



UCL

# Estates Strategy

2022-27

## Executive Summary

The Estates Strategy is part of a connected whole, as a key component of the Strategic Plan 2022-27. It has evolved through consultation with the UCL community, where we have learned from the daily challenges experienced by users of our estate and identified opportunities for positive change.

The Estates Strategy addresses years of underinvestment in the maintenance of our estate with a focus on safety and compliance. The Estates Strategy will, over time, reduce the size of our estate through densification, enabling greater investment in our owned spaces. UCL's sporadic and often unplanned growth has created an estate reliant on high-cost leases, fragile and fragmented infrastructure, and low space utilization, which has become more evident in the post pandemic environment.

The Estates Strategy is aligned to the Finance Strategy, with a clear focus on getting our collective house in order and includes opportunities for a wider range of stakeholders to engage in the discussion regarding what we invest in.

A core and underlying theme of the Estates Strategy is UCL's sustainability commitments and our target to reach net zero carbon by 2030. This can only be realised by embodying sustainability in all our Estates decisions and financial investments.

The Estates Strategy recognises and focuses on the need to invest more in putting our students at the heart of campus as well as much improve standards of accessibility and inclusive design and planning.

## Estates Strategy themes

The following themes are the focus of the Estates Strategy over the Strategic Plan period and will be delivered through an aligned portfolio approach.

- 1. Safety, compliance and infrastructure**  
Creating a more resilient campus by necessary and key investment in the core infrastructure including the significant backlog of repairs, compliance and maintenance work that have built up over time.
- 2. Finish what we started**  
Completing the capital projects which include ION/ DRI (Centre of Excellence in NeuroScience), UCL East (UCL's new academic and residential campus in East London), Oriel (a world-leading centre for advancing eye health with Moorfields Eye Hospital), and the 20 Bedford Way (IOE) masterplan phase II (creating a modern, better utilised and fit for purpose teaching, learning and working environment).
- 3. Densification and quality of space (better use of better space)**  
Investing in denser and better specified spaces to save lease costs, reduce fragmentation across departments, platforms and services and enable UCL to support additional student numbers in learning and study spaces and other important UCL activity, which will support our ability to excel across teaching, research and innovation.
- 4. Campus experience and student experience**  
Investing in short term campus impact projects over the Strategic Plan period including public realm works, new student spaces and progressing other initiatives with the Students' Union aligned to the Student Life Strategy.
- 5. Start to conceive and design our medium-term strategy**  
Start to plan for the medium term now and invest resource into the feasibility, decant strategies and planning of strategic projects across Bloomsbury and UCL East.

## Estates Strategy principles

The Estates Strategy principles align to the above themes have been developed to guide UCL's decision making and investments.

- 1. Provide and maintain a safe and healthy environment** for staff, students, people we work with and for those who visit.
- 2. Be more efficient with our space.** Make better use of better space, increase the efficiency and density of activity across our campuses and have better data and space management tools.
- 3. Reduce fragmentation.** Bring academic units, platform technologies and supporting services together to benefit and be more productive from co-location.
- 4. Embody environmental sustainability and accessibility in everything we do.** Enable realisation of the Sustainability Strategy, and our accessibility plans.
- 5. Improve campus experience for all users and put students at the heart of campus.** Using our resources to improve campus experience for all and in partnership with Students' Union UCL, to create the learning, study and social spaces that connect our student community and give a stronger sense of belonging.
- 6. Invest in better teaching and conference space and making the best use of it.** Invest in capacity, functionality, quality and utilization so that we can provide the right type of space when it is needed for UCL students and staff.
- 7. Rationalise our leases.** Realise savings through planned exits from non-strategic and short-term leased space in favour of consolidation in freehold and long leasehold properties.
- 8. Spend within our means.** Commit to a realistic and deliverable short-term capital plan, while planning for significant future investment.
- 9. Plan for the future.** Align the Estates Strategy with size and shape planning to accommodate change in a managed and controlled fashion.