help our staff realise their full potential at UCL. As an early career researcher, you are at the beginning of what we hope will be a long, exciting and fulfilling career in research at UCL. This welcome pack is one of the ways we hope to support you through that journey.

Professor Alan Thompson, Dean, Faculty of Brain Sciences



## Our mission: postdocs for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Welcome to the Faculty of Brain Sciences. You are obviously here to do great science, but also to complete your training and take the final steps in your journey towards an independent career, either within or beyond academia - while at the same time keeping up a great work-life balance! We know this is a tricky balancing act, and we, the Early Career Researcher Committee and the rest of our postdoc community, will support you in your efforts in any way that we can.

There is so much information, and so many helpful resources and initiatives that can help you, but it can be hard to find them. Which is why we've created this welcome pack for you. We'll point out where to find the things that we found useful when we were starting our own journeys.

### Good luck

The ECR Committee would like to wish you the best of luck in your new role and we look forward to meeting you soon. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any suggestions for how we might do things better, or just to say hi! We would love to hear from you.

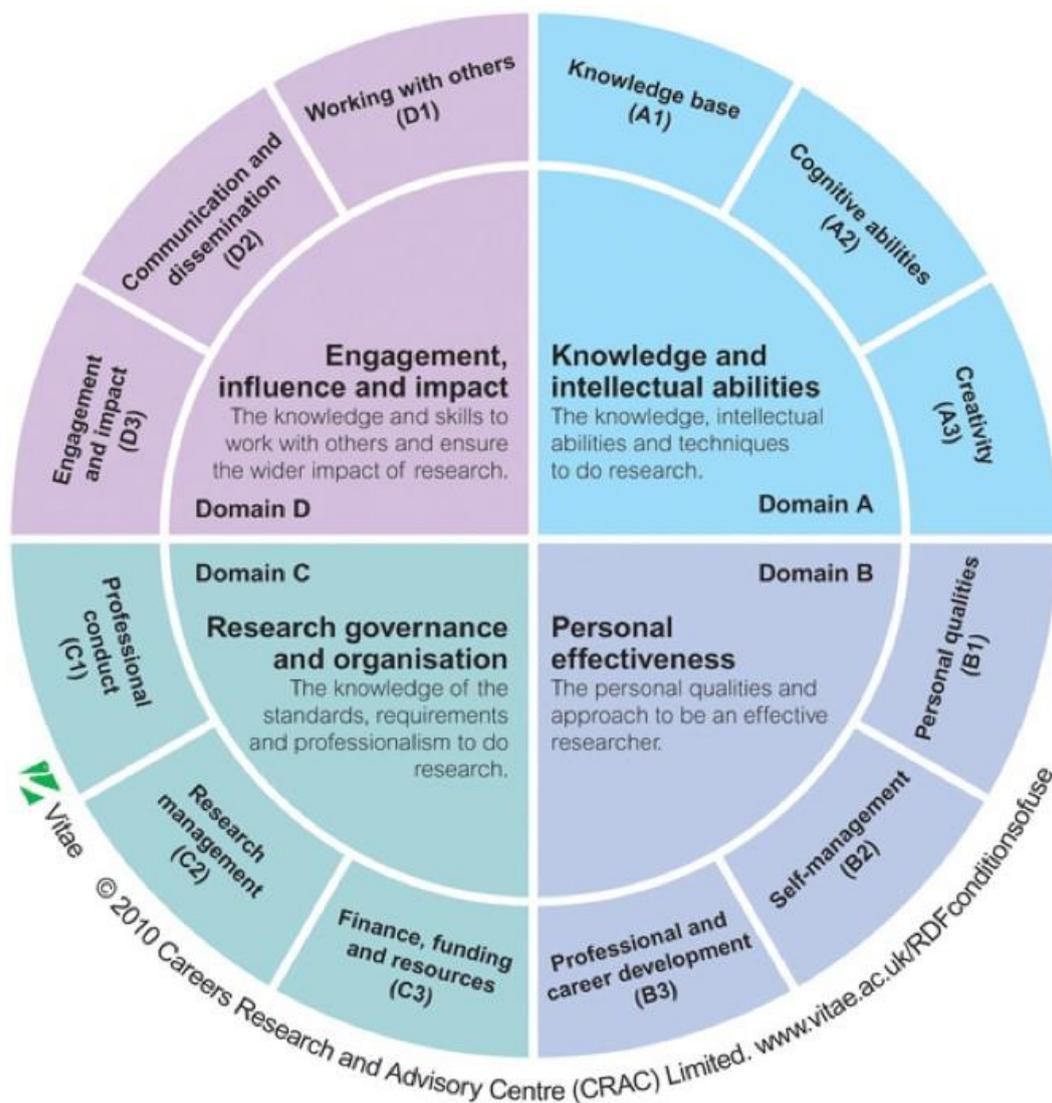
# The Vitae Researcher Development Framework

