UCL

Education Strategy 2016–21

Principal Theme 2 of UCL 2034

Contents

Updated: June 2017

UCL Education Strategy 2016–21

Introduction

This is an exciting time for education at UCL. UCL 2034 commits the university to becoming:

'A global leader in the integration of research and education, underpinning an inspirational student experience' UCL 2034 Theme 2

The next five years will see us implement and exemplify our philosophy of 'research-based' education, as we generate momentum towards the aspirations of UCL 2034.

In particular, we will work together on the following key themes with staff and students:

Education through research and enquiry
Education for undergraduate and postgraduate students will be shaped by the six dimensions of the 'Connected Curriculum'. We will work to ensure that students at UCL are learning through research and critical enquiry, making connections across their programme and related subjects. This emphasis on connections exploits our strengths as a multi-faculty university, and echoes the interdisciplinary nature of much of our research.

Education through participation
We will foster and embed a culture of students and staff working together to shape the curriculum and the university environment, with students having a clear voice in decision-making and opportunities to design and implement the 'inspirational student experience' of UCL 2034 theme 2.

Education through experience
For UCL, education is about connections, depth and breadth and this extends beyond the seminar room or lab. We want to offer students tailored extra-curricular activities which extend their formal learning and help them to develop in the round. We will substantially develop opportunities for students' experiential learning with an expansion of work placements and internships; new opportunities to study or spend time abroad; volunteering and enterprise

projects, and challenging and inspiring interdisciplinary courses, such as the Global Citizenship Programme. We will also continue with our commitment to modern foreign languages with our requirement that all UK students should either enter with, or have developed by graduation, a basic level of modern foreign language competence.

By prioritising activity under these three headings, we will ensure that our students are well-prepared for future career success in a global economy and for a lifetime of intellectual and personal development through further academic study, research and life learning courses. Our world-leading research, multidisciplinary structure and diverse staff and student body provide us with the elements that will enable the construction of a rich and expansive UCL education, one that takes our students and staff beyond subject boundaries, and makes learning an active, engaged process.

This strategy sets out what each of these themes will mean in practical terms for students, staff and other partners over the coming years. Against the overarching objectives of theme 2 of UCL2034, we set out nine objectives for education and the student experience at UCL over the period 2016-21. Each objective is contextualised and we set out a series of immediate actions alongside projects that will mature towards the end of the strategy period.

Professor Anthony Smith
Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs)

Strategy context

This strategy has been shaped by our relationship to distinct traditions and external influences.

The first guiding influence is our own values. We want the education we offer at UCL to reflect the university's founding principles in ways that make sense for today's world. In the Connected Curriculum, we have found a way of uniting our research heritage and our tradition of challenging orthodoxies with our commitment to innovation and inclusivity, articulating an approach to education that will resonate with ambitious, intellectually curious and dedicated students and staff. A key UCL principle is collegiality, and this finds expression in our renewed and expanded commitment to working alongside our students to understand and develop the student experience in line with their needs and ambitions.

The second shaping factor is how UCL itself has changed over the past decade. At the time of writing, we now have around 37,000 students in 11 faculties and, since the merger with the Institute of Education, we are now a predominantly postgraduate institution. We are also about to embark on a further period of physical expansion, as we establish a second campus in East London, on the site of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. This growth, and the parallel shift in cohort demographics, raises important questions for us about how we resource and develop as a research-intensive multi-disciplinary university. Much of this strategy, and the short-term actions in particular, are a response to recent change.

In addition, we face many of the same challenges as other UK universities: the shift in attitudes among our students as a result of the 2012 rise in undergraduate tuition fees; increased competition for the best students, both nationally (with the relaxation of student number controls) and globally; the sector-wide challenges of meeting student expectations about how their education should prepare them for their future careers, and how they should be assessed and receive feedback. Government policy will now increasingly focus on the 'quality' of university education, and we expect that a Teaching Excellence Framework will be introduced in the near future. This merely serves to galvanise our efforts to ensure that the education we provide brings returns for students in terms of their intellectual development and their personal measures of educational success.

