Supporting Students at UCL

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1. Introduction

UCL is committed to the wellbeing and safety of our students, providing suitable support and guidance to them in times of need.

There are many sources of support for students who are having difficulties whether they are academic, emotional, financial or physical, however sometimes it is hard to know how to help a student who appears to be struggling, particularly if you feel they are unwilling or unable to seek the help they need.

The purpose of this document is to outline support available through UCL Student Support and Wellbeing and through external services, and what to do in certain situations to ensure students receive the support they require. The aim is to provide consistency in how students are supported across UCL, to ensure they are referred appropriately and aware of how UCL can help.

We recommend that you take some time to look at UCL’s student support pages to familiarise yourself with the resources available to students during their studies with us. At the end of this document, there are links to a number of key resources, including policies and procedures relating to the welfare of students.

2. Student Support and Wellbeing

The UCL Student Support and Wellbeing is part of Student and Registry Services and comprises several different teams, each focussing on different aspects of support. The Student Support and Wellbeing
department is also responsible for liaison with UCL’s multi-faith advisor and with the NHS practice currently based in Gower Place.

2.1 Student Disability Services

**UCL Student Disability Services** provide a comprehensive range of support services for students who have a disability which impacts upon their studies at UCL. They support students with physical and sensory impairments, specific learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders, mental health difficulties, and long-term health conditions. As well as arranging for adjustments to learning environments, the team loan out specialist equipment and provide one-to-one tutoring and support for students with specific learning difficulties.

Students with mental health difficulties of a more than temporary nature may benefit from the non-therapeutic support that can be arranged by Student Disability Services. Staff in Student Disability Services can also advise on, and liaise with other staff in the implementation of, appropriate reasonable adjustments to teaching and learning in individual cases.

2.2 Student Psychological Services

**UCL Student Psychological Services** is dedicated to helping UCL students with personal, emotional and psychological concerns. The Student Psychological Service team consists of a variety of highly trained and experienced professionals. There are currently two psychiatrists and ten therapists on staff with a range of psychological training and expertise.

Students are encouraged to refer themselves to the service and register online. The Service aims to see a student as soon as possible. Waiting times vary according to demand and take into account the urgency of the circumstances. Priority appointments are available for students who meet certain criteria.

Student Psychological Services does not offer crisis support. Please click here for crisis support information.

2.3 International Student Support

The **International Student Support** team is dedicated to providing support and guidance to all non-UK students at UCL, including arranging the International Student Orientation Programme and providing guidance on practical matters.

The International Student Support team does not provide immigration or visa advice, but works closely with UCLU’s Rights and Advice Centre who have a team of trained and experienced caseworkers who support all UCL students. To find out more about the services they provide, please take a look at the [UCLU Welfare website](#).

2.4 Study Abroad

The **Study Abroad** team provides welfare and administrative support to UCL students undertaking a year abroad. The Study Abroad team supports the Global Engagement Strategy in seeking opportunities for UCL students to study abroad as part of their degree.
In addition to the support provided by the Study Abroad team, UCL students abroad have access to free, confidential support is available 24/7 through Care first. Through this, students can obtain practical information, resources and sign-posting to other services, as well as short-term counselling on a variety of topics.

2.5 Student Centre

The Student Centre offers information and support to students enrolled on programmes of study at UCL and UCL alumni. If you are not sure which is the most appropriate service to direct a student to, you can send them to the Student Centre who can assist or signpost accordingly.

The Student Centre is located on the ground floor of the Chadwick Building on the Gower Street Campus and is open from 10:00 – 16:00, Monday to Friday.

2.6 Events

The Student Support and Events Team is responsible for the organisation of key student events on behalf of Student and Registry Services. Their primary events are the annual Graduation Ceremonies and the bi-annual Opening of Session (Start of Term) events. They also provide logistical support and expertise for ISOP, the annual Study Abroad Fair and other student welfare events.

2.7 Chaplaincy

The Chaplain provides pastoral support to students of all religious backgrounds and none, to provide support to faith groups, and to enable UCL to be a place where differing religious views can be discussed with respect.

2.8 UCL Health Centre

Gower Place Practice is the UCL Health Centre and covers a large area of Central and North London which enables most students to remain registered with the Practice during their time at UCL.

