



UCL

THINGS TO TALK ABOUT...

A guide to conversations
with your personal tutor

LET'S GET STARTED

From settling into university life to planning your career after graduation, the relationship you build with your personal tutor will play a large part in the success you achieve at UCL and beyond.

To help students and tutors alike get the most from their regular progress meetings, we have created this brief overview of the type of topics you'll be discussing during your time at UCL. If you like to talk, you may not need it, but it's always useful to have something to fall back on if ever you're lost for words...

For more information on personal tutoring and a list of useful links, go to:

www.ucl.ac.uk/personal-tutoring

THE FIRST YEAR

From orientation and establishing a healthy study routine to forming relationships and planning for the years ahead, there's a lot of ground to cover during year one.

- Settling in
- About personal tutoring
- Making progress
- Support and wellbeing
- Research
- Getting feedback
- Building relationships
- Looking ahead
- Reviewing the year

Settling in

- Where did you live and study before UCL?
- Why did you choose UCL?
- Why did you choose your subject? What are you most looking forward to on the course?
- What do you think you might gain from coming to a University that's well known for its research?
- Do you have a particular destination in mind beyond UCL or are you open to a range of possibilities and hoping UCL will help you shape those?
- Have you met your Transition mentor yet?
- Do you have any particular concerns that you'd like to address now?

About personal tutoring

- Do you understand how personal tutoring is organised in your department/programme?
- What do you think you can expect from your personal tutor, and what can your personal tutor expect from you?
- Do you know about the resources and opportunities available to support you?

Making progress

- How have you found the year so far? What aspect have you found most intellectually stimulating?
- What have been the highlights?
- What have been the hardest parts? How have you managed those?
- Has your view of your subject changed from when you started? If so, how?
- What do you feel you have you learned so far?

Support and wellbeing

- Are you finding all the course materials accessible to you?
- Any issues with physical access on campus?
- Do you know the procedure if you miss any classes due to illness?
- Do you know what to do if you think you might need an extension to a coursework deadline?
- Looking ahead to the exam period, have you applied for any reasonable adjustments you might need?

Research

- Have you been able to get a sense of any of the research activity that's happening in your department?
- What independent investigations have you done so far?
- Have you been able to meet researchers in your department and talk about what they do?

Getting feedback

- Have you had any informal feedback on your work, including contributions to discussions, seminars, labs? What did you learn?
- Have you had any formal feedback yet on your work? If so, what have you learned and what actions will you take forward as you continue to study?
- What kind of feedback do/would you find useful?
- Do you have any questions about your feedback?
- Are you making use of other opportunities to seek feedback e.g. via Moodle or during office hours?
- How confident do you feel about using the correct referencing style for your subject(s)?
- Are you confident that you understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it?

Building relationships

- What opportunities have you had to collaborate with other students? What have you most enjoyed and what did you find most challenging with this?
- Have you used any of the UCL professional teams?
- Have you joined any clubs or societies?
- Have your experiences here made any difference to the way you relate to your friends and family outside UCL?
- What plans do you have for the rest of this academic year to build/develop collaborative relationships?
- Can you think of up to three groups at, or connected to, UCL that you feel a part of? (E.g. social media, societies, departmental etc.)

Looking ahead

- Can you think of a piece of information or advice that's been especially useful to you so far?
- Are you beginning to feel part of a learning and research community? If not, what could you do to make this happen, or what could UCL be doing?
- What plans do you have for the summer?
- Have you thought about volunteering, work shadowing or internship opportunities?
- Have you considered registering for the Global Citizenship Programme?

THE MIDDLE YEARS

During the middle years, continuity is the name of the game, as you polish up key skills, focus on personal and professional development and build firm foundations for the future.

- The year ahead
- Improving your skills and tracking your development
- Planning your career
- Research
- Reviewing the year
- Looking forward to next year

The year ahead

- How are you feeling about the year ahead?
- Looking back at last year, what are the three most significant things you'll take forward this year?
- How are you beginning to identify areas of particular interest to you? Are you reading into particular aspects of your subject(s), or considering dissertation topics that especially interest you?
- What are you doing, and what could you do, to keep up your motivation for study?
- Can you identify three things that you want to achieve or particularly focus on this year?

Improving your skills and tracking your development

- Are there any particular skills you have identified as important for this year? (E.g. project management, research skills, essay-writing or presentation skills.) Do you know where to get help with these?
- Do you know how to use referencing and bibliographic software such as Endnote?
- Are you contributing to the wider community? (E.g. volunteering, sport, music.)
- Are you keeping track of the skills and knowledge you're developing, and making notes about future priorities and plans? Are you aware of different formats you can use for personal development planning (PDP)?

Planning your career

- How developed are your plans for future employment?
- Have you contacted the Careers Service and attended departmental/Faculty events focusing on future career opportunities?
- Have you used any of the UCL professional teams?

Research

- Have you begun to prepare for your own research project?
- What do you understand by research? Why is it important?
- What research have you done so far?
- Are you attending – and perhaps even contributing to – events, talks or research seminars in your department?
- If events like this are not readily available, can you think of ways in which you might help to introduce them in the future?

