

UCL Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2021

Action plan for Objective 3 (June 2019)

Strategic vision

Enhance our inclusive, caring and supportive community by positively promoting good health and wellbeing (social, physical and mental) as the foundation for academic success and a great student experience.

Main objectives

1. Establish a whole-university approach to student health and wellbeing.
2. Support students in their integration into life at UCL.
3. Develop resources to encourage personal awareness of health and wellbeing and facilitate peer support.
4. Establish effective links between UCL, the NHS and other services to deliver integrated mental health care and improved risk management.
5. Ensure support for disabled students or those affected by health and wellbeing difficulties is personalised and the adjustments are effective.
6. Align student and staff wellbeing policies and initiatives to foster an inclusive and supportive community.

Introduction and context

Wellbeing does not mean an absence of physical or mental illness. Rather it is a state of physical, mental and emotional health where a student is able to engage meaningfully in learning and contribute to their community. Wellbeing is personal and multifactorial, but typically includes feelings of being socially connected, a sense of direction and belonging, satisfaction with personal achievements, and low levels of anxiety.

This strategy sets out to embed a whole-university approach to health and wellbeing so that students can reach their full potential, be successful and enjoy their time at UCL.

The strategy has been developed and will be delivered in partnership with Students' Union UCL. It recognises the positive impact of inclusive and welcoming communities on student wellbeing and commits to making sure that all students thrive at UCL. There should be no stigma in disclosing disability and health/mental health difficulties. A new clinical pathway for students affected by mental health difficulties will provide more students with evidence-based treatment, in a timelier manner than is currently the case.

There are numerous dependencies between staff and students. The strategy sets out to align approaches to staff and students' health and wellbeing in order to bring about cultural change and lasting improvements.

The strategy reflects UCL's context and mission described in UCL 2034. UCL students come from a wide range of backgrounds and bring a diversity of prior experiences to our community. In 2018/19, there are around 42,000 students enrolled on programmes of study and research at undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research levels across 11 faculties. Whilst UCL has more postgraduates than undergraduate students, some undergraduate programmes attract students as young as 16 years old. Around forty per cent of UCL students are international. UCL's location, in central London, further contributes to the richness of the student experience.

In 2018, UK government policy shifted towards an explicit expectation that universities will make student health and wellbeing a strategic priority. A former universities minister, Sam Gyimah, expressed that it is no longer acceptable for universities solely to see their responsibility as the training of the mind but that they also need to work to adopt a sense of real importance of wellbeing across the institution. As such, external developments inform the strategy, too.

The six main objectives of the strategy set out UCL's approach to student health and wellbeing over the period 2019-2021. Each objective is achieved by a group of actions to be set in motion immediately and be fully embedded by 2021.

The strategy will be refreshed in 2021 alongside the UCL Education Strategy and the Research Strategy.

Action plan

Objective 3 - Develop resources to encourage awareness of wellbeing and facilitate peer support

Looking after oneself and awareness of how social, physical and mental factors contribute to wellbeing are essential for student success. Students take ownership of their health and wellbeing, taking proactive steps to engage with support when this is needed. Facilitating peer support through community-building activities and providing students with information and advice on wellbeing are key priorities for UCL.

Leads:

- Mitesh Vagadia – UCL
 - Katie Sykes – SUUCL
- a) Develop a web-based 'Wellbeing for Success' platform to inform students and encourage them to set goals and make choices for a healthy life at university and beyond. Work in partnership with students to develop content for the platform that reflects diverse views and experiences.
- UCL Wellbeing for Success blog/platform – The current blog is a good foundation for the Wellbeing for Success platform. The plan is to continue with the blogs focusing on self-support and promoting through social media channels which includes Wellbeing Wednesday takeover. Blog analytics will provide a more accurate picture of number of views.
 - Blog Editorial Board – Having a student centred approach to the content is essential, in order to ensure this occurs we will set up a group editorial board made up of a DCP member, Student Union member, Sabbatical officers, SRAs and current students to oversee the content of the SSW blog, vlogs, podcasts, which will be hosted on both the SSW and Student Union website.
 - SSW webpage – Support information on the SSW website provides useful content around self-care. This will need to be regularly revised, reviewed and expanded.
 - Students sharing talent platform – Part of the Wellbeing for Success platforms students will have the opportunity to share and showcase their personal interests, talents and abilities. This will involve working with the Student Union, Student union clubs and societies with the possibility of using the Student Centre space to host the events – 'UCLs Got Talent'.
 - The NHS Five Ways to Wellbeing – Connect, Be active, Keep learning, Give to others and Be mindful provides the next level of support and focus for the Wellbeing