Practitioners at Gower Place Practice are particularly experienced in the care of university students. They know the university system well and are experienced in dealing with issues that students may face, whether it is emotional problems, stress related to exams and study or mental health issues.

It is important to emphasise to students the importance of registering with a local GP. Students should be encouraged to speak with their GP if they are facing psychological or emotional issues, as well as psychical illnesses.

Registered students can make appointments or attend the walk-in surgery which operates from Monday – Friday between 9.30am to 10.30am and 2.30pm to 3.30pm.

Gower Place Practice is currently located at 3 Gower Place but will shortly be moving to a new premises, also close to the UCL campus. They will move to 8 Ridgmount Street on 18th April 2016 and will be renamed to Ridgmount Practice.
3. Out of hours support

Student Support and Wellbeing services are available between 9:00 – 17:00, Monday to Friday. Outside of these hours, students can access support if required through the following channels:

3.1 Care first

UCL Student Support and Wellbeing is working in partnership with Care first to provide students with an out of hours support and information helpline. Information and counselling are provided via telephone from Monday to Friday from 5pm to 9am, at weekends and during Bank Holidays and College closure periods. UCL students currently abroad on a study abroad programme have access to Care first services 24/7.

To use the Care first helpline, students should call 0800 174 319. The service is paid for by UCL and is available only to UCL students. This means that students will be required to provide their name, date of birth and UCL student number in order for a Care first specialist to be able to assist.

Further information about Care first can be found here.

3.2 Samaritans

Central London Samaritans provides emotional support round the clock for anyone experiencing feelings of distress or despair. They can be contacted by phone (116 123) or email (jo@samaritans.org) and they also offer a drop-in service 9:00am - 9:00pm every day at 46 Marshall Street London W1F 9BF.

3.3 Nightline

London Nightline is a confidential listening, support and practical information service for students in London. Students can contact Nightline Nightline from 6pm to 8am every night of term via telephone, Skype, text or e-mail. Tel: 0207 631 0101, email listening@nightline.org.uk, Skype chat: nightline.chat. Skype Phone: londonnightline. Text: 07717 989 900

3.4 Students staying in halls of residence

All UCL accommodation buildings have Wardens and Vice Wardens on site, even out of hours. Wardens can be contacted through the local hall office. If a student has an emergency, out of hours contact details are provided at hall offices for the on-call Warden or Vice Warden.

Although not operated by UCL, the University of London Intercollegiate Halls have similar arrangements in place, and information on their services and support arrangements can be found via the University of London website.

4. Student of concern
In serious cases where you are very concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a student, we would encourage you to complete the UCL Student Cause for Concern Form. You can also email studentofconcern@ucl.ac.uk

Within 24 hours of receiving a Student of Concern form Student and Registry Services will take action on the concern reported. The person who submitted the form will be notified of this action.

Where possible, we would encourage you to speak to the student in the first instance to let them know that you are concerned about them and that you are informing Student Support and Wellbeing.

Student and Registry Services will then work with the student and other services to support the student’s physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

Where a student appears to be missing Student and Registry Services will work with UCL Security Services and the Police to try to ensure the student is safe.

4.1 Emergency situations

In a situation where you are concerned a student is in immediate danger of hurting themselves or others you should phone 999 or take them to any Accident and Emergency Department. The closest Accident and Emergency Department to UCL is at University College Hospital located on Euston Road.

More information on supporting students in crisis can be found on the student support page.

5. What to do if…

5.1 A student has stopped engaging

If student has stopped engaging completely and there are existing welfare issues and you are concerned about their safety and wellbeing, please complete the UCL Student Cause for Concern Form. Otherwise, please follow departmental procedures for non-engagement.

Where a student appears to be missing Student and Registry Services will work with UCL Security Services and the Police to try to ensure the student is safe.

5.2 A student is having financial difficulties

Encourage the student to visit the Financial Advice and Support webpage and contact the UCL Student Funding Welfare Coordinator for further advice.