These external factors have a bearing on the shape of the strategy – both on the challenges that we are focusing on, and on the decisions that we have taken about where to push boundaries and forge something new. However, the primary aim of this strategy is to ensure that we are investing time, money and energy to create an educational experience that enriches our students intellectually, socially and culturally. The objectives set out in this document reflect our desire to forge an inclusive and supportive community of scholars, both novice and experienced, and to create the conditions under which staff and students can learn from one another and develop as individuals within the wider university community.

This strategy relates directly to UCL 2034, theme 2 in particular (and theme 4 on Life Learning and collaborations with our partner schools and colleges) and sets out a series of objectives relating to the longer-term ambitions in the parent strategy. Each of its objectives has been defined with the trajectory needed for UCL 2034 in mind. The objectives have also been shaped by the outcomes of an extensive period of consultation across the UCL community in 2015.

Our Education Strategy is aligned with, and supports, the ambitions in a number of other UCL strategic documents, including the Research Strategy (which covers postgraduate research and doctoral education) and the Global Engagement Strategy. In addition, although its primary focus is on taught education at UCL, rather than on the doctoral experience, it has been developed together with the Doctoral School. The Connected Curriculum, in particular, is intended as a bridge between taught education and the research training characteristic of a doctoral programme.

This strategy has been developed in consultation with the UCL Students' Union (UCLU) and over the next five years we will work in partnership with them to realise the aims of the strategy.

Objective 1:

To move towards personalised student support, from first contact to graduation and beyond

UCL 2034 commits us to attracting and retaining the best students and to ensuring that we provide particular support for international students. This Education Strategy approaches these two aims in tandem as we work to ensure that all undergraduates and postgraduates, regardless of their background, experience or stage of learning are appropriately supported. We see our engagement with prospective and new applicants and with international students as part of a wider continuum, one which acknowledges the diversity of our student body, and ensures that all our students are supported as individuals.

UCL is operating in an increasingly competitive higher education environment. The best students have tremendous choice; and even 'home' students are more willing than ever before to travel internationally for their university education. Our aim is to appeal particularly to those students who are attracted by the opportunity to learn through research, even if their future careers lie outside academia, and who are proactive about identifying and pursuing their personal and professional goals.

We want to use the distinctive approach we have developed through the Connected Curriculum to enthuse and inspire prospective students and to ensure that we are as inclusive as possible in implementing and resourcing our support structures. We are mindful that no student can be easily categorised and that all students require greater or lesser support to integrate, participate and make the most of their time at UCL. In particular, we want to focus over the next five years on expanding our support for academic writing for all students and to ensure that we support students to integrate well from the start.

Our priorities: 2016–2018

- Operate an enhanced welcome service so that all students feel part of our community from the outset, with a particular focus on those students who are joining us from overseas and may need particular support on arrival;

- Initiate a series of projects to support the integration of international and home students outside the classroom, in particular through work with the staff and student representatives at our halls of residences;

- Pilot a number of models for delivering discipline-relevant academic writing support for all students, whether English is their first language or not;

- Review our pre-entry materials for prospective students and those holding a firm offer with us to ensure that we are consistent in our messages. We would like to take every opportunity to prepare students for the Connected Curriculum and research-based education, and to inspire students to identify with UCL's distinctive approach at an early stage;

- Initiate a broad project with UCLU to make UCL more welcoming for black and minority ethnic (BME) students in particular, developing 'belonging' interventions and mentoring schemes;

- Review the UCL Transitions programme so that it supports student progression as well as retention;

- Introduce a UCL Scholars programme to welcome our scholarship holders to the university and celebrate their outstanding academic achievements;

- We will implement a new approach to personal tutoring, linked to the Connected Curriculum and to students' experience of undertaking research as part of their programme.

By 2021:

- We will have expanded our academic writing programmes (and, where appropriate, our support for students with English as an additional language) so that all students, at any phase of their education, receive personalised support with this core skill;

- In line with our aim to offer students opportunities outside the formal curriculum to explore interdisciplinary connections, we will establish a new strand of activity with the working title of the 'Introductory Programme'. This will be a distinctive and intellectually stimulating online programme of pre-entry materials, which will introduce prospective students to the interdisciplinary breadth of the UCL education and allow them to explore our campus and connect with other students before they arrive. We hope to exploit the potential of social and collaborative media to build a community of students online before they join and to integrate interdisciplinary academic activities into the university induction programme. The Introductory Programme will link through to the Global Citizenship Programme, providing important points of reflection in our students' first year.

