



# Athena SWAN Fact Sheet 1: Career Development

## Mentoring

The way in which mentoring schemes are designed and run varies across departments. For example some are intending to utilise the UCL-wide online mentoring platform [uMentor](#), while others are developing 'in-house' schemes. In addition, some are supporting and encouraging staff to access mentoring schemes such as the SLMS [Academic Careers Office](#) 'Future Fifty' scheme. Most have organised training sessions for mentors to ensure they are aware of their role and responsibilities as a mentor, but also to highlight Athena SWAN and the importance of mentoring for female staff.

While some departments have chosen to create tailored mentoring schemes (see below), many have (or are planning) mentoring schemes that are open to all staff (C, CS, LMCB, ICH, IGH, IEHC, IoN, EDI, DoS, DoP, UCLMS, MPB, IfWH, SoP). PALS have mentoring available to all academic staff, but aimed specifically at women.

### **uMentor**

**uMentor is UCL's online mentoring platform. All staff are able to sign up as a mentor and/or a mentee and must first complete an online training package. Mentors and mentees can then create a personal profile outlining the topics they wish to discuss as part of a mentor relationship. Mentees can search the mentor database using various criteria such as areas of interest (career development, work/life balance etc) or Faculty.**

## Mentoring for Students

Several departments have set up a mentoring scheme specifically for students (IEHC, BE, ICH, IfWH, MPB, DoM, SS). In most cases, both the mentor and mentee are students; this offers support for junior students, but also skills and CV development for the mentor. For example, in ICH, IGH and IEHC, first year PhD students are mentored by second and third years. In ICH, the graduate tutors train the mentors, and meet with them regularly to gain feedback and discuss any common issues. ICH are considering rolling this out to third year PhD students who would be mentored by Post Docs.

MPB plan to set up group mentoring – the group of PhD students and junior researchers will meet once a year and will be led by a female member of staff.

## Mentoring for Post Docs

Mentoring schemes have been established, or are planned, to support early career researchers (C, EI, IoO, DoM, I&I, ICH, DoP, MPB, CI, P&A). All are open to male and female post docs, except the DoM who are offering mentoring to female post docs in the first instance. In some cases, mentoring relationships are focused on issues such as fellowship applications, while others are general schemes to support career development. There are plans in some departments to extend the mentoring scheme to other members of staff once it is running smoothly for post docs.

## Promotions Mentors

Specific mentoring relationships have been established in departments to support the promotions process (UCLMS, DoS, C, DoM, SS). For example the DoS pair applicants with a 'promotion buddy' who has recently been successful in being promoted, and the DoM has trained 4 'senior promotions mentors'.

To address a particular attrition point between senior lecturer and professor, the IfWH have committed to provide tailored coaching for all female senior lecturers and readers to support their progression to professor.

## Maternity Mentors

A number of departments have identified preparing for, and returning from maternity leave as a time where women may need support and advice to ensure they are enabled to continue to progress after their period of leave. A number of schemes have been established:

- IoN have identified two female mentors – 1 clinical and 1 non-clinical, who have been trained in UCL policy. All individuals taking or returning from maternity are encouraged to contact the IoN mentors. The department has also identified a paternity mentor.
- ICS are pairing members of their 'preparation for pregnancy and returning to work' group to act as maternity buddies. The CI plan to canvas opinions on setting up a similar scheme.
- EDI have a cohort of volunteer parents, listed on the EDI website, who are available for discussion and advice on childcare issues and work/life balance.

Other departments have made sure that their mentors are trained and up to date with UCL policy in relation to maternity, flexible working, and childcare. Those returning from maternity leave are encouraged to request a mentor (MPB, DoM, I&I).

## Induction Mentors

Departments are required to allocate new Lecturers and Research Fellows a mentor when they start at UCL. Some departments routinely assign new starters a mentor (MPB, C, BE, CE, PALS, P&A, SoP, SS). The mentor should support the new member of staff in settling in, finding their way around UCL and supporting their career development. In MPB, the induction mentors are expected to meet with their mentees on a monthly basis during their probation, and then twice a year thereafter. In BE, female new starters can request a female mentor.

# Training and Development

## Training

UCL's Organisational Development Team and the Doctoral School run a range of training programmes for staff at all levels and PhD students, and some of these are particularly relevant to supporting women's career development.

Departments are promoting UCL training such as Springboard and the SLMS Academic Careers Office 'Future Leaders' programme (EI, DoP, ICH, DoM, PALS, IoO, I&I, IGH, SS). In addition, departments are nominating individuals to take part in external training programmes such as Aurora, the Academy of Medical Sciences Mentoring and Career Development Programme and the NIHR Leadership Support and Development Programme (ICH, UCLMS, IfWH). To date, UCL has sponsored 15 women to attend the Aurora programme.

In 2014 the Faculties of MAPS and Engineering joint-funded training for female academics on presentation, communication and media skills.

Departments with larger numbers of teaching staff are providing additional support and training to support them in improving their research profile to support their development and promotion prospects (EI, UCLMS).