5.3 A student discloses that they have been affected by sexual violence or harassment

Support and guidance can be found in the Sexual Violence Guidance. If a student wishes to report the incident to UCL, they can do this online or contact student.wellbeing@ucl.ac.uk. The Student Support
and Wellbeing team will then be in contact with the student to arrange an appointment as soon as possible.

5.4 A student discloses that they have been a victim of bullying

Guidance can be found in the UCL Policy on Harassment and Bullying. It is hoped that most cases of alleged harassment and/or bullying will be resolved by the informal procedures outlined in the Policy, but formal action may be considered where informal action proves ineffective, or where a student feels that an informal approach is not appropriate.

The UCL Student Mediator can provide advice and guidance to students who have been affected by bullying and/or harassment.

5.5 A student is pregnant

Students are encouraged, but are under no obligation, to inform their Personal Tutor, Departmental Tutor, Programme Tutor, or in case of research degree students, Principal Supervisor, of their pregnancy.

Students should discuss and agree maternity-related absence with their department in advance. UCL recommends that students take at least 6 months to a year’s interruption, but at the very least, they will be required to take two weeks’ compelling maternity-related absence from study, or at least four weeks if they are on a placement away from UCL.

Further details can be found in the Support for Pregnant Students guidance.

5.6 A student is transitioning gender

UCL has a designated, primary contact person to provide practical support on transitioning to students at the University. A student who intends to transition, or is transitioning, and wishes to discuss this, should in the first instance contact Denise Long, Director of Student Support and Wellbeing.

The Policy and Guidance for Students Transitioning Gender provides full details, including how departmental staff can support students transitioning, as well as links to key actions that may need to be taken into account to support the process of a student transition at UCL.

5.7 You suspect a student of radicalisation or engaging with extremist groups/materials

If you are concerned about the behaviour or actions of a student in relation to radicalisation or extremism, contact Andy Saffery (Deputy Registrar & Lead Officer for Prevent at UCL).

Information and guidance about the Prevent strategy can be found here.

5.8 A student is suffering from personal/emotional difficulties
Most personal problems experienced at university can be resolved quickly by talking to a family member or a friend or by seeking help from tutors or other advisors. However, some students may experience emotional or psychological difficulties that may require appropriate professional support.

Appendix 4 of the Student Mental Health Policy provides detailed information about recognising and managing emotional problems in students, including steps on responding to a student who is distressed.

Student Disability Services also have a [detailed guide](#) with advice for staff on dealing with students with mental health issues.

### 5.9 You suspect a student may have a mental health issue

If you are concerned about the mental health of a student in your department, we would advise that you read through Student Disability Services factsheet for staff about [Student Mental Health](#), which includes information about signs that a student may have a mental health issue and what to do if you are concerned.

You can also consult one of the student counsellors in order to assess the best course of action for the student. You can do this by phone, ringing 21487 (020 7679 1487) or in person by arranging an appointment with the Student Psychological Services, Senior Executive Officer ([g.nandagopal@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:g.nandagopal@ucl.ac.uk)).

### 5.10 You suspect/a student discloses that they have been self-harming

Although self-harm can be distressing to witness, it is not unusual. If you think a student has been self-harming, or they disclose to you that they have, encourage the student to engage with professional support through their GP.

You should also encourage the student to register with [Student Psychological Services](#).

### 5.11 A student discloses that they are feeling suicidal

The suicide or attempted suicide of a student is an extreme, but fortunately rare, response to mental distress. Appendix 1 of the Student Mental Health Policy provides detailed information and steps on dealing with suicide threats and dealing with students engaged in an attempt on their lives. A summary of some key points are listed below. It is important to refer to the policy for full guidance.

In such cases, the primary aim is to get them to see a counsellor or a doctor.

- The student should be settled in a comfortable environment with opportunity to talk
- Speak to them calmly and without a sense of urgency
- Gently introduce the idea of seeking help from a counsellor or doctor
- If they agree, try to arrange an urgent appointment with Student Psychological Services or Gower Place Practice.
- Outside of office hours, they should go to UCH Accident and Emergency
- Stay with the student and ask if they would like a family or friend to be called
- Discreetly try to summon support of a colleague
• If the student refuses help, provide them with contact details for Samaritans and Nightline
• In the case of a student who appears unmanageable or their life appears to be at risk, summon an ambulance and the police on 999. The police have powers to remove people who are a danger to themselves to a place of safety.

5.12 A student requests to speak to a women’s adviser

Some women students might prefer to speak to a woman member of staff outside their own Department if they are facing issues and would like support and guidance.

The UCL Adviser to Women Students is especially concerned with the welfare and social needs of women at UCL. The Adviser is pleased to see any woman student to discuss any problem, be it academic, social or personal.

Further details can be found here.

5.13 A student is feeling stressed about exams and/or deadlines

Some stress ahead of exams and deadlines is normal and can be managed through certain techniques. Encourage the student to read through some of the online resources for stress management.

If a student is finding the stress overwhelming and is struggling to cope, encourage them to speak to their GP in the first instance.

Student Psychological Services sometimes run workshops that students may find beneficial. They may also wish to register with Student Psychological Services.

5.14 A student is homeless

UCL does not provide emergency accommodation. If a student finds themselves without anywhere to stay, for short term emergency accommodation there are a number of Youth or other Hostels around London. You can search for hostel accommodation on the Hostel World website.

They can put themselves on the waiting list for UCL accommodation or contact the University of London Housing Services for advice. Further details can be found here.

In some cases it may be appropriate for the student to take some time away from their studies and return when they are in a more stable position. See the Interruption of Study page for further details.

5.15 A student is a parent

Information about support for students who are parents can be found on the Support for Student Parents page. This page provides details on the UCL Day Nursery, funding support, breast-feeding and baby changing facilities and links to information about family accommodation.

5.16 A student is unsure if they are on the right course
If a student is unsure whether they are on the right course, remind the student that it can take time to settle in and adjust to university studies. Make the student aware of their options – whether there is any possibility to change courses, or an aspect of their course, or any other appropriate academic advice to ensure they are well supported.

5.17 A student is struggling to settle in

If a student is struggling to settle in, remind them that this is normal and many students struggle in the first term - whether it is finding friends, managing money or getting used to university level study. Student Psychological Services sometimes run workshops that students may find beneficial. If they are struggling to cope, encourage them to speak to their GP. They may also wish to register with Student Psychological Services.
Undergraduate students should be encouraged to engage with the Transition Mentor Programme, designed to support new first-year students to settle in quickly and achieve their potential. Some students may also benefit from making an appointment with the UCL Cultural Consultation Service.

5.18 A student has a dispute with a member of UCL staff

In cases where a student has a dispute with a UCL member of staff or service, they should contact the UCL Student Mediator. The role of the Student Mediator is to advise and assist UCL students with the resolution of complaints, involving staff or other students or services of UCL. See the Student Mediator webpage for further details, including contact details and appointment information.
Students may also wish to refer to the Student Complaints Procedure. UCLU Rights and Advice can also provide support and guidance to students regarding complaints.

6. Interruption of studies for health and wellbeing issues

Sometimes taking some time away from university is the best course of action to offer a student the best chance of recovering or improving their wellbeing. In such cases where a student is interrupting their studies for health and/or wellbeing issues, they would be welcome to meet with Student Support and Wellbeing ahead of this to discuss support arrangements. It is not essential to do this, but if the student has questions about support during interruption, then Student Support and Wellbeing can assist. Although students do not have access to UCL support services during their period of interruption, Student Support and Wellbeing can advise on seeking support outside of UCL.

Prior to resuming their studies, students will be required to provide assurance that their studies will not be detrimental to their health or their help to their studies before re-enrolment can be permitted. This will include providing medical evidence and a personal statement to indicate that they are well enough to live and work in a university environment, which may also be followed up by a welfare appointment with Student Support and Wellbeing. UCL has a team of appointed medical advisers who sit on the appointment panel, review medical evidence and advise on fitness to study.
Following the welfare appointment, Student Support and Wellbeing will make recommendations to the Faculty Tutor as to whether they feel the student is fit to resume their studies, and what on-going support the student may require.

Students receive an email when their interruption has been authorised to confirm the process and what documents they will need to provide. For this reason, it is important to indicate on the interruption form if a student requires a return to study appointment with Student Support and Wellbeing.