A global leader in the integration of research and education, underpinning an inspirational student experience

Objective 2:

To embed the Connected Curriculum across the university

The Connected Curriculum is an ambitious framework for learning which will reconceptualise education at UCL. It supports students to learn by doing research and makes sense of the sometimes fraught relationship between academic research and the taught curriculum. We will give every student at UCL the chance to make connections between their development as researchers and the broader discipline picture.

UCL has a long history of establishing new research domains and traditions of thinking and discovery. In universities today, the tension between academic research and the taught curriculum can lead to false divisions, perpetuating the misconception that teaching is the poor relation of academic research. The Connected Curriculum is our response to that tension and it represents a radical restatement of what we believe a university education should be for. As such, it resonates fully with the principles of innovation and disruptive thinking that we associate with UCL's founders and which is exemplified in interdisciplinary programmes such as the BASc Arts and Sciences, our Natural Sciences programme and the Integrated Engineering Programme.

A culture of 'research-based', rather than the more traditional 'research-led' education is particularly appropriate for UCL at this point in our history. Societally-focused, cross-disciplinary research initiatives such as UCL Grand Challenges offer inspiration to, and are inspired by, the educational experience. Our 2015 REF results were outstanding, but, despite pockets of excellence, our National Student Survey (NSS) results leave room for improvement in all aspects of the student learning experience. Our long-term solution to this disparity is to seek to forge meaningful links between the two core components of our academic community. The Connected Curriculum is one of the key ways in which we will focus investment and expertise towards rapid and sustained improvement in measures of student satisfaction and signal our commitment to parity of esteem between research and education.

Experience of research is not just a stepping-stone to academia; the skills involved in research and enquiry are increasingly integral to careers in the professions, in industry and in business. Research-based education is therefore an important element of our support for our graduates' career preparation. Additionally, the Connected Curriculum provides a framework for the integration of the various strands of activity across UCL that enrich the formal curriculum. These include enterprise and knowledge transfer and the Global Citizenship Programme, which provides opportunities for students to collaborate across disciplines and work directly with local charities and organisations to apply their learning. We will continue to ensure that students have regular opportunities to present their work and to apply their theoretical learning in practical contexts.

Our priorities: 2016–2018

- A review of our regulations, governance structure, programme approval systems and quality assurance processes to ensure that they reflect the principles of the Connected Curriculum and incentivise and support staff to redevelop taught programmes;

- The continued expansion of the UCL Arena programme to provide support, guidance and inspiration for staff as they review and revise their curricula to reflect the Connected Curriculum principles and the development of benchmarking and guidance resources to support staff as they make 'research-based' education the core principle of their teaching and programme design;

- The development of the teaching and learning portal as a resource hub for information about the Connected Curriculum and the impact it can have on the student experience, in particular by celebrating the considerable good practice already in evidence across the university;

- To use Connected Curriculum frameworks to support the implementation of the 'liberating the curriculum' activities which have been developed collaboratively by staff and students to put black, queer, disabled, and feminist contributions and critiques on an equal footing in the curriculum;

- To use the review of academic promotion and reward criteria and processes to embed further the link between research and teaching as an institutional principle.

By 2021:

- We will have reviewed all our programmes to ensure that they reflect the six dimensions of the Connected Curriculum;

- A technical infrastructure to support a Connected Curriculum virtual learning environment will be in place, providing the opportunity for staff and students to publish outputs and showcase their work.

Objective 3:

To address and resolve the persistent challenges of assessment and feedback

Assessment and feedback are challenges for the whole higher education sector. We know that staff can find it difficult to design effective assessment and give effective feedback. Expectations can also be mismatched, with students and staff having different ideas about what constitutes effective feedback.

Although this is a sector-wide issue, our National Student Survey (NSS) results show that this is a particular concern for UCL. Our students are telling us that the way that we are supporting their learning and evaluating their progress needs urgent attention and we will respond by making action in this area a priority.