### **The Academic Careers Office (ACO):**

**Established in 2012 in SLMS, the ACO provides runs several initiatives including the Future Leaders - two cohorts of sixteen aspiring leaders are recruited each year (50% female), and the Future Fifty Mentor Scheme which created 50 mentoring pairs across SLMS. Information is also available on the ACO website on clinical and non-clinical academic careers.**

### **Grant writing / funding**

Departments have improved the support available for staff applying for fellowships and grants. Some have done so following a detailed analysis of funding applications and success rate by gender (see Fact Sheet 7). Actions implemented include:

- Establishing mechanisms for review and feedback for fellowship and funding applications (EDI, IoO, UCLMS, CI, SS, M). For example, the M have introduced an internal peer review process – experienced staff give advice on preparing a research proposal. Since this was put in place, the grant income of the department has more than doubled.
- Following detailed analysis of their grant applications, IfWH identified specific issues for non-clinical female staff. In response, they plan to review grant applications and give feedback, but intend to be particularly aware of the opportunity to combine non-translational with pre-clinical translational research – which is more likely to secure funding.
- Others plan to promote funding opportunities, highlighting those specifically for female scientists on their departmental website (IoO, IfWH, CI).

## Conferences

The EI is providing a childcare bursary for students and staff to cover the cost of childcare associated with attending conferences. Similarly UCLMS have financially supported conference attendance where necessary.

I&I realised that in some cases, female scientists have to turn down invitations to conferences because of the cost of childcare or other caring responsibilities. In response, they have asked that staff record invitations to conferences, as well as presentations given for appraisal and review.

## Networks

### UCL Women:

**UCL Women was launched in January 2013 and is a network for female academic and research staff in STEMM. Lunchtime events are held where academics (UCL and external) speak about their research and career progression. In March 2015 UCL Women held their first International Women's Day lecture. Professor Elizabeth Blackburn, Nobel Laureate, spoke about her research, followed by a discussion on a life in science with Vivienne Parry OBE. The reception included a photo exhibition, using images of women from the SLMS Academic Role Models report. The event was extremely popular, and all 350 tickets sold out within days of being advertised. This will be an annual event.**



*UCL Women International Women's Day Lecture 2015.  
Professor Elizabeth Blackburn and  
Vivienne Parry OBE*



## Astrea:



**Astrea is UCL's network for women in Professional Services (PS). It's open to all PS women at any career stage or level of seniority. It was co-founded by Emma Todd and Alice Chilver, and is now run by a steering group. Events are held on a bi-monthly basis on themes such as 'communicating with confidence', 'being ready to seize the next opportunity: ace your application' and 'how to network effectively'. There are currently 500+ women from across UCL signed up to the Astrea mailing list.**

**Astrea held its first conference in December 2014. The conference was funded by all UCL faculties and some central PS departments. 250 women attended. The day included a panel discussion with high profile speakers.**

A range of staff networks have been established to support staff development. For example:

- Women's networks and forums have been established within departments to enhance networking opportunities and to enable discussion and peer support for career development (DoS, CS, C, P&A) These forums also feed in to the self assessment process.
- A joint women's network has been established between SS and M. Events are open to staff and students and enable networking across related departments.
- ICH are setting up a Mum's and Dad's group (MADS) to support parents and careers in the department (see Fact Sheet 5).
- Many departments have established networks for early career researchers (see Fact Sheet 2).



## Promotion

### Promotion process

Many departments have enhanced the usual senior promotions process following feedback from staff. For example:

- Many departments have committees who review all staff in the department and assess whether they are eligible for promotion, rather than relying on staff to self-select for promotion (M, P&A, LMCB, UCLMS, PALS, IoO, IoN, DoM, EDI, IGH, SoP, SS).
- Efforts have also been made to ensure promotion committees are gender balanced (EDI, DoM, ICS, P&A, IGH).

Departments that still have a self-selection process for promotion have put support mechanisms in place such as:

- Considering all female staff for promotion (ICS)
- The HoD contacts all female academics individually inviting them to submit their CV (DoS).

These activities have resulted in an increased number of women being put forward for promotions, some of whom have said they would not have otherwise applied (DoM, IoN, DoS, ICS).

The feedback provided to applicants who are not supported by the Departmental promotions committee has been improved (EDI, DoS, IfWH, ICS), and some departments pair unsuccessful applicants with 'promotion buddies' or mentors (see above).