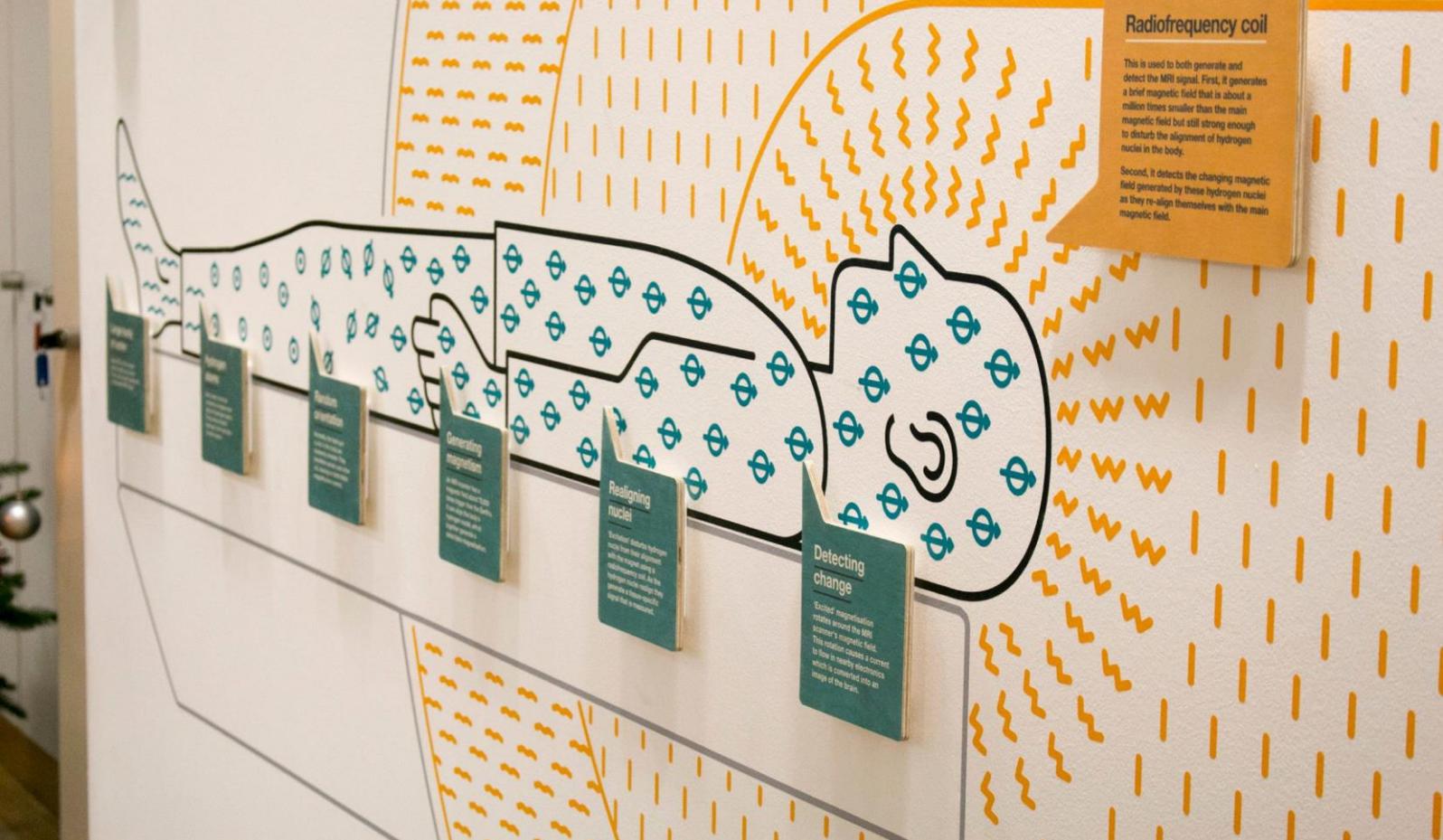
Our starting point for helping you develop as a researcher is the Researcher Development Framework (RDF), produced in 2010 by Vitae. Vitae is a UK organisation dedicated to the personal and professional development of researchers. Produced in consultation with higher education organisations as well as non-academic stakeholders, the RDF highlights four domains critical to the professional development of every researcher, irrespective of career stage or trajectory. Someone with these qualities will be eminently prepared to lead a lab, but also just as ready for a career as a policy analyst or industry consultant.