for Success platform. The plan is to produce a series of articles around each heading which provides tips on how to Connect, Be active etc.

- “Little things matter” campaign – The focuses on students providing us a sentence of what they consider is the little things in life that may them smile or appreciate life. This then can be shared via social media or yearly pocket size book for other students to use and contribute themselves. The thought process for this is to help students who are feeling particularly low/down obtain a positive perspective.
 - Learn from the experts – Research into proven methods and techniques of achieving a sense of wellbeing from experts around the world – Tony Robbins, Robin Sharma, Dipak Chopra. Using this information to complement and enhance our content and methods.
 - Give to others – It is proven that volunteering and giving to others has a direct positive impact on a person’s wellbeing. Working closely with the Student Union it is key we provide and promote students volunteering opportunities. This will also include a social media campaign around “What have you done to help others?”
- b) Isolation, perfectionism, time-management difficulties, exam anxiety, sleep problems, imposter syndrome and financial worries are faced by students. There is experience and expertise across UCL on managing and overcoming these issues. Encourage exchange of ideas and best practice through the Student Health and Wellbeing Community of Practice.
- SSW webpage – Support information on the SSW website provides useful content around self-care, which covers the above topics and provides students information on methods to deal with each one. We will continue to expand on this and review regular.
 - SHW COP – Through the development of the SHW COP the core members have identified 5 projects of interest. Each of the projects will focus on individual areas. The list of the COP projects stated below which enhance student support with the challenges mentioned.
 - PG students’ project would like to develop a clear understanding of the support available and how to access it and to provide our PG students with a sense of value and belonging within the UCL community.
 - School of Life and Wellbeing will provide a platform for internal and external expert speakers to share their knowledge and tips on key topics. Experts will include personal experiences of students, academics, professionally services staff, alumni and external motivational speakers. It is just as important for current students to share their stories of success and overcoming adversity. Promote through Videos, Podcasts, and Talks.
 - Symptoms Checker will enable student facing staff to accurately triage and refer to support services without needing to be an expert. Empowering staff and students to support each other.

- Departmental Wellbeing toolkit will aim to improve students' sense of belonging to a community within their academic department by improving awareness of wellbeing resources and practises within academic departments, identifying and share good wellbeing practice across academic departments and increase in wellbeing initiatives run by academic departments.
 - Evaluation and Surveys will engage with data to produce tangible metrics in support of the student H&W agenda and evidence the correlation between good wellbeing, student experience and student success.
 - Lunch time workshops for students – In consultation with the UCL colleagues and students - look at delivering specific workshops like the lunch time lecturers around the key topics - Isolation, perfectionism, time-management difficulties etc. which could also be based on the student life cycle.
- c) Provide a range of dedicated resources, such as apps and online training programmes, to promote good health and wellbeing and ways to cope with complex experiences, thoughts and emotions.
- SSW webpage – The UCL SSW webpage is a central dedicated resource for current students looking for information and support about health and wellbeing – the content is contributed from number of different resources and individuals including students. The Development, Comms and Projects (DCP) team will continue to ensure relevant content is updated regularly in the same style and standard.
 - UCL Positive App – Current students can download the UCL Positive App for free this is flexible, app-based programme designed to help students positively shift the way they think, feel and behave. It combines accessible science with practical tools to help students improve and maintain your psychological wellbeing. The DCP team will look at ways of promoting the app for current students and new students from Sep 2019.
 - Welcome to UCL app – The Welcome to UCL app for new starters has elements of self-help information for new students and promotes student wellbeing in general by providing information about the UCL support services on offer. We will continue to build on the success of the app from 2018-19. The Welcome App has the capability to offer self-guided tours such as the health tours. This will be in addition to health and wellbeing tours provided by external partners and for those who are not able to attend the tour in person. We are in the final stages of confirming this with colleagues in student recruitment who organise Campus tours. Please refer to Objective 2D.
 - UCL Go! app – The UCL Go! app has access to a wider audience (current students). DCP is working with UCL Go! app team to promote SSW content to current students. This is currently in the early stages but the aim is to find out what students are using the app for and how we can use the app as another tool to reach our students. For 2019 exam period – we have agreed with the UCL Go! app team