We are also mindful that assessment shapes what students learn, and the emphasis they place on various aspects of the taught curriculum. Consequently, with our ambitions for the Connected Curriculum come the need to ensure that our assessment practices shift to respond to the new emphasis on students learning through research.

This is an urgent matter for us, and as such, we will take action in the short-term to address the most pressing problems, and then work in the longer-term to establish focused, faculty-specific programmes of review to ensure that we exemplify excellent assessment practices alongside excellent teaching.

Our priorities: 2016–2018

- An immediate focus on assessment practices, through our quality assurance processes and the work of the Centre for Advancing Learning and Teaching (CALT) with departments, to ensure that all programmes are meeting minimum standards, including the requirement that all assessed work is handed back within four weeks with feedback;

- The dissemination of indicative marking criteria as a starting point for departments to develop their own, discipline-specific criteria;

- Improved central communication with students about assessment practices at university so that they understand what they can reasonably expect from their tutors and why they are being assessed in particular ways;

- To ensure our regulations and enhancement programme supports staff to develop and make use of a variety of forms of assessment, including e-assessments;

- To identify how we can draw on our education partnerships (with UCL Academy, City & Islington Sixth Form College and Newham Collegiate Sixth Form College) to support students with the transition from assessment in Years 12 and 13 to first-year undergraduate study;

- To review our position on the introduction of a grade point average (GPA) scheme at UCL.

By 2021:

- We will have implemented the recommendations of a root-and-branch review of assessment at UCL, with the aim of identifying long-term measures to improve our students' experience of the assessment process and their assessment literacy, including a substantial reduction in the volume of assessment. We will ensure that staff are supported to mark consistently, as well as given opportunities to innovate and develop, including through the use of e-assessment. The review will be completed by 2017 and we will revisit this objective then to confirm further objectives;

- We will have audited the assessment culture in every faculty and identified recommendations for change and the resource needed to bring about this change;

- There will be opportunities in every programme for students to present their work to external audiences, for example alumni, employers, and online interest groups;

- The systems we operate to ensure staff can record and monitor students' achievement and students can track their own progress will be substantially improved.

Objective 4:

To create cultures of student engagement and leadership

We will significantly expand the opportunities available to our students to participate in creating and shaping policy and practice at local and institutional levels, and place student feedback and insights at the heart of our decision-making.

UCL is a community of scholars, all at different stages in their understanding of scholarship, research and the application of knowledge. We need the insights of all our members, whatever their experience, to shape local and institutional decisions and contribute to productive ways of working. This is particularly important for a university such as UCL, which attracts students of an extremely high calibre. By harnessing the intellectual and creative firepower of our students together, we will create a better university.

Although higher education is not a conventional commodity, students invest more than time and effort in a programme of study and they are sophisticated consumers who want to feel that they are being rewarded for their financial and personal investment. Significantly, at a time of increased tuition fees, UCL students are joining an expanding institution, with the practical pressures this brings for the university infrastructure.

We now collect a good deal of information from our students about how they feel about UCL and their education – in module surveys, internal surveys and through the National Student Survey (NSS). We will invest more comprehensively in this rich resource.

The concepts of student engagement and student partnership have been gathering momentum across the HE sector for several years. The idea that we might bring students and staff together to solve problems, identify new directions and change cultures is particularly appropriate for UCL, with its traditions of collegiality and its future rooted in the participation and creation culture of the Connected Curriculum. Enhanced engagement with what students and staff can learn from each other is right for us at this stage of our development, and will set us well on the way to meeting the ambitions in UCL 2034. We are particularly keen to work in partnership with UCLU on this.