As postdocs, it is natural for us to focus exclusively on “Domain A”, the bread and butter of our science. We will try our best here at the Faculty of Brain Sciences to help you keep an eye on the bigger picture without compromising your commitment to excellent, ground-breaking research.

UCL is committed to the professional development of its research staff, and in fact encourages you to use the RDF to help frame career discussions with your principal investigator (PI) or line manager. You will find more information on the UCL Learning Academy website.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/learning-academy/researcher-development>





# Our commitment to our early career researchers

The Faculty of Brain Sciences is committed to nurturing future leaders in research into the brain sciences. At UCL, our researchers form part of an academic framework and are encouraged to apply for promotions at various points in their career.

The Faculty has useful information about the processes and key dates for the promotions cycle on our website:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/brain-sciences/about-faculty/working-faculty/academic-promotions-processes>

The UCL HR team also has a page with lots of useful information about promotions:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/policies-advice/academic-career-framework-and-promotions-processes>

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is a particular priority for the Faculty and we have a dedicated website with information about the projects being worked on in this arena, as well as opportunities to get support and get involved:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/brain-sciences/about-faculty/equality-diversity-and-inclusion>

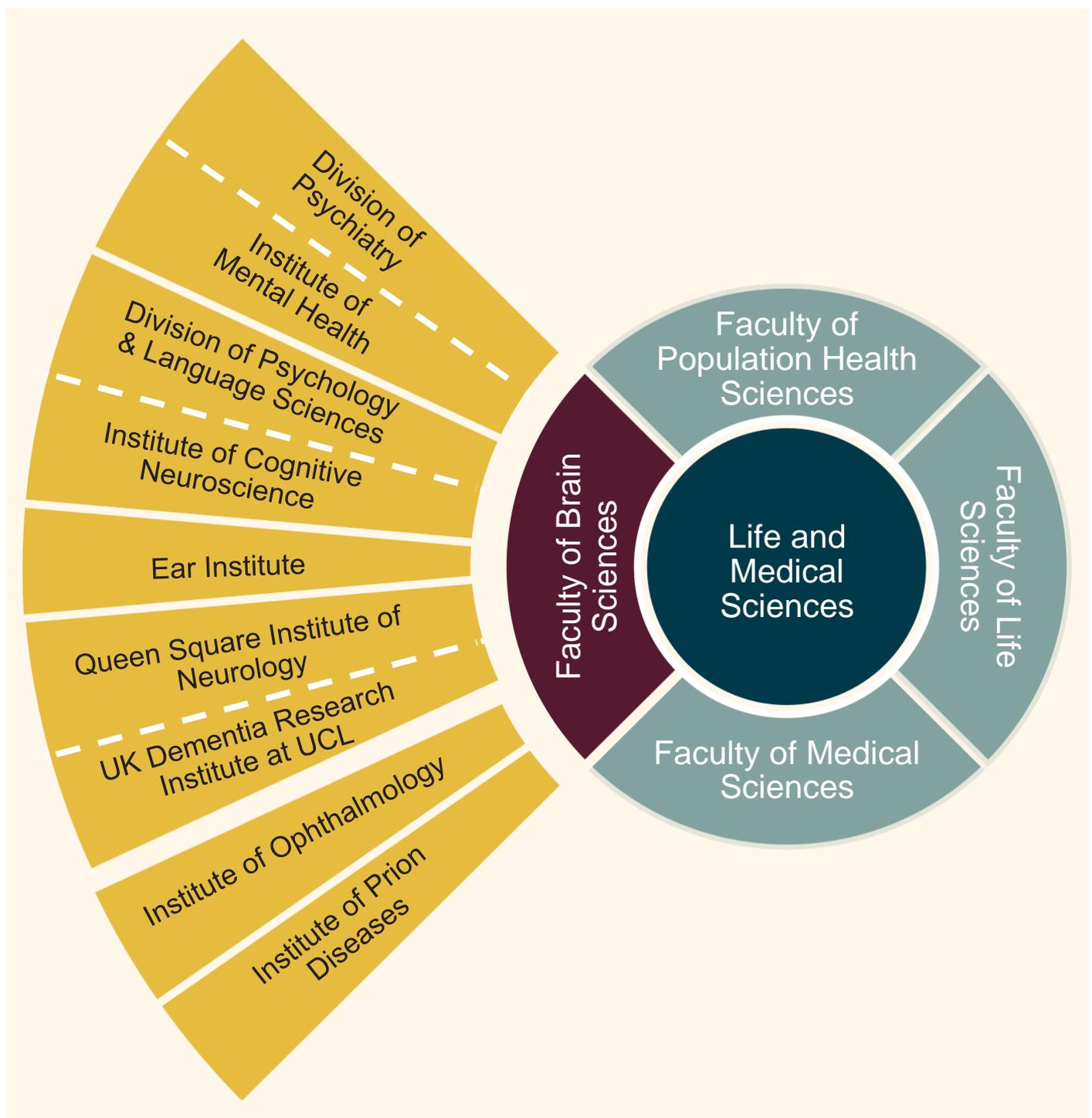
We also have an online portal for early career researchers, where we list all of the Faculty research seminars, and signpost to resources, networks, funding sites, mailing lists, career development advice and much more.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/brain-sciences/research/early-career-researchers>

# An introduction to the Faculty

The Faculty of Brain Sciences was established on 1st August 2011. UCL Faculty of Brain Sciences is a vibrant environment driving forward ambitious plans to solve the greatest health and wellbeing problems in the brain sciences; to educate the next generation of leaders and professionals; and to engage in enterprise and knowledge transfer activities.

Our Faculty is the largest of the four that operate in the Life and Medical Sciences domain at UCL. It brings together expertise from nine Institutes and Divisions in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, prion diseases, ophthalmology and vision, mental health, language sciences, audiology, deafness and hearing, neurology and related basic neuroscience. The Faculty is led by the Dean, Professor Alan Thompson, and the Director of Operations, Mr Geoff Dunk.



