



Athena SWAN Fact Sheet 4: Support for Students and Student Recruitment

Student Career Development

Networks and career events

Departments have committed to ensuring students have access to support and information on career development, opportunities for further study and jobs within academia. Many of these activities are similar to the provision for early career researchers (Fact Sheet 2). For example:

- M, SoP and CE have run sessions on further academic study, such as 'what is a PhD?' for UG and MSc students, or talks on diverse career options. Sessions includes information on funding opportunities.
- PALS are developing a workshop on academic careers that will be embedded within all UG and MSc programmes.
- Many departments support and/or fund student societies or forums which organise seminars (on both academic and career development topics). These forums also provide opportunities for students to present their research in an informal environment (C, IoO, LMCB, CE, PALS, ICS, M, P&A, IGH)
- SS run 'meet your Professor' events to engage students in research and to promote academic careers.
- Similarly, departments encourage students to attend departmental seminars (I&I, C, ICS, CI, CE)

Mentoring schemes have also been established to support students. Please see Fact Sheet 1 for more information.

Students from the Department of Biochemical Engineering initiated the 'UCL Women Engineers' student society for students across the Engineering Faculty. Events have been well attended and enable cross-department networking and support.



CV building activities

Several departments offer additional support for students to help them gain experience that will enhance their CV, for example:

- Involvement in teaching: UCLMS and M encourage PhD students to get involved in teaching, and students sit on the M teaching committee.
- Medical students take part in student-selected components that develop their teaching, facilitation and mentoring skills. These include, for example Target Medicine – which is a widening participation scheme, Sexpression – teaching school students about sexual health, Open Minds – teaching school students about mental health and a peer mentoring scheme for LGB students.
- Awarding success: At the DoS away day, the new Eleanor Davies-Colley prize was awarded to the best PhD student presentation, chosen by the Dean of Life and Medical Sciences. Similarly, the CI presents an annual award to the MSc student with the best results. Each year the award will be named after a different inspirational female scientist and accompanied by a synopsis of her achievements. The winner will also receive £250.
- Conference attendance: The EDI, CI and CE offer funding for students to attend conferences. The EDI also provide funding to cover membership costs of academic and professional bodies. SS run an internal PhD conference which MSc students are invited to attend.
- Summer placements: BE and CS offer summer placements in UCL research groups for students to get experience of academic research, and M promote and encourage students to apply for the London Mathematics Society summer scholarship. Departments are also promoting AcaMedics – this is a scheme run across several universities where medical students are placed in academic research groups.

- Academic development and funding: Promising female PhD students in DoM are paired with senior academics who provide career development advice, assistance with fellowship applicants and practice for interviews. Similarly, students in LMCB, EDI and I&I have access to a Committee who give advice to students – both on their research project and for career development.

Support for female students

Many departments offer female students the opportunity to speak to female academics for advice and support. For example, by offering an 'adviser to female students' (MPB, PALS, CE, M), or offering female students the opportunity to request a female supervisor or personal tutor (LMCB, UCLMS, I&I, IoO, ICS). Similarly, ICH have made sure that the PGR tutor team is made up of 2 men and 2 women.

Student recruitment and outreach

Recruitment process and training

Departments have committed to improving the student recruitment process through mirroring UCL practice and policy for staff recruitment (Fact Sheet 3). For example ensuring interview panels have female representation (M, ICH, UCLMS, IfWH, EI), and requiring those involved in student recruitment to attend recruitment training (DoM, EI), complete equality and diversity training (UCLMS, DoM) or unconscious bias training (UCLMS).

Re-thinking course content and structure

Departments in Engineering have been re-thinking how their subject is taught, by focusing on problem-based learning and teaching, addressing environmental, social, economic and policy issues. This has culminated in the new Integrated Engineering Programme. It appears that this approach is more attractive to female applicants than the traditional approach to teaching engineering.

In addition to this, some Departments in the Faculty of Engineering have changed their entry requirements for undergraduate students – which appears to have had an impact on the gender balance of applicants and accepted students. Several UCL Engineering departments no longer require an A level in Physics, and ask that students without this A level complete a 'physics for engineers' module as part of their first year. Because female students traditionally drop Physics at A Level, the choice not to require Physics A level widens the pool of potential applicants.

Departments in SLMS are also starting to consider how their courses could be designed to be more attractive to female applicants. For example:

- DoS have started to offer a wider range of courses, including postgraduate certificates and distance learning MScs. This has increased the proportion of female students on courses for non-clinicians.
- UCLMS recognise that part time courses may be more attractive to female applicants. The department are setting up a working group to explore the option of part time study for MBBS students.
- UCLMS also noted research by the Royal College of Physicians suggested that women are more attracted to certain specialties, often those involving people-focused roles such as GP, psychiatry and paediatrics. The department are updating their student admissions brochure to emphasise potential career opportunities in specialties which are traditionally more attractive to women.

Attracting female students

Many departments committed to ensuring that both male and female staff and students were present at undergraduate open days and outreach activities (CE, ICH, CS, C, BE, DoS, IoN, IfWH, M, P&A), or the iBSc fair (where MBBS students choose their one year intercalated degree) (S, I&I, MPB).

DoM, DoS and M intend to hold open days for PhD study, with good representation from current female staff and students. Similarly, the DoP held a 'meet the academics' event for UCL core and specialty trainees in Psychiatry. This included presentations from the department's MSc and Postgraduate Tutors about opportunities for funding and study. This was followed by a networking drinks reception. It is intended that this will be an annual event.

Others have plans to improve their publicity material such as websites and prospectuses. For example improving the gender balance of images in publicity materials (CE, BE, P&A, MPB, I&I, IoO, CS, IGH), developing a 'student experience' section of the website – and ensuring that at least half are from female students (I&I), and including short videos of positive female role models at different stages of their career on the departmental website (CE). For more information on improvements to departmental websites, please see Fact Sheet 6.

Outreach Activities

Departments are involved in many outreach activities to attract students from under-represented backgrounds to apply for a degree, and to come to UCL. A range of activities take place across UCL such as 'target medicine', 'meet the mathematician', 'in2science' and summer placements. Examples of activities that are specifically aimed at attracting female students are listed below:

- UCL has a 'Inspiring Women in Science' speakers list which is circulated to local schools as part of the UCL outreach brochure.
- The Faculty of Engineering run an annual 'women in engineering' day for A level female students, many Engineering departments are involved in organising and running the day
- CS are planning to run training for teachers on teaching computer science; they intend to include a gender aspect to this training to give teachers the skills to engage female students computer science, and to promote career opportunities in computer science to female students.

Engineering Outreach:

The Faculty of Engineering run their own education and outreach activities and request that schools taking part in activities organised by the Faculty or their partner organisations (e.g. Royal Institution, James Dyson Foundation, Engineering Development Trust, Royal Academy of Engineering) ensure 50% of participating students are female. This has been hugely successful, and in the 2014/15 the Faculty worked with over 2500 school pupils in Years 5-12, 50% of whom were female. The Faculty has an active group of over 300 staff and students involved, and the Faculty makes sure that there is gender balanced participation of staff and students at all activities and events (including the Women in Engineering Day).