The Student Support and Wellbeing team will contact students shortly before they are due to return from interruption to provide request documentation and to arrange a welfare appointment.

7. Under-18s and vulnerable adults

Particular considerations may be taken into account if the student is under 18 or classed as a vulnerable adult. The UCL Safeguarding policy is currently under review – an updated version will be available online shortly.

8. Academic support

8.1 Personal Tutor

Every student at UCL is provided with a Personal Tutor (a supervisor in research degrees), who will normally be a member of teaching staff but not necessarily teaching courses taken by their tutees.

Personal tutorial sessions should be scheduled in both small group and one-to-one formats to support tutees' learning and development, as well as considering personal welfare where needed.

Further information on the role of the Personal Tutor can be found here.

8.2 Departmental Tutor

The Departmental Tutor has oversight for a range of activities within the department as outlined here. In terms of welfare and pastoral support, the Departmental Tutor is responsible for the induction of new students to the department, overseeing the Personal Tutor Scheme and the transition programme and providing advice to students on a wide range of academic and personal issues.

8.3 Faculty Tutor

The Faculty Tutor, in collaboration with the Dean, has overall responsibility for ensuring both that appropriate action is taken in relation to students and to learning and teaching matters.

In terms of student welfare, the Faculty Tutor has general academic and pastoral oversight of all students (undergraduate, graduate taught and graduate research students) in the Faculty, including managing and monitoring the Personal Tutor Scheme, careers advice and providing advice and direction to students experiencing difficulties (academic, financial, medical or personal).
Where the Faculty has a separate Faculty Graduate Tutor s/he will have responsibility for graduate research students. The Faculty Tutor will, however, have overall responsibility for the general academic and pastoral oversight of all students in the Faculty.

Further information on the role of the Faculty Tutor can be found here.

9. Further resources

9.1 Student Support and Wellbeing video

The Student Support and Wellbeing introduction video provides information about the support services students have access to at UCL, including; the Student Centre, Student Psychological Services, Student Disability Services, religious support, support in UCL housing, the UCL Health Centre and the Cultural Consultation Service. This video may be useful to refer to in departmental inductions, or to share with students as required throughout the year.

9.2 Self-help resources

Student Psychological Services provides a range of online self-help resources for students on personal development and mental health, including procrastination, self-esteem, sleep, anxiety, stress and depression. They also have a wealth of information and advice on problems commonly experienced by students on their support pages.

You may find it helpful to familiarise yourself with these resources so you can direct students to them as appropriate.

They also have a self-help library with many books that students can borrow. The library is located on the ground floor of No. 3 Taviton Street, London WC1H 0BT.

9.3 Student Mental Health at UCL – Advice for Staff

Student Disability Services have a detailed guide with advice for staff on dealing with students with mental health issues. We would encourage staff to familiarise themselves with the contents of this document.

9.4 Support through UCLU

UCLU has a range of services to support students, including the Rights and Advice Service which provide advice and support in areas including; immigration, academic, housing, employment and other legal and university matters.

UCLU also offers peer support groups for students which you may wish to encourage a student to attend, if appropriate.
They have three main peer support groups – one (Students4Students) is open to any students experiencing any kind of mental health issue whereas the other one (Student Minds) is more specific to eating disorders and the third one (Medics4Medics) is specific to medical students.

Further information can be found on the UCLU Peer Support Services page.

9.5 Cultural Consultation Service

The UCL Cultural Consultation Service aims to enhance learning and teaching outcomes for students and staff facing cross-cultural and social conflicts. The service can support students facing difficulties making the transition to university life, adjusting to a new education system and adapting to a new culture.

Further information about the Cultural Consultation Service can be found here.

9.6 Support for staff

If you feel you need emotional support after a difficult or distressing situation with a student, contact Occupational Health for details of the Employee Assistance Programme.

10. Policies and procedures

UCL Student Mental Health Policy
UCL Policy on Harassment and Bullying (Students)
Sexual Violence Guidance
Interruption of study
Pregnancy during studies
UCL Medical Evidence Guidance
UCL Support to Study Policy and Fitness to Study Procedure
UCL Guidance for Students Transitioning Gender
UCL Safeguarding Policy (currently under review)