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QUEEN SQUARE INSTITUTE OF NEUROLOGY



Director's view: April 2020

Message from the Director and Manager

Welcome to the latest edition of the Institute's termly newsletter, which is an update and highlights some of the many excellent activities at the Institute.

The recent Covid-19 pandemic that is affecting the world and the UK has cast a shadow over the fantastic work you all deliver in the Institute. We want to take the opportunity in this termly newsletter to **thank every single one of you** who is helping us manage this unprecedented crisis.

We appreciate these are incredibly difficult and uncertain times for everyone as we adjust to working remotely, have had to wind down some critical research activities, and carry out our teaching and assessment remotely. Most of our taught student have returned home and many of us are home schooling our children. Our clinical colleagues have been released to support our NHS.

Now, more than ever, it is important we work collaboratively to support our business contingencies plans, support our students and research staff, our support staff, our Estates and Facilities colleagues who make sure our premises are still a safe environment for us to work in, and especially support our NHS colleagues who are on the front line.

We have been overwhelmed by the incredible response we have had to our call for volunteers: thank you! The latest institutional information on this pandemic can be found at www.ucl.ac.uk/coronavirus.

Below is a summary of the support and resources available to help you during these difficult times. Should you have any queries please contact your Head of Research Department, Line Manager or either of us: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ion/people>

Let's take this opportunity to also highlight the many recent significant Institute achievements, some attracting major media attention (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ion/news>), too many to mention all of them, so please scroll down for all of our termly updates and some of the key highlights from the past 3 months.

All of these achievements have been realised by your collective hard work, which is critical in enabling the Institute to continue to be highly successful across its full range of activities including education, basic science and translational science.

Thank you to all of you in supporting us and our mission during these unprecedented times.

Please look after one another, keep safe and stay well,

Michael & H  l  ne

COVID-19 support and resources

- An **optional and anonymous Covid-19 survey** has gone out to all at IoN to capture colleagues' needs. Please check your inbox for the link. The responses to this survey will be read by our EDI Team member and summarised.
- **UCL confirmed that it would [release all clinical academics](#) to support NHS services** during the current crisis, while our [medical students are volunteering](#) to look after doctors' and nurses' children and help out with other day-to-day jobs, such as dog walking and shopping. We are also making UCL's Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) machines [available to the NHS](#) to expand the capacity for coronavirus testing.



We are collating responses for anyone clinical and non-clinical staff wishing to volunteer. Please contact a.bibi@ucl.ac.uk should you wish to volunteer.

Research



- **Research and policy work addressing Covid-19.** In order for UCL to capture all research activities, policy work and industry partnerships, we are collating a list centrally. If you are involved and haven't already been in touch, grateful if you could outline the work you're doing to Sinead Kennedy, Director of Research Planning and Coordination, School of Life and Medical Sciences (sinead.kennedy@ucl.ac.uk) and Jennifer Hazelton, BEAMS Research Facilitator (j.hazelton@ucl.ac.uk).
 - **REF :** As part of their REF2021 / COVID-19 contingency planning, the funding bodies have agreed to postpone the REF data submission, this follows the rapid developments in the UK's response to coronavirus in recent days. www.ucl.ac.uk/research/evaluation/research-excellence-framework/ref-2021
 - UCL is currently reviewing its policy and impact of the government lockdown on researchers employed on research grant awards and Clinical Research Fellows who have been deployed back to the NHS; further guidance will be communicated in due course.

 - [UCL Coronavirus Response Fund](#). This initiative is raising urgently-needed funding for UCL's targeted coronavirus research activity. All donations to it, large and small, will enable us to continue to mobilise around three key areas that will contribute to the management, mitigation, and eventual halt of the virus:
 1. Sequencing of the virus and vaccine development
 2. Monitoring and surveillance of the virus, its progression, and its impact
 3. Managing the unprecedented challenges to our healthcare system, the way we live and work, and the impact on society.

 - UCL is engaging with funders to mitigate the impact from Covid-19 crisis on research; This page <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research-services/news/2020/mar/covid-19-impact-research-funding> contains links to UCL's major research funder's guidance on Coronavirus and advice for researchers. This is an evolving situation so please review this page and your Funders' own webpages regularly for updates.

