



UCL wants to offer more cutting-edge short courses for personal and professional development that are informed by our world-leading research.

Developing a short course can allow you to:

- improve the skills and learning experience of people around the world
- train professionals and influence changes of practice in your area of work
- engage with external industry practitioners, giving you ideas on how to improve your other programmes
- generate new forms of income
- create a community of learners to pursue your research interests
- help spread UCL's reputation worldwide
- improve the impact that UCL's research has on wider society and the global economy

Developing short courses

UCL's Education Strategy

2016–21 commits UCL to extend its global reach, reputation and impact by offering a wide range of short courses, including those for continuing professional development (CPD).

What developing short courses means

Developing a short course involves four stages:

1. planning
2. designing
3. marketing
4. evaluating

Development is a continual, iterative process. For example, after you run and evaluate a course, you are likely to go back to the design stage to update the course before you market it and run it again.

Plan to run your short course several times. This means it will generate more impact each time and be increasingly cost-effective (as the fixed costs of creating it fall).

UCL Life Learning short courses include:

- professional development – training and CPD for skills and career development
- executive education – specific courses for executives, leaders and managers
- personal learning – continuing education to suit all ages and interests
- summer schools – intensive study for individuals and professionals

Courses vary in length from one day to several months. They can be delivered face-to-face, online or blended (using both in-person and online elements) via [UCLeXtend](#), UCL's public-facing e-learning platform.

Short courses can be credit-bearing or non-credit-bearing. For more information on the difference between these and to find out which option is right for your short course, see the [Life Learning Credit Framework section](#) in UCL's Academic Manual.

Planning your course

1.

Decide on the type of Life Learning activity you want to offer. Are you involved in research that could be developed into a short course?

2.

Work out what resources you have. Will the course be in person, lab-based, online or blended (a mixture of online and face-to-face)? How you design the course will affect the cost of developing and delivering it.

4.

Decide if the course should offer external accreditation and CPD points, a requirement for a number of subject areas. If so, contact the external relevant bodies early in the planning process.

3.

Do some market research. This includes looking at the competition and working out who your audiences are and what they need. See the resources and guidance: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lifelearning/resources-staff/>

5.

Prepare a business case that explains how the course will be successful commercially.

6.

Check that your short course will meet the educational principles found in UCL's [Academic Manual](#).

Designing your course

1.

Design your course with learners' needs in mind. What do they want and need to know?

2.

If you can, go to an [Arena Blended Connected \(ABC\) CPD design workshop](#). This is a 90-minute hands-on session to help you balance cost with course design, using an effective and engaging paper-based approach.

4.

Vary teaching methods to encourage more active learning and make sure new content is presented in a variety of ways, not always text-based. Consider using digital education resources to present content in engaging, interactive ways.

3.

Identify the learning outcomes and (if your short course includes them) assessments. These will help you design the learner journey and the specific learning activities.

5.

If you develop an online or blended course, ensure that your learning design meets [UCL's E-Learning Baseline](#), our minimum expectations for e-learning provision for all taught programmes and modules.

6.

Make sure that your teaching is as inclusive as possible so that all learners on your course are able to fulfil their potential.

Putting it into practice

Marketing your course

For advice and support about marketing your short course, contact UCL's [Life Learning team](#).

They can help you promote your course through:

- the Life Learning course finder website
- social media
- UCL's alumni office
- 'natural' web search (through search engine optimisation)
- connections with the business community, e.g. through UCL Consultants

Top tip:

Come up with a short (e.g. tweet-length) description of your short course. This can help you focus on what learners will achieve on your course and can also help with marketing.

Putting it into practice

Evaluating your course

Think about ways of evaluating your short course, such as through learner feedback both during and at the end of the course. You could also follow up several months later to ask for concrete examples of how they've put what they learnt into practice.

Evaluation can help you to make improvements so that the course gets better each time you run it.

More information

The [UCL Life Learning team](#) can give you advice and support about market research, costing, learning design, evaluation and marketing.

The team has also put together an [interactive flow diagram](#) of the practical steps involved in developing a short course, which links to various sections of UCL's [Life Learning wiki](#) (you'll need a staff login to view).

Attend an Arena event

UCL Arena runs regular [events](#) for educators at UCL. Many of these are directly related to the development of courses.

ABC design workshop

Arrange an [Arena Blended Connected \(ABC\) CPD design workshop](#) via the UCL Life Learning team.

The workshop will help you to design your course to meet the needs of your learners.

Lynda.com

UCL has a subscription to [Lynda.com](#), the online video training provider. Lynda.com has many short and informative courses on teaching and learning techniques and tools, as well as ideas for course design.