

UCL Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2021

Action plan for Objective 6 (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 6 - Align student and staff wellbeing policies and initiatives to foster an inclusive and supportive community

An aligned strategic approach to the health and wellbeing of both staff and student groups is required to bring about cultural change and lasting improvements since there are numerous dependencies between the two groups. This strategy is aligned with the UCL Wellbeing Strategy (2017-2022), which primarily addresses staff wellbeing.

Leads:

- Lina Kamenova – UCL
 - Danielle Swanson – SUUCL
- a) Advance inclusive and supportive working, learning and living environments, where the health and wellbeing of both students and staff are equally important.
- Engage with relevant research to gain greater understanding of the dependencies between student and staff health and wellbeing. In a university context, students and staff share working, learning and living environment, however, the dependencies between the two groups in terms of health and wellbeing are not well understood.
 - Stay abreast of and respond to emerging best practice on staff and student health and wellbeing within the sector. For example, Universities UK are working on an updated framework for a whole-university approach to staff and student wellbeing. This follows the launch of Stepchange in 2017 which primarily focused on students. We will engage with this framework when it becomes available in December 2019.
 - Liaise with the Office of the President and Provost to explicitly acknowledge commitment to staff and student health and wellbeing in UCL 2034.
 - All Steering Group members, and in particular the Co-chairs, to share key messages related to health and wellbeing widely within UCL and at a senior leadership level.
 - Participate in the review and re-development of Wellbeing@UCL (UCL's Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2022, which primarily addresses staff wellbeing). Ensure student and staff wellbeing is addressed in a strategic and consistent manner within UCL.
 - Support Occupational Health & Wellbeing to develop, promote and embed the role of Wellbeing Champions within UCL and SUUCL.

- Liaise with SUUCL to develop, promote and deliver the role of Welfare Champions within clubs and societies. Add community building and wellbeing promotion responsibilities to the student course representative roles.
- Foster a shared working, learning and living environment, which values and promotes student and staff wellbeing.

- Biak et al. (2017) identified that both student mental wellbeing and academic achievement are strengthened by learning environments that actively foster the following 5 wellbeing essentials: autonomous motivation, belonging, relationships, autonomy and competence. UCL's Ways of Working descriptors (currently for professional services) can also be organised around the same 5 categories:

Wellbeing essentials	Students <i>Biak et al. (2017)</i>	Staff <i>UCL Ways of Working</i>
Autonomous motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight contribution of the academic discipline's practitioners to society • Value students' learning and understand their perspectives • Support the development of learning goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a positive and proactive service to our colleagues and communities; our work is important, and we respond to the 'bigger picture' • Work creatively and recognise each other's contribution • Draw out opportunities through being ambitious, united and forward-thinking.
Belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalised approach to support • Value diversity • Practice social inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive and proactive service to our colleagues and communities • Listen and respond with fairness and compassion • Shared commitment to our goals
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate social interactions • Encourage care and concern for others • Foster collaborative learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build strong relationships; insist on honesty, inclusion and respect for each other • Take care of ourselves, our students and each other • Work collaboratively
Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable informed choices • Justify required tasks and requirements • Use coaching approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use well communicated consultative plans • Review our practices and innovate where necessary to use our resources effectively • Work creatively in empowered cross-functional teams and partnerships
Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practise informational language • Deliver appropriate levels of challenge and support • Provide meaningful and encouraging feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning-focused working environments; communicate with intention and clarity • Achieve high quality outcomes and smarter ways of working • Value constructive feedback

- b) Enhance the ability of staff to understand difficulties they or students may be experiencing and help them to support students, colleagues and others by making dedicated mental health and suicide prevention training widely available at UCL.
- Make Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training widely available within UCL and SUUCL and meet demand for this training. Offer MHFA training to Sabbatical and Part-time Officers as well as postgraduate research students.
 - Identify a network of MHFA training providers who departments can contact directly and book training with. Work with Organisational Development to ensure training impact is measured and assessed. Ensure providers understand UCL's context and the internal support provision. Training providers include Rethink Mental Illness, Mind, Goldentree Community Interest Company and Remploy.
 - Promote the benefits of undertaking MHFA training and encourage staff to complete this training where possible. The benefits of MHFA training include (but are not limited to): opportunity for staff to share and reflect on challenges, which may be particularly relevant to their department; consistency of mental health training across the institution; guidance around looking after one's own wellbeing as well as supporting others.
 - Increase awareness of health and wellbeing issues as part of leadership and management development programmes. Ensure MHFA training is mentioned at appraisals where appropriate. It is highly recommended that managers and research supervisors complete MHFA training as part of preparation for and ongoing learning in these roles.
 - Promote the benefits of undertaking suicide prevention training. Identify a network of training providers who departments can contact directly and book training with. Ensure suicide prevention online training is effectively promoted within UCL and SUUCL.
- c) Develop and deliver training programmes, providing staff with knowledge and skills to help them to effectively support students' wellbeing and personal development.
- Conduct a survey and focus groups with staff to gain insight into the information, resources and training they need when working with and supporting students. Develop information, resources and training which are reflective of the findings.
 - Provide clear guidance on boundaries between pastoral roles and responsibilities vs professional health and wellbeing support. This aims to ensure effective and empowered pastoral support alongside timely and appropriate referrals.
- d) Develop collaborative and co-ordinated approaches between student and staff support services and other relevant stakeholders to manage complex student cases.
- Agree shared protocols between SSW, Occupational Health & Wellbeing and other relevant stakeholders to ensure a holistic approach to complex student cases.

- Ensure that appropriate dedicated support is offered to students and staff when responding to complex student cases.
- e) Strengthen collaborative initiatives between student and staff support services to offer consistency in the approach to enhancing the wellbeing of the whole UCL community. Offer shared access to resources and facilities where possible and appropriate.
- Optimal health is a dynamic balance of physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual health (O'Donnell, American Journal of Health Promotion, 2009, 24,1,iv). Develop initiatives in each of these categories and make them available to both staff and students where possible.

Shared resources and facilities

Physical	Emotional	Social	Spiritual	Intellectual
Stop Smoking clinic	EAP programme	Lunch time walks	Meditation classes	Museums
Cycling schemes	Dignity advisers	Community building activities	Yoga classes	Lunch hour lectures
Gym	Sexual violence advisers	Wellbeing fairs and events	Quiet rooms	
Shape Up programme	MHFA training	UCL networks		
Sleepio programme		SU clubs and societies		

Priorities for the 2019-20 academic year:

- Make MHFA and suicide prevention training widely available and easily accessible to all UCL and SUUCL staff and postgraduate research students.
- Conduct a survey and focus groups with staff to gain insight into the information, resources and training which they require when working with and supporting students. Develop information, resources and training, which are reflective of the findings.
- Develop guidance for staff to ensure student wellbeing is considered at all stages of the learning experience, such as induction, academic community building, feedback and assessment and understanding boundaries when supporting students.
- Agree shared protocols between SSW, Occupational Health & Wellbeing and other relevant stakeholders to ensure both students and staff are supported when responding to complex student cases.