 - The UCL Doctoral School has issued further guidance for our PhD students and support available to them: <https://www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/support-and-advice/response-plan-to-coronavirus.html>
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Remote working



- ISD have created [a guide](#) to remote working, which includes information about setting up at home, tools to help you work remotely and tips for how to use them. Please keep an eye on the ISD website for latest advice or contact our IT team at ion-itsupport@ucl.ac.uk. To make sure you are able to work from home, please take the following steps:
- Make sure you have the necessary software installed on your UCL laptop or home computer.
- Use the VPN only when needed, as capacity is limited. You don't need to use it for Office365, Microsoft Teams or other productivity tools. To save using the VPN, please copy your working files from the N: and S: drives to MS OneDrive (which is cloud accessible).
- For teaching staff, if you are preparing online lectures, please contact ion-itsupport@ucl.ac.uk if you think you need a headset. You will also need to install the Lecturecast Personal Capture application on your computer.
- Make use of Microsoft Teams, especially for collaborating (e.g. for daily "stand-up" calls with your team).
- Many of us are now using Microsoft Teams to collaborate via chat and conference calls

Health and wellbeing during remote working



- During this period of remote working, try to think about finding a space within your home environment that enables you to work undisturbed, has sufficient lighting (preferably natural daylight) and is maintained at a comfortable temperature.
- If you don't have access to an office desk and office chair at home, please make good use of any table and chair, as opposed to sitting on the sofa or in bed. Ensure you take regular breaks; try to stand up and move away from the computer during these breaks, giving your body a rest from sitting in the

same position for long periods. Using a separate monitor, keyboard and mouse is also recommended over using a laptop and trackpad, if available.

- If you feel unwell and cannot work (whether from coronavirus or any other reason), you should report this to your line manager and record it on [MyHR](#) in the usual way.
- Please continue to take your annual leave as planned, even if you are working remotely. We want to make sure our staff are well-rested and can still achieve a good work-life balance.
- UCL Wellbeing have rolled-out a comprehensive list of resources available to support your Wellbeing during the Covid-19 outbreak. Please visit their [website](#) for further information and see below.
- It is particularly important that line managers stay engaged with their teams and combat the stresses of self-isolation. Wellbeing Champions also have an important role to play in supporting their local areas. Please see below for further details.
- Please continue to check the [Public Health England website](#) for the latest official advice. And consult the UCL coronavirus page for much more information, latest guidance and FAQs: www.ucl.ac.uk/coronavirus.

IoN-DRI programme update

The IoN-DRI programme team are continuing to design and deliver the IoN-DRI programme as best as possible during this unprecedented time. Our aim is to ensure we are ready for a quick resumption of planned activities when conditions return to normal, and that we use our resources as effectively and efficiently as possible in the meantime.

Construction update

UCL decided to stop early enabling works and surveys as of 27 March at 256 Grays Inn Road. This is to protect the safety of all persons involved across UCL and our supply chains, conform to government advice and ultimately mitigate UCL's financial exposure. In the meantime, we are working remotely to progress commercial negotiations and design development. We will continue to monitor the situation and will keep you updated of changes to planned construction activity.

Transformation update

As part of the IoN-DRI programme's transformation activities, we have identified a number of services across laboratory operations and laboratory infrastructure that have the potential to enhance the operational capabilities of IoN and UCL more widely. We have grouped these services, 55 in total, into 11 initiatives based on the extent to which they form logical process flows or share common resources.

In light of recent developments, we have revised our plans for how best to deliver these 11 initiatives. Instead of conducting pilots and rolling each initiative out sequentially, we are front-loading planning for all the initiatives so that they are ready to be commenced when normal conditions resume. Once the planning work has been completed we will begin to pilot those initiatives that can gain value from desk-based testing and do not require equipment, infrastructure and

other resources to be available. We are also producing rollout and education materials across all the initiatives.

By restructuring our delivery plans in this way, we will be well-positioned for a quick restart and will have the core resources in place to deliver the programme as planned. We will keep you updated as the situation progresses.



[Artist for new IoN-DRI facility on Grays Inn Road](#)

[appointed](#)

Annie Cattrell has been appointed as the public artist for the IoN-DRI neuroscience facility on Grays Inn Road. Annie is a tutor in the School of Arts and Humanities at the Royal College of Art. She has undertaken previous art commissions at Oxford and Cambridge Universities and exhibits widely, both nationally and internationally. She will work closely with the building architects along with the UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology, the UK Dementia Research Institute and UCLH's National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery to help shape the identity of the new development through artwork that will stimulate debate and provide a lasting legacy on the site.

[The Garfield Weston Foundation donate £5 million to the new facility](#)

The £5 million donation from the Garfield Weston Foundation is their largest gift to UCL to date. They will name the Weston Conference Centre in the new building, which will provide facilities to connect scientists and welcome visiting collaborators from across the UK and the world.

Please also see IoN-DRI [Intranet pages](#) for updates

IoN news

[Centre Celebrates 25 years at 12 Queen Square](#)



- The Wellcome Centre for Human Neuroimaging celebrates 25 years at 12 Queen Square with a reunion of founding members and opening of new 7T MRI scanner and OPM laboratories.

[Professor Olga Ciccarelli named Deputy Editor for Neurology](#)

We're delighted to announce that Professor Olga Ciccarelli, Professor of Neurology and Head of the Department of Neuroinflammation, has been named Deputy Editor for the journal Neurology

Congratulations!

We're pleased to announce the following recent prizes and awards:



[Dr Sonia Gandhi awarded new fellowship](#)

Francis Crick Institute clinical group leader and IoN research fellow, Dr Sonia Gandhi, will receive £2.3 million in a new fellowship from the Medical Research Council to support her work on Parkinson's disease.



[Adnan Alahmadi selected as finalist in the British council Saudi Arabia Study UK Alumni Awards](#)

Dr. Adnan Alahmadi is the Head of the Diagnostic Radiology Department at King Abdulaziz University. He completed his study (master and PHD) in the UK at the IoN.

[The 2020 Blavatnik Awards for Young Scientists in the UK Announced](#)



This year's winners include [Professor Timothy Behrens, University of Oxford and UCL](#), who has developed innovative models for mapping the brain's electrical signals that have significant implications for brain surgery, the treatment of mental disorders, and artificial intelligence. The Laureates were honoured at a ceremony on 4th March 2020.

[Dean's List of top performing students for 2018/19 is announced](#)

Every year the Dean recognises the top 5% of students, in terms of academic performance, from across the Faculty, including over 20 from IoN this year.

Top-voted #MadeAtUCL discoveries

'[Disruptive Discoveries](#)' [#MadeAtUCL](#) is an awareness campaign that engaged millions by bringing the university's research stories to life. We're pleased to share with you the results of the [#MadeAtUCL](#) public vote campaign UCL conducted in the last 3 months last year.

The stories received a total of **18,430 votes** over the three-month period until 9 December 2019.

- [‘Join Dementia Research’ – getting the public involved](#) received the 2nd highest votes overall.
- Other IoN stories receiving the highest votes (all in the top 50%)
 - [Using innovative technology to protect older adults’ finances](#)
 - [Silencing the Huntington’s disease gene](#)
 - [UCL behavioural therapy transforms lives of stroke victims by helping them to read again](#)
 - [Making technology widely available to understand how our brain works](#)
 - [Can old drugs perform new tricks?](#)



Make Alzheimer’s a thing of the past.

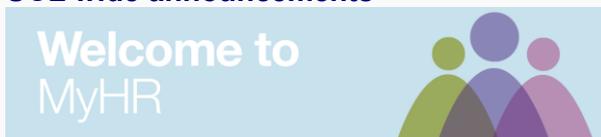
Disruptive thinking since 1826

UCL

#MadeAtUCL

[See more IoN news](#)

UCL wide announcements



MyHR went live on 6 February 2020

Together with MyFinance, UCL now has a single, fully integrated HR and Finance management system.

MyLearning has replaced the Learning Electronic Records System (LERS) and the Single Training Booking System (STBS) and went live on **17 February 2020**.

Visit the [MyHR](#) website and take a look at our [MyHR user-guides and training videos](#) to get started.

[New policies on Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct and Personal Relationships](#)

The wellbeing of our staff and students continues to be of the utmost importance at UCL. We have recently undertaken a review of our policies and procedures that relate to bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct.

TOPS update

- [TOPS newsletters](#)
- [Faculty Futures](#)

Focus: Dignity at Work



- We are rolling out a training programme 'Taking The Lead', which is a bullying and harassment prevention workshop aimed at senior colleagues with line management and supervisory duties. Future sessions will be delivered via Teams

Our AthenaSWAN Silver application renewal was submitted on 11th December 2019. [IoN AthenaSWAN pages](#)

Workshop to support ECR and Teaching Staff

A new information session and workshop on early career promotions was held on 24 March delivered by Prof Helene Plun-Favreau. Slides are available on [IoN Intranet](#).

We encourage all Academic, Teaching and Research staff to consult the [Academic Careers Framework](#) and [academic promotions processes](#) to build their CV and track record towards applying for promotions.

Career resources and events

are on the [IoN intranet](#) including: [ECR portal](#)

Inclusion awards



UCL's Inaugural Inclusion Awards night took place on Wednesday 12 February 2020 and saw a large number of UCL staff and students celebrating the fantastic equity, diversity and inclusion work taking place across UCL.

Congratulations to staff who were nominated. You're all winners to us!

[Further information on the awards](#)

One PS Awards



One PS Awards 2020: Nominations now open

Celebrating our achievements is key to One PS and to UCL being a great place to work.

Nominations close on Thursday 16 April.

[Further information on the awards](#)

Provost's awards for public engagement

Congratulations to staff who were nominated. [Further information on the awards](#)

Please see our [Public Engagement pages](#) for IoN activities and events.

Focus: Sustainability



IoN sustainability pledges 2019-20

- All of our events will now be vegetarian catering and we avoid plastic water bottles
- Achieve Green Impact Silver Office Award
- Organise an IoN green day
- Co-ordinate an IoN wide LEAF group
- Make waste and sustainability part of the IoN Labs induction
- Set up a Lab equipment repair service for IoN buildings

UCL Sustainability team update

We are keeping with the current Green Impact timeline for now and will be reviewing as things unfold in the upcoming weeks with contingency plans in place. We are working with NUS to undertake digital audits and we will be flexible with the following:

- Submission Deadline - 15th May,
- Office Audits - 27th-29th May.

Further information on ION activities is on the [IoN website](#) and [intranet](#)
ION contacts: sarah.lawson@ucl.ac.uk and s.czieso@ucl.ac.uk

Focus: Health, Safety & Lab Operations



Lab closures and COVID-19 work

Guidance on remote working and how to safely shut down labs and offices has been published by safety services.

Guidance for work on COVID-19 has been published by safety services.

- [Extended remote working checklist](#)

Anyone who would like to start work in this area should contact our safety advisor Andy Minnis a.minnis@ucl.ac.uk

Update on drinking water in QSH

Estates recently confirmed that water from all kitchen taps is drinkable. Bathroom

taps & signage will be removed and Estates are in the process of identifying space for fountains on floors that don't have a kitchen.

- **Legionella Safety Reminder:** All Departments have been asked to identify all water systems that are used less than once a week and to introduce a weekly 5 minute flushing routine for those. Contact s.czieso@ucl.ac.uk for questions.
- **New IoN Safety Induction Form:** The new starter safety induction form for IoN buildings has been updated! Please use the new version which can be found on the [intranet safety pages](#) from now on. A signed copy has to be kept on file by the department and numbers of inductions have to be returned to DAs quarterly.
- **IoN Intranet H&S pages** have been updated and information about the new H&S Budget, Management of H&S at IoN and a Critical Incident Plan have been added with more information and material to follow over the next few months <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ion/intranet/health-safety>

Focus: Wellbeing

The current situation with regards to Covid-19 is understandably stressful and upsetting for many of us, as our attention is drawn to our own physical health, and that of those around us, it is also important to remember to care for our mental health and wellbeing at this time. Self-isolation and quarantine can also have a significant impact on our mental health. We would like to make you aware of the following resources available:

- [Care First Employee Assistance Programme:](#)
- [SilverCloud:](#) An 'online cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) platform,
- [Coronavirus and your wellbeing from Mind.](#)
- [10 Minute Mind mindfulness course](#)
- [Q&A on COVID-19 and mental health:](#) a video Q&A from the World Health Organisation
- [Information on healthy lifestyles.](#)
- **Other information and helplines.** From Mental Health First Aid England [My Whole Self](#)

Please keep an eye on [IoN Intranet wellbeing pages](#) for updates, as well as the [list of resources from UCL Health and Wellbeing Human Resources](#)