THE FINAL YEAR

The final year can be uniquely challenging, as your studies come to a head and you prepare for life beyond UCL. It's a time when your personal tutor can be especially helpful.

- The year ahead
- Final year considerations
- Measuring progress (research project/dissertation)
- Planning your career
- Reflecting on your time at UCL

The year ahead

- How are you feeling about the year ahead?
- Looking back at last year, what are the three most significant things you'll take forward this year?
- What progress have you made with identifying areas of particular interest to you, and have you been able to make choices to reflect that interest?
- What are you doing, and what could you do, to keep up your motivation for study?
- Can you identify three things that you want to achieve or particularly focus on this year?

Final year considerations

- How are your research project plans coming along?
- What progress have you made developing the skills that you identified as important for this year? (E.g. project management, research skills, essay-writing or presentation skills.) Do you know where to get help with these?
- Do you have a clear idea of what you intend to do next year?
- Have you begun looking at application schedules for further study or for graduate training schemes?
- Have you contacted the Careers Service?
- The final year can be quite pressured – do you know how to get support if you feel stressed?

Measuring progress (research project/dissertation)

- How is your project work going?
- Has the supervision been useful?
- What would you change about your supervision?
- Have you identified any research skills that you need to develop further?

Planning your career

- Have you made use of the Careers Service?
- Do you have a CV prepared?
- What are you planning to do in the next six months to make your CV stronger?

Reflecting on your time at UCL

- How have you changed during your time at UCL?
- Do you have any recommendations for UCL concerning future students taking the same course as you? Or just in general?
- Where do you want to be in five years' time?
- Do you envisage having an ongoing relationship with UCL? What could that look like?

ONE YEAR MASTERS

There's a lot to pack into a one-year Masters degree, so making regular contact with your personal tutor is vital to your chances of success.

- Early days
- Support and wellbeing
- Getting feedback
- Mid-course concerns
- Planning your career
- Final thoughts

Early days

- Why did you choose UCL?
- What do you feel makes your course distinctive?
- Do you have a particular destination or career in mind or are you hoping that UCL will help shape your ideas?
- Do you have any particular concerns that you'd like to address now?
- Are you clear about your academic programme for the first term? Is there any information you need, or anything you'd like to know more about?
- Do you understand how personal tutoring is organised in your programme?
- What do you think you can expect from your personal tutor and what can your personal tutor expect from you?
- Do you know about the resources and opportunities available to support you?
- Are you thinking about further study beyond your Masters? If so, do you know when the application deadlines are and how to prepare for them?

Support and wellbeing

- Are you finding all the course materials accessible to you?
- Any issues with physical access on campus?
- Do you know the procedure if you miss any classes due to illness?
- Do you know what to do if you think you might need an extension to a coursework deadline?
- Have you applied for any reasonable adjustments that you might need during the exam period?

Getting feedback

- Have you had any informal feedback on your work, during discussions, seminars, labs?
- Have you had any formal feedback yet on your work? If so, what have you learned and what actions will you take forward?
- What kind of feedback do/would you find useful?
- Do you have any questions about your feedback?
- Are you making use of other opportunities to seek feedback e.g. via Moodle or during office hours?
- How confident do you feel about using the correct referencing style for your subject(s)?
- Are you confident that you understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it?

Mid-course concerns

- How have you found the year so far? What aspect have you found most intellectually stimulating?
- What have been your highlights?
- What have been the hardest parts? How have you managed those?
- Are there any particular skills you have identified as important for this year? (E.g. project management, research skills, essay-writing, presentation skills.) Do you know where to get help with these?
- Have you begun work, or preparation, for your research project? What have you done so far?
- Are you attending – and perhaps even contributing to – events, talks or research seminars in your department?
- Have you started looking at applications for further study or employment?

Planning your career

- How developed are your plans for future employment?
- Have you contacted the Careers Service and attended departmental/Faculty events focusing on future career opportunities?
- Have you used any of the UCL professional teams?
- Do you have a CV prepared?
- What are you planning to do in the coming months to make your CV stronger?

Final thoughts

- How is your research project going?
- Has the supervision been useful?
- What would you change about the project work if you could?
- Do you have any recommendations for UCL concerning future students taking the same course as you?
- Where do you want to be in five years' time?
- Do you envisage having an ongoing relationship with UCL? What could that look like?

Useful contacts

UCL Student Support and Wellbeing Services

Website: www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/support/ssw

Email: student.wellbeing@ucl.ac.uk

Follow us: @UCLcares

Address: UCL IOE, 20 Bedford Way,
London, WC1H 0AL

Telephone: 020 7679 0100

Come to the SSW Student Helpdesk for daily drop-ins:

Mondays and Wednesdays 2–4pm

Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays 10.30–12.30pm

Students' Union Advice Service

Website: www.studentsunionucl.org/advice

Drop-ins: **Mondays to Thursdays 10am–1pm and 2–4pm**

Address: **Floor 1, 15 Gordon Street**
London, WC1H 0AH

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