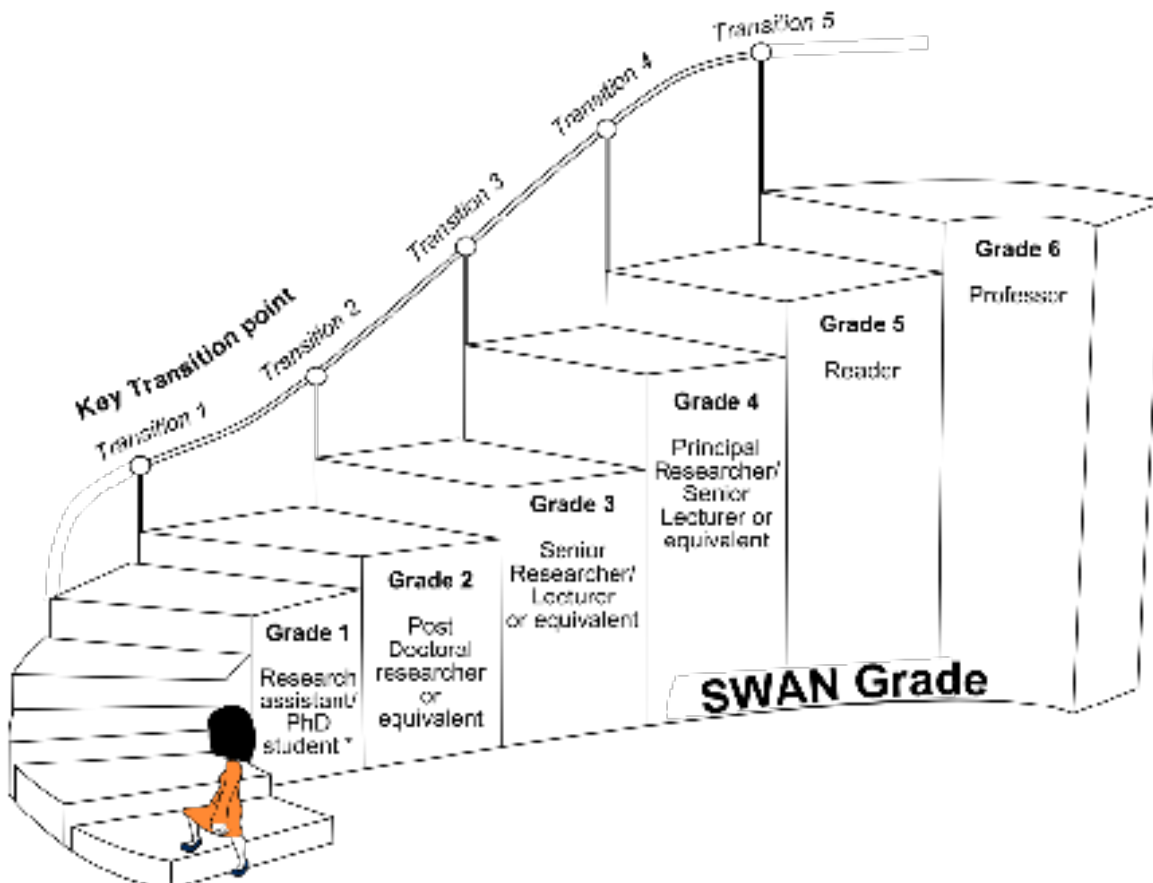
## Support for promotion

Following feedback, to improve transparency and understanding of the promotions process, departments now ensure the process and criteria are circulated and made clear to all staff. For example IEHC have developed a policy and guidance handbook for staff which is circulated every year before the promotions round. IfWH and PALS will publicise examples of successful promotions cases, and will circulate the criteria annually.

Other initiatives include:

- The CI is establishing a mock promotions committee; potential applicants will submit an outline application and those considered suitable will receive support throughout the application process.
- ICS plan to run a department event for clinical and non-clinical staff to discuss career development – this will include sessions on promotion, grading and review. There will then be the opportunities for networking, followed by a focus on individual career guidance via a speed-mentoring session.

Improvements have been made to the appraisal process in many departments to support the promotions process.





# Appraisals

The vast majority of departments have moved to an annual appraisal process, rather than the current UCL requirement for biennial appraisals (ICH, C, IEHC, UCLMS, EI, EDI, I&I, DoM, IfWH, DoS, M, DoP, IoO, CE, CI, ICS, PALS, IoN, LMCB, IGH, SoP). IGH have gone further and offer 6-monthly voluntary catch-up sessions that focus on career progression and work-life balance.

In addition, the majority of departments have enhanced the appraisal documentation; in many cases this has been implemented to support career development and work towards promotion. Guidance for appraisers or appraisal checklists have been developed that include:

- Explicit discussion on working towards promotion (IoN, IoO, UCLMS, I&I, BE, PALS, DoP, LMCB, IfWH, ICH, CI, P&A, IGH, SoP, SS) (PALS have expanded this to professional services staff to make sure re-grading and development are discussed)
- Training opportunities / Career development opportunities / Mentoring (IoO, I&I, PALS, LMCB, IfWH)
- Self-promotion opportunities / conference attendance (I&I, UCLMS)
- Workload / flexible working (I&I, DoP, LMCB, IfWH, ICH, ICS, P&A)

To ensure staff are aware of the potential benefits of appraisals, CS ran a session at a departmental all staff away day to raise awareness of the role appraisal can play in supporting staff for promotion and career development.

Departments are working to ensure that all appraisers have attended UCL appraisal training (IfWH, IGH, DoS). IfWH and DoM are arranging additional training for appraisers to ensure they are up to date with relevant policies at UCL, and give appropriate support in planning for promotion.

DoM, ICS and DoS are planning to set up an appraisal feedback process. This will enable the SATs to further support the appraisal process if necessary.