to use the push notification function to notify students of any travel disruptions which may impact students attending the Excel centre for exams.

- Umii app – We are in talks with Umii, an app which coordinates new students getting to know one another before arriving. We are in consultation regarding costs and return of investment and whether to go ahead for Sep 2019.
 - Activity Tracker – working with colleagues in the student union we will continue to promote project active opportunities and support the development of a UCL “Activity tracker” an online platform that rewards students for doing physical activity. Students will earn points for being physically active and then be able to deem their points for rewards around campus – coffee shops
 - Moodle and Portico Homepage – A member of the DCP will look at ways in which we can promote key messages, blogs, videos etc via the Moodle and Portico Homepage.
 - Ready for University – Dedicated online web resource which includes techniques to help students prepare and deal with university life. This will include helping students produce a checklist of identifiable personal habits that they have used previously to help themselves through adverse times. Student minds webpages offers similar advice to prepare students for University.
 - Online wellbeing training for students – DCP will continue to promote online training for students for example suicide awareness. We will continue to build on the online training project started with the aim to add the training to the UCL HR single training booking system.
 - Benchmarking – We will be set the task to horizon scan and research the sector to see what other potential dedicated resources we can potential promote to our students.
 - UCL Student Opportunities Guide – The VP Education team along with the Student Union has created a guide for students to promote the numerous opportunities to learn outside of their degree programme. From being a ChangeMaker, A Student Quality Reviewer, Transition mentor to an Academic Representative. It’s vital we work with the VP Education team and Students Union to promote these opportunities which promote good health and wellbeing.
- d) Building networks, learning new skills and contributing to the lives of others can help students stay connected and focused on the present. Encourage volunteering, career development, study abroad and entrepreneurship opportunities to this effect.
- Building networks – SSW has built up positive working relationships with other UCL departments, Student Union and external partners to support UCL students. DCP will continue to build on these by working closer with colleagues in Student Union volunteering services, Careers and Study board team.
 - Volunteering opportunities – SSW sits on the Student Union volunteering steering group and will continue to work in collaboration with the service and promote the

benefits of volunteering. We will continue to work the Student Volunteering service to promote the positive messages of volunteering and wherever possible use volunteering opportunities for students to meet other students – See Action 3F

- Benefits of Study Abroad – Work in collaboration with Study Abroad team promote the benefits of study abroad – videos, Q & A's with students who have completed study abroad. The plan is to create a working group to see how we can support the Study abroad team to ensure students engage with their service and take up opportunities. Survey students on their study abroad or have completed a study abroad the reason they decided to pursue the study abroad route.
 - Entrepreneurship – Work in collaboration with UCL Innovation & Enterprise department to promote the benefits of Entrepreneurship – videos, Q & A's with students/alumni who are successful entrepreneurs. The plan is to create a working group to see how we can support the Innovation & Enterprise department team to ensure students engage with their service and take up opportunities.
- e) Enhance existing and develop new peer support programmes across UCL to facilitate health and wellbeing-related conversations and activities.
- Peer support programmes – Map out what peer support programmes across UCL currently exist such as the transition mentors and look at which ones are working and why. The TA forum will be able to provide an insight into what support programmes are available via the academic department.
 - SSW training for Peer support programmes – The SSW team are keen in shaping the development of the peer mentor schemes by ensure peer mentors are provided training about the relevant SSW support on offer to students.
 - SRA peer mentor in halls of residence – The SRA model currently offers peer to peer support in student residences which has been enhanced each year. Further development in the area is happening and is highlighted in Action 3F.
 - Peer support working group – Create a working group to develop new peer support programmes that would benefit students to facilitate health and wellbeing activities – for example Affiliate Students peer support programme.
 - Departmental Buddy scheme - refer to Objective 2 action C.
 - Current students delivering campus tours – refer to objective 2 action D.
 - Face-to-face components of the Introductory Programme (e.g. group challenges) - refer to objective 2 action B.
- f) Continue to develop the Student Residence Advisers peer support system to effect a culture of care and respect for each other in UCL's student residences.
- SRA peer mentor in halls of residence – SRA role for 2019-2020 has been developed to focus more on community building and peer to peer support. The following additions have been made to the role:

- Daily drop in service
 - One Volunteering event per SRA
 - One community building event per SRA
 - SRAs being part of the hall committee to support the elected Hall Rep.
 - SRA training – SRA training has been updated to focus on SRAs offering peer to peer support and methods to building a community as well as focusing on mental health support.
 - SRA comms – DCP is working in collaboration with the accommodation team to promote the SRA service for the first time. They will continue to build on this partnership by liaising with each other regularly to send out SSW and SRA related comms to residents in halls.
 - SRA Log and timesheets – DCP has have set up an easy to use records system for SRAs to use to record call outs. This system will make it easy to obtain data on the reason for call outs and monitor trends. This will also support the accommodation team monitor facilities management call outs and issues and SSW.
 - Res Life Program – DCP is working together with the accommodation team to develop a Res-Life program for UCL student residences. The Res-Life programme will look into the overall ‘out of hours’ support needed within halls from Welfare pastoral, security, social to facilities management aspect. Based on the current model and number of SRAs this is not achievable and therefore the revised model will need to consider the cost implications for us to deliver a successful Res-Life model. We are working with Accommodation to implement a Res-Life programme within UCL Halls of Residence for Sep 2021
- g) Students find most beneficial the networks they self-identify with. Facilitate further development of student-led networks through the Students’ Union for a range of specific characteristics, such as students who live at home and commute to UCL, mature students, students who are parents and carers, and disabled students.
- Student Union working group – Create a working group with Students Union, students and UCL staff to review the current student led networks and then identify networks that need to be developed for student with specific characteristics. Work with the Student Union to create the student networks identified and how they can support students from specific characteristics.
 - Student-led networks – Research into successful student-led networks at other HEI’s to adapt methods which would work for UCL students.

Priorities for the 2019-20 academic year:

- Development of a web-based 'Wellbeing for Success' platform themed around the NHS Five Ways to Wellbeing – Connect, Be active, Keep learning, Give to others and Be mindful. The platform content will have an editorial board made up of SSW, Student Union, Sabbatical officer, SRAs and current students.
- SHW COP – working with COP colleagues to deliver the agreed 5 projects of interest - PG students' project, School of Life and Wellbeing, Symptoms Checker, Departmental Wellbeing toolkit, Evaluation and Surveys
- Map out what peer support programmes across UCL currently exist such as the transition mentors and work with the existing programmes to ensure peer mentors are provided training about the relevant SSW support on offer to students.
- Continue to develop the Student Residence Advisers peer support system to effect a culture of care and respect for each other in UCL's student residences.
- Development of an online web resource which includes techniques to help students prepare and deal with university life. This will include helping students produce a checklist of identifiable personal habits that they have used previously to help themselves through adverse times.
- Development of a working group with Students Union, students and UCL staff to review the current student led networks and then identify networks that need to be developed for student with specific characteristics. Work with the Student Union to create the student networks identified and how they can support students from specific characteristics.