# UCL professional development and resources for staff

UCL provides an incredible array of professional development and outreach resources for its staff. In fact, we consider ourselves to be sector leaders. Sometimes though, the hardest part can be finding the right website! So, here's a list (not comprehensive!) to get you started:

## Research Support Services at UCL

### Researcher Development

Designed to bring together all the different strands of UCL research staff support.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/learning-academy/researcher-development>

### UCL Careers

UCL Careers offers events, interview coaching, 1-on-1 sessions, employer and job fairs and more. This is delivered by specialists who are accustomed to working with researchers, many of whom have research and postdoc experience themselves; Twitter: [@uclresearchers](#), [@uclcareers](#)

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/careers/about-us/who-can-use-our-services/researchers>

### UCL Innovation and Enterprise

UCL Innovation and Enterprise can support you in many ways. They provide training, funding, and advice on starting your own business and commercialising your research outputs. They can also help building partnerships with external companies, and can even help you set up your own continuing professional development (CPD) courses.

[www.ucl.ac.uk/enterprise/staff](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/enterprise/staff)

### UCL Consultants

With the support of your principal investigator, UCL Consultants are available to support your work with outside partners (including companies, government and public sector) when it is being undertaken as consultancy or other non-research service provision. They offer a variety of training programmes, details of which are provided on their website.

[www.ucl.ac.uk/consultants](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/consultants)

## UCLB

UCLB (Business) is the commercialisation company of UCL and its partner NHS Trusts, covering spin-outs, intellectual property, licensing, etc. If you're an academic or student at UCL working on a novel and exciting idea that shows promise and potential, UCLB are there to help and guide you at every step of your journey from innovation to impact.

UCL also has a £100m tech fund for investment in commercialising research, mainly focused around life sciences.

[www.uclb.com/for-researchers](http://www.uclb.com/for-researchers)

<https://www.ucltf.co.uk/>

## UCL Research Coordination Office

Research facilitators from the Research Coordination Office are here to support you in your pursuit of research funding. They can support you with your grant and fellowship applications by checking eligibility, reviewing draft applications and arranging mock interviews.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/school-life-medical-sciences/about-slms/office-vice-provost-health/research-coordination-office>

## UCL Translational Research Office

The TRO help support making basic research into clinic or market-ready products. They provide integrated support for translational research, industrial partnerships and drug discovery.

[www.ucl.ac.uk/translational-research](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/translational-research)

## UCL Research Services

If you need help with grant applications, Research Services has resources that can help you!

[www.ucl.ac.uk/research-services/applying-funding](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/research-services/applying-funding)

## UCL Academic Careers Office

The Academic Careers Office supports academic and clinical academic researchers in SLMS to pursue research. They run niche funding schemes, innovative skills training and personal development support including the UCL NIHR integrated academic training programme.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/school-life-medical-sciences/about-slms/office-vice-provost-health/academic-careers-office>

## UCL Joint Research Office

The Joint Research Office can help you when you need to set up a new project involving people (such as patients). They can advise you on whether or not you'll need ethics approval and check your approval application and help with sponsorship when needed.

[www.ucl.ac.uk/joint-research-office](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/joint-research-office)

# Learning and Development

## Research Staff Development Programme

The UCL Research Staff Development Programme (RSDP) is a central programme open to all research staff from post-doc to research leaders and principal investigators. It aims to support the professional and career development of researchers, to enable them to make the most of their potential and to help ensure the ongoing creation of excellent research outcomes at UCL and beyond.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/learning-academy/researcher-development/research-staff-development-programme>

## UCL Arena

UCL Arena is UCL's professional development pathway for teaching: a scheme of awards accredited by the Higher Education Academy giving teaching and support staff nationally recognised fellowships. They offer three different schemes that are designed to give the skills to teach effectively.

[www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/professional-development/ucl-arena](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/professional-development/ucl-arena)

## UCL Culture - Public Engagement

UCL Culture teams manage museums, theatres, collections and facilitate engagement. The department offers training, networks, funding and opportunities for you to connect your work with groups outside the university. Visit their website for more details and stay in touch via their newsletter and Twitter: [@UCL\\_Culture](https://twitter.com/UCL_Culture) and [@UCLengage](https://twitter.com/UCLengage).

[www.ucl.ac.uk/culture](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/culture)

# Resources

## UCL Libraries

Via the library, you can get access to a huge range of electronic resources, browse special collections and find different spaces to work in.

[www.ucl.ac.uk/library](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library)

## UCL Open Access

UCL has been making a concerted push for open access across its departments, and in fact many grants (and the REF) now require it. This is your one stop shop for all your open access needs.

[www.ucl.ac.uk/library/open-access](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/open-access)

## UCL Institute of Making

Need somewhere to spin a pot or print a rocket ship in 3D? Members of UCL Institute of Making have access to making events and the use of their space and equipment.

[www.instituteofmaking.org.uk](http://www.instituteofmaking.org.uk)

## Access to LinkedIn Learning

As a member of staff at UCL, you have free access to LinkedIn Learning: a huge range of video tutorials supporting learning in software, creativity and business.

[www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/linkedin-learning](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/linkedin-learning)

## UCL Research Services Equipment Catalogue

The UCL Research Equipment Catalogue is a searchable database containing information on all UCL's major research equipment and facilities. After logging in with your UCL ID, you can view information on each item (such as technical specifications and availability) and use an enquiry form to contact the equipment owner.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research-innovation-services/research-services/training-and-support/additional-tools/ucl-research-equipment-catalogue>

# Networks, Benefits and Departmental Activities

## UCL Research Domains

The UCL Research Domains are large, cross-disciplinary research communities that span UCL and our partner organisations, fostering interaction and collaboration. There are ten domains; the ones most likely to be of interest to researchers in Brain Sciences are the Neuroscience and Collaborative Social Sciences. Each domain has a dedicated careers network, providing seminars and career development. You are strongly encouraged to find the domain(s) and career networks most relevant to you and join their mailing list.

[www.ucl.ac.uk/research/domains](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/domains)

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/domains/neuroscience>

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/domains/collaborative-social-science>

## UCL Support Networks

There are many fantastic networks across UCL. These include networks for LGBTQ+ staff, women, staff with disabilities, black and minority ethnic staff and many more.

[www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/pay-benefits/staff-networks-and-groups](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/pay-benefits/staff-networks-and-groups)

## UCL Work-Life Balance and Benefits

UCL has a number of perks and benefits for staff, see the website below for details.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/work-at-ucl/reward-and-benefits>

## Departmental Activities

Most Institutes and Divisions in the Faculty run various local activities for Early Career Researchers including events and mentoring, and would welcome your involvement. You can contact your local Faculty ECR Committee Representative for more information (see list at the end of this document).

# UCL Faculty resources

## Events Feed

All Faculty researchers are encouraged to attend seminars and events around the Faculty and UCL. In the Faculty, our Institutes and Divisions hold various seminars, presented by internal and external experts, from PhD to Professors. You can find a full list of these events on the Faculty's website.

[www.ucl.ac.uk/brain-sciences/events](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/brain-sciences/events)

## Brain Teaser (our fortnightly Faculty staff bulletin)

Brain Teaser is meant to give you a five-minute snapshot of what is happening across the Faculty. It features key topics from the Faculty's executive team (FET) - which includes the Dean, ViceDeans and Directors of Institutes and Divisions - and highlights the latest news and events. You will automatically receive this as a member of Brain Sciences staff - but please make sure it's not being sent to your Clutter folder!

## Specialist Libraries in the Faculty

As well as the main library, the Faculty also accommodates four specialist libraries: at the Ear Institute, Queen Square Institute of Neurology, Institute of Ophthalmology, and Chandler House (Language & Speech Science Library).

[www.ucl.ac.uk/library/libraries-and-study-spaces/ucl-libraries](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/libraries-and-study-spaces/ucl-libraries)



# Early Career Researcher Portal

We realise how hard it can be to navigate UCL's resources, initiatives, policies and procedures. And how hard it can be to find funding, careers advice and all the other stuff that can be found externally to UCL. So, as well as creating this welcome pack, we have also created an online portal with signposts to the resources such as mentoring schemes and networks and the things we find most helpful. If you have any ideas about what you'd like to see there please get in touch the Faculty Doctoral and Researcher Development Manager, Rik Ganly-Thomas, [r.ganly-thomas@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:r.ganly-thomas@ucl.ac.uk).

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/brain-sciences/research/early-career-researchers>



# Teaching opportunities for our ECRs

UCL's teaching strategy promotes research-embedded education. What this means for you is that you are encouraged to get involved in delivering teaching in one way or another. The Faculty is keen to encourage all staff to undertake teacher training, which we hope will help you with your career progression.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/professional-development/ucl-arena/arena-postdoctoral-researchers>

A normal first step towards teaching for ECRs would be getting involved in PGT MSc research projects where postdocs are usually involved in supporting student projects in their lab. You can also support some teaching if your PI teaches specific modules or ask if you can assist with lab training for students.

However, we know that there is a lot more that can be done more proactively and that is one of the reasons why we are committed to improving the way we do things.

We have already mentioned UCL Arena, but it is such a great resource that we wanted to mention it again.

All staff are encouraged to join Arena Open to help support them to apply for Higher Education Academy (HEA) Fellowships which recognise your contribution to teaching and learning in higher education.

[www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/professional-development/ucl-arena](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/professional-development/ucl-arena)





# Why we made this booklet

Newly revised for 2021/22, this booklet is designed to help Early Career Researchers navigate all the opportunities available to them. The booklet was originally developed by the Early Career Researcher Committee in response to the 2017 staff survey, which showed us that many of our early career researchers don't feel well enough supported. An extensive audit was carried out into the support that was available for researchers across our Faculty, and a number of key gaps were identified.

The first of these gaps was that, although support was available to ECRs, the lack of a unified source of information meant that ECRs weren't always finding the support they needed.

We hope that with this welcome pack and the accompanying online Faculty website, you will be able to find the support you need, when you need it.



## ECR Committee members

At the time this document was revised, your committee members were as follows:

Department	Name	Job title
Faculty	Gill Bates	Faculty Lead for Doctoral Training and ECR
Faculty	Rik Ganly-Thomas	Doctoral & Researcher Development Manager
UCL	Kasia Bronk	Academic Development Consultant
Ear	Maria Chait	Professor of Auditory Cognitive Neuroscience
Ear	Magdalena Zak	Research Associate
IoO	Mariya Moosajee	Professor of Molecular Ophthalmology
IoO	Sandra Hemkemeyer	Research Fellow
IoO	Megan Vaughan	Research Assistant
IoN	Charlie Arber	Research Fellow
IoN	Barney Bryson	Senior Non-Clinical Research Fellow
IoN	Matt Gegg	Research Associate
IoN	Avital Hahamy	Research Fellow
IoN	Helene Plun-Favreau	Professor of Cellular Neurodegeneration
IoN	Ana Faro	EDI Project Manager
IoN	Giles Story	Postdoctoral Researcher
UK DRI at UCL	Amanda Heslegrave	Senior Research Associate
UK DRI at UCL	Sarah Aldous	Research Associate
PALS	Katerina Fotopoulou	Reader in Psychodynamic Neuroscience
PALS	Sarah Griffiths	Research Associate (Language and Cognition)
PALS	Aman Saleem	Principal Research Fellow
Psychiatry	James Kirkbride	Reader in Epidemiology
Psychiatry	Moise Roche	PhD Candidate
Psychiatry	Vasiliki Orgeta	Associate Professor of Psychology of Aging and Dementia
Prion	Jan Bieschke	Programme Lead