IoN wellbeing champions (L-R): Jacky Bauer, Linda Taib, Jenny Lange

Join IoN online yoga sessions

We are planning to start a new 10 session course after Easter

- **Beginner classes on Tuesdays, starting on 14th April, 12:00-1:15**
- **Intermediate classes on Fridays starting on 17th April 12:00-1:30.**
- If you want to join, send an email by 10th April to Bernadett Kalmar b.kalmar@ucl.ac.uk indicating which class you would like to join

If you're doing something that you'd like to share, we want to hear about it! Either write to Sandra Porteous s.porteous@ucl.ac.uk or tweet and tag us @UCLIoN

Newly awarded grants over £500k

Epilepsy Society

- Professor Ley Sander (Department of Clinical and Experimental Epilepsy) awarded £705,346 for salary costs from 6 Jan 2020 for 60 months.

MRC

- Professor Sonia Gandhi (Department of Clinical and Movement Neurosciences) awarded £1,902,259 for research into 'Dissecting molecular mechanisms of Parkinson's disease' from 1 Jan 2020 for 48 months.
- Professor Huw Morris/Co-Investigator Dr Tammarn Lashley (Department of Clinical and Movement Neurosciences/ Neurodegenerative Diseases) awarded £975,369 for research into 'Defining and diagnosing neurodegenerative Movement Disorders through integrated analysis of Genetics and neuroPathology (MD-GAP)' starting 1st April for 36 months

NIHR

- Professor Martin Rossor (Department of Neurodegenerative Diseases) awarded £702,276 for the National Director for Dementia Research office starting 1st April for 18 months

Wellcome Trust

- Professor John Duncan (Department of Clinical and Experimental Epilepsy) awarded £752,983 for research into 'Navigation to improve outcome of epilepsy surgery' starting 1 April for 36 months.
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New Starters and staffing news

Welcome to staff who joined ION in the past 3 months.

Mr David Villarroel Campos; Dr Rubika Balendra; Mr Bardur Joensen; Dr Rikesh Rajani; Dr Robert Seymour; Mr Mengke Yang; Mr Nicholas Alexander; Mr Andrea Castegnaro; Miss Samia Mohinta; Miss Isabella Cordani; Mr Jack Brookes; Dr Chiara Pizzamiglio; Miss Krista Sibley; Miss Emily Blackburn; Mrs Joyita Mukherjee; Dr Alessia Bianchi; Dr Eleanna Kara; Miss Joanne Thomas; Dr Timothy Musial; Ms Amy Edmunds; Miss Katrina Cowan; Ms Elizabeth Chambers; Dr Mireia Mato Prado; Miss Sofia Koletsi; Ms Alice Hickling; Dr Emil Gustavsson; Dr Sarmi Sri; Dr Yixing Wu; Mrs Maha Younes; Mr Samson Hall; Ms Catherine Ader; Ms Fiona Pepper; Ms Melissa Leija Salazar; Miss Clara Robson; Mr Desmond Bates; Dr Seema Maru; Dr Nic Cade; Mr Ben Clarke; Ms Erinna Bowman; Dr William Macken; Mrs Masuda Khanom; Mr Chris Routh; Mr James McStravick; Dr Susana Carmona; Ms Samantha Henry; Ms Amber Simpson

We wish our colleagues who have recently left IoN all the very best for the future.

- [Rickie Patani profile in Lancet Neurology](#)
- [The Erasmus+ Mobility programme](#) : Rossana Rizzo attended the Erasmus staff training week for librarians.

[Please see IoN Vacancies for opportunities at IoN](#)

Recent Queen Square Events

Queen Square Inaugural Lectures

[Tuesday 25th February 2020](#)

- Professor James Kilner (Professor of Human Motor Neuroscience, Department of Clinical and Movement Neurosciences): title tbc
 - Professor Ludvic Zrinzo (Professor of Functional Neurosurgery, Department of Clinical and Movement Neurosciences): title tbc
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Upcoming Queen Square events

Due to the ongoing impact of coronavirus, UCL announced that most university buildings will be closed, therefore the majority of upcoming IoN events and seminars have been cancelled or postponed for the foreseeable future. Some events are starting to be delivered online - please check www.ucl.ac.uk/ion/events and [@UCLIoN](https://twitter.com/UCLIoN) for updates

[See more IoN events](#)