Our priorities: 2016–2018

- The establishment of a coherent and consistent approach to student surveys, making clear to students why they matter and how the results drive institutional change. This will include systems to ensure that staff receive the data from those surveys in ways that make it simple for them to determine how to respond. Surveys will become the entry-level activity of a broader culture of student participation;

- To build on the existing UCLU Student Academic Representatives (StARs) scheme and UCL's ChangeMakers Projects and Scholars strands so that students become fully involved in all aspects of quality enhancement and assurance, work with us as consultants on curriculum development projects and have the opportunity to imagine, articulate and initiate improvements to education at UCL;

- The Student Experience Committee (StEC) will become the primary focus for monitoring the quality of the student experience, providing senior-level scrutiny of a range of issues, and ensuring that we can demonstrate clear progress on areas that students report are unsatisfactory;

- To develop a joint understanding with UCLU about the respective roles of the university and the union in building a culture of engagement for all students at UCL and to work collaboratively on engagement activities wherever possible.

By 2021:

- All UCL faculties will be regularly working with students through the UCL ChangeMakers framework;

- We will have moved to centrally-managed student module evaluation surveys and built the technical and governance infrastructure to ensure that we are reviewing this information consistently and acting constructively in response to it.

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Objective 5:

To review and strengthen our postgraduate taught (PGT) provision in response to our changing demographics

Following our merger with the Institute of Education, UCL is now a predominantly postgraduate institution. This shift has prompted us to conduct an in-depth review of our PGT provision. We need to ensure that we are operating sustainably and efficiently, and to be confident that we are meeting the specific needs of this particular cohort. We must also manage the process of transition from an undergraduate-focused culture to one which can effectively accommodate the differing needs of the UG and PGT communities.

We know that those on postgraduate Master's programmes are the least satisfied of our students. Crucially, they are only on campus for a short period of time – one year, in most cases – which creates challenges in terms of building cohort identity and ensuring students feel able to participate fully in the life of the university.

In 2016-17, we reviewed the sustainability of our postgraduate portfolio, and considered issues of quality, including our students' perceptions of their programmes and our support for them. We also looked in some detail at our approach to marketing PGT programmes. This review highlighted the diversity of provision at UCL, and the need to accommodate our substantial professional practice programmes within the developing Connected Curriculum narrative. It also pointed to the need to review principles relating to the viability of programmes and modules in the more specialist areas of PGT provision. We also need to build marketing and business planning capacity to ensure we

continue to attract the very highest calibre students in existing and emerging disciplines. Finally, we identified a clear and consistent demand from the student body for more substantial investment in PGT-specific support services, and, in particular, to facilitate a greater sense of identify amongst this group.

Our strategic objectives for PGT provision are therefore determined by the outcomes of that review.

Our priorities: 2016–2018

- To establish a framework for responding to the findings of our recent PGT review;

- To develop and implement a new planning and costing framework for PGT provision with modules as the unit of viability;

- To review UCL's approach to market research in support of PGT provision;

- To pilot a new personal tutoring model which supports the specific needs of PGT students;

- To develop a framework for identifying and supporting PGT students from widening participation backgrounds;

- To review our top-level messaging about PGT study at UCL to ensure that we emphasise our strengths in professional and applied disciplines.

By 2021:

- We will have put in place the planning structures that facilitate targeted investment in those PGT programmes which have the capacity to attract and retain the very best students;

- We will have reviewed and improved the support we provide for master's students, including our approach to induction, personal tutoring, careers support and academic literacies;

- We will have taken steps to ensure that our regulations and institutional structures can accommodate the kinds of interdisciplinary study that make our PGT provision particularly attractive to high-quality students and teaching staff;

- We will have embedded an institutional culture that reflects and responds to the distinctive needs of PGT students. We will be working consistently with students and their UCLU representatives to provide an outstanding PGT experience, comparable with, but distinctive from, that of our undergraduates.

Objective 6:

To develop a teaching estate that is fit for purpose

UCL's central London location is undoubtedly a huge asset, and an important reason why students choose to study with us. We know that the quality of the teaching estate, and the use we make of it, can make a big difference to staff and students alike – facilitating great teaching and ensuring students are learning in comfortable, well-equipped and inspiring spaces. However, accommodating a growing student body on a dispersed campus in central London.

We expect that the Connected Curriculum's emphasis on collaborative learning and learning through research is likely to change teaching patterns over the coming years and we need to ensure that our space management is agile enough to respond. Additionally, we want to capitalise on the potential of technology to extend and enrich the classroom experience to online learners through virtual classrooms, 'flipping' methodologies and tools and streaming.

