# **Staff Guide**

# **Events and ideas for engaging students and gathering feedback**

## Workshops / Hackathons

These types of sessions can be useful for exploring ideas in more detail. For example, if there is a recurrent issue being raised by your students, you could turn this into a challenge to be solved using a ‘hackathon’-style event. In these sessions, staff and students brainstorm in small groups to come up with a solution.

This can also be a useful approach for testing out and improving new concepts.

You could also try using workshop ‘kits’ such as [Ketso](https://ketso.com/) to explore ideas collectively and visually.

## Townhall meetings / Forums

Some departments have had success with termly student experience meetings or forums, which give those students who are not Student Academic Representatives an opportunity to participate in conversations with staff about their departments.

Providing some lunch for attendees is always a popular incentive. You could use this time to develop a shared charter or raise the awareness of the department’s priorities for the year ahead.

Involving Student Reps in the planning and promotion of the event can be very effective in fostering a sense of staff-student partnership. Enabling Reps to take an active role in the event can help to raise awareness of the Reps’ role and is likely to encourage other students to liaise with them.

## Voting pads in lecture theatres / seminars

If departments are looking to get a quick response to a proposition or question, they can put these questions to students directly in lectures or tutorials.

UCL staff are able to hire [Electronic Voting Systems (EVS)](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/services/learning-teaching/e-learning-services-for-staff/e-learning-core-tools/electronic-voting) pads for live voting. Staff can pose a question on the screen, and invite students to vote on this question. After polling is complete, you will see a bar chart of the responses that were received.

Three teaching spaces (Cruciform LT1, Christopher Ingold Auditorium and Harrie Massey Theatre) have the pads installed permanently, and the pads can be hired via the [UCL Audio Visual Centre](https://avcucl.siso.co/).

## Informal events

Never underestimate the power of a free coffee or cake! Speak to your Student Reps to find out when a convenient regular slot might be. Keep the event informal and something that students can drop into.

Some staff have voiced concerns that they won’t be able to find enough space for everyone, but it’s very unlikely all your students will show up. Some programmes or departments have used teaching sessions or induction events to make the most of UCL’s central London location, with off-campus visits and walks. The event doesn’t need to be badged as an opportunity to give feedback (this will probably happen naturally) but just an opportunity to get staff and students together and build a sense of community.

## Speak to existing networks

Transition Mentors and Academic / Departmental Societies can be great networks to tap into: Transition Mentors may be aware of common issues mentioned by first-year students who aren’t sure how to raise it with staff or who to speak to. Likewise, departmental student societies can often provide useful feedback, or may be interested in developing a discussion or solution through their network.

## Useful links and resources:

A workshop method for gathering feedback: <https://ketso.com/>

## Useful Case Studies:

[Education E-News article: How to engage undergraduates in small or medium cohorts](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/case-studies/2018/dec/how-engage-students-small-medium-cohort-undergraduates)