Over the period covered by this strategy, UCL will expand into East London with the opening of a sizeable campus on the site of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. This also provides an opportunity for us to experiment with new ways of teaching and learning, including spaces for professional and executive education.

Our priorities: 2016–2018

- To resolve the most pressing problems with timetabling and rooming;

- To review our academic structures, including the shape of the teaching year, to ensure that we are making the most efficient use of our teaching estate without compromising the experience of staff or students;

- To review our module confirmation and registration systems to ensure that our academic processes facilitate the efficient production of the timetable;

- To support faculties to review programme structures and their modules portfolio to ensure that we are delivering teaching in the most efficient way possible, without compromising academic considerations or student choice;

- To establish an Education Spaces Quality Working Group to develop standards for the fit-out of teaching spaces and to oversee the room refresh programme against these standards.

By 2021:

- We will have overhauled our timetabling systems (and the resource planning systems that support them) to ensure that we are able to plan effectively for programme delivery and optimize our use of the teaching estate.

- We will have significantly enhanced the quality of UCL's learning campus as our programme of capital investment begins to transform UCL, with a new student centre (bringing together all student services together under one roof for the first time), substantially refurbished buildings for UCL Laws and the Bartlett School of Architecture, and new catering and social spaces;

- We will have established facilities in Bloomsbury and in UCL East to kit out as experimental learning spaces, and use these as a test-bed for the potential future evolution of education spaces within UCL.

Objective 7:

To establish a digital learning infrastructure that connects students with each other, with staff, with research and with the wider world

This strategy prioritises research-based learning; bringing staff and students together to learn from each other; and ensuring that students are partners in our community. These principles underpin the choices we will make about digital education. We have set ourselves the task of being world-leading in digital education by 2034 and want to establish UCL as a blended campus in which technology supports authentic, creative and collaborative learning, enables a wide range of assessment approaches, augments face-to-face contact and encourages productive learning outside of the classroom. There are three strands to achieving this objective:

1. We will provide a distinctive digital infrastructure to connect students with each other, with staff, with research and with the outside world to support networked, research-based and interdisciplinary education. The existing virtual learning environment (VLE) will be augmented by a set of communication, collaboration and productivity tools that will together form our 'Connected Learning Environment'.

2. We will improve the student digital experience, providing a high quality, technology-rich blended environment for student study. This encompasses physical infrastructure (student computers, software, Wi-Fi, Bring Your Own Device); ease of use of systems; accessibility and digital wellbeing; and supporting students to develop their digital capabilities to ensure that they are able to thrive in new working and learning environments. We will ensure that students are engaged in driving UCL's digital agenda and improving the student digital experience.

3. We will provide world-class tools, support and infrastructure for teaching and support staff. This will help them develop their own digital scholarship; enable them to design curricula for blended learning; support creation and use of media in teaching; and support them to use innovative spaces for student-centred and collaborative learning.

Our priorities: 2016–2018

- Scope, design and pilot the Connected Learning Environment, which builds on the traditional VLE, extending it to support engagement between students, with research and researchers, and with the outside world, including with alumni;

- Pilot a 'Domain of One's Own', providing students with an online space and tools to reflect on, curate and showcase their learning;

- Introduce the Connected Curriculum Development Tool for course design so that design for blended learning can be systematically embedded into formal programme and module planning and review;

- Establish a digital scholarship strand of UCL Arena to support staff to develop their online pedagogy and broader digital scholarship;

- Work with students to establish a digital capabilities initiative to provide a range of both embedded and standalone skills development opportunities;

- Establish an educational media service to support the growing demand for media production and delivery from both staff and students;

- Expand the Lecturecast service into UCL's largest classrooms and introduce an opt-out policy in response to student feedback.

By 2021:

- We will have implemented a programme to improve the student digital experience, providing a quality technology-rich blended environment for student study;

- We will have fully implemented a 'connected learning environment' in support of the Connected Curriculum;

- We will be operating a learning analytics service with support structures and resources to enable staff and students to exploit the potential of data about learning;

- We will have introduced an open education resources (OER) service to provide a showcase for UCL education and for student-generated content, and to bring together internal resources of common interest in support of the connected curriculum.

Objective 8:

To expand our co-curricular offer in response to student feedback about employability and our commitment to education in the round

We recognise that our students make the decision to study at UCL with one eye on their future careers. Our London location and our reputation as a world-class university, together with the huge network of industry and business partners we have, puts us in an ideal position to respond to overwhelming feedback from students that they expect their time at university to prepare them thoroughly for the world of work. A decision to expand our support for student employability also responds to feedback from employers about the qualities and experience they are looking for in graduate recruits.

The Connected Curriculum framework will support the expansion of work-relevant learning in our taught programmes. We wish to enhance that by providing a comprehensive offer to students that responds to their personal circumstances and aspirations. Our work here complements the Global Engagement Strategy's commitment to supporting student mobility and expanding opportunities to study and work abroad.

Additionally, we want to continue to ensure that we provide high-quality opportunities for students to learn from co-curricular activities, such as volunteering, running clubs and societies, participating in sports as well as from extra-curricular learning opportunities such as the Global Citizenship Programme. Such opportunities have an important role to play in fostering a sense of community among our diverse student body and we will continue to prioritise space within the timetable to allow our students to participate fully.

Our priorities: 2016–2018

- The introduction of annual careers registration for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students, in order to provide targeted support and in particular, to reach those students who would benefit from intensive careers advice and support at a much earlier stage. This is in line with our commitment to careers education: supporting students to take a proactive, informed approach to their career, rather than simply facilitating their engagement with employers;

- The continued development of our Global Citizenship Programme, which brings students together to collaborate on projects in an interdisciplinary context. We will link this programme with our new, pre-entry Introductory Programme, so that participation in both contextualises the first year of students' undergraduate programmes, The Global Citizenship Programme will be established as a core element of the UCL year with competitive entry for the academic strands of the programme and participation recognised as prestigious by students;

- Consolidation of the work of the Volunteering Services Unit. The VSU is one of the largest student volunteering services in the country and approximately 10% of our students are currently engaged in some form of volunteering through the VSU;

- Through the Connected Curriculum framework, we will promote an expansion of opportunities for students to engage in work-based learning through their taught programmes.

By 2021:

- We will have expanded our existing support for non-academic internships and placements, led by UCL Careers in collaboration with faculties, and be in a position to offer UCL-facilitated, structured work experience to a sizeable element of UCL's cohort.

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Objective 9:

To extend our global reach, reputation and impact from Life Learning through an extensive portfolio of short courses and CPD for personal and professional development

It is increasingly clear that we need to prepare our students to respond to the demands of a rapidly changing work environment and to equip them to develop the ability to adapt as systems and knowledge also change.

Today's undergraduates are likely to have several careers and to move more rapidly than ever before between companies and roles. We believe that one of the key roles for a university in the future will be to support individuals to keep learning in discipline-specific fields and to make high-quality, research-informed executive and professional education available to learners across the world. This underpins UCL's commitment, in UCL 2034, to secure recognition as a leading global provider of Life Learning activity to support personal and professional learning well beyond graduation.

UCL already delivers many short courses, for example in the built environment, business, engineering, healthcare, language, law, leadership, management and security. However, we are not currently recognised as a leading provider. We intend to change this over the next five years with a strategy for Life Learning which will allow UCL to expand its global reach, reputation and impact within new markets whilst also establishing diversified and sustainable income streams through increased provision of high-quality short courses.

We will build on our multi-disciplinary strengths to analyse and apply research-based education to address global challenges, establish a competitive edge in the workplace, grow productivity and enhance the employability and earning power of our postgraduate learners on taught programmes and Life Learning courses.

Our priorities: 2016–2018

- Develop a 'Life Learner' status and pathway in UCL's regulations, together with quality assurance processes, toolkits and other resources to incentivise and support staff to deliver high-quality short courses;

- Further improve the Life Learning course finder website and its integration with the UCLeXtend online learning platform, and investigate operational and technological solutions to support the online user journey and user experience;

- Continue to actively seek and secure investment and build capacity to develop and deliver new courses to existing and new markets.

By 2021:

- We will have established a UCL-aligned quality management framework and provided evidence of good practice and enhanced learning experiences to support personal and professional development;

- We will have enhanced the online user journey and user experience through operational and technological solutions to integrate the Life Learning course finder website, the UCLeXtend online learning platform and a course administration system;

- We will have expanded the portfolio, increased commercial collaborations, promoted innovation in education and demonstrated learner satisfaction and impact.

Education Strategy enablers

Our strategy is a mix of the ambitious and the pragmatic. We have identified three key enablers for the objectives outlined above:

Rewarding staff for their investment in teaching
In common with much of the sector, we recognise that our staff are managing substantial workloads and that teaching can often appear less rewarding – financially and reputationally – than research. This is something that we have to change if we are truly to move to a research-based teaching culture: parity of esteem between the two activities becomes increasingly more pressing. Work is now underway to review the promotions criteria at UCL, and we hope to be able to implement a new promotions framework by 2018, including new materials to guide staff through the promotions process, and underpinned by the UCL Arena programme for staff at all stages of their careers.

Annually, we reward staff for outstanding contributions to education at UCL through the Provost's Teaching Awards. This scheme is now nearly a decade old and we will be reviewing it in 2016-17 to ensure that it continues to recognise staff for their achievements and is established as a key point in the UCL calendar.

We will also need to invest in support services for teaching staff, and particularly in those who provide developmental opportunities and qualifications for those who teach and lead on education. We will need to invest in the infrastructure that underpins UCL Arena, UCL's framework for supporting staff to develop as teachers and acquire accreditation for their education activities. Additionally, as we move towards a greater use of technology in education, we will increasingly need to invest in instructional designers to work with staff to support the transition to learning online.

Investment in systems, processes and infrastructure
The objectives in the Education Strategy urgently require an updated student information system. A robust and agile student system is fundamental to the infrastructure that support education and the student experience. It facilitates the smooth running of procedures that are crucial to the university and can deliver important efficiencies in terms of staff time and effort.

Thanks to the ubiquity of sophisticated websites and databases, our students and staff now expect that they should be able to access information online, or expedite queries and actions in an efficient and user-friendly way. Many of the key functions of a university as students encounter them – timetabling, module selection, feedback and progress tracking – can now be facilitated and expedited by technology and students expect to be able to deal with the administrative side of the student experience with minimal disruption. Additionally, the complexity of an institution of the size of UCL makes it vital that we streamline our systems and processes as far as possible, both to reduce the burden on staff, and also to minimise institutional risk.

Following work to identify how our students and staff want to use the system, we will need to secure the funding to implement our Student Information Strategy. We will work to implement urgent enhancements to Portico over the next two years, and seek funding to allow us to deliver the Student Information Strategy by 2021 at the very latest.

Our work on systems will also encompass a review of data in the student records system, and the processes we use to collect this data. This review will pave the way for a number of innovations, including a review of module choice and module structures.

We also need to ensure that we invest appropriately in our physical infrastructure: to provide an IT system that supports mobile and own-user devices, and ensures that all students can access university devices wherever they need them; a teaching estate that enables high-quality teaching and a consistent and comfortable learning experience, and investment in library and digital library holdings.

We also anticipate that investment will be necessary to grow our Life Learning programme, both to develop the technical platform and to provide the physical facilities to support a sizeable professional development and executive education programme.

Strong communications on education
UCL is a diverse and devolved institution, which brings with it particular communications challenges, particularly if we want to capitalise on the wealth of good practice that exists across the university. There is a need for greater communication with and between the central administration and the faculties on education, in particular to ensure that appropriate materials are developed to support staff and students to lead change. Over the next five years, we will be substantially expanding our primary channel for education communications – the Teaching and Learning Portal – and developing a supplementary resource on education for students. We will also keep our committee structures and reporting lines under constant review to ensure that decisions are being communicated appropriately and effectively. Work to refine our quality assurance processes is already in train, and we expect to draw on the information we collect through those processes, and through the Connected Curriculum infrastructure, to an ever greater extent to support communication across the university on education matters.

Measuring success

One of the objectives under theme 2 of UCL 2034 relates to levels of student satisfaction in national and internal surveys:

Achieve high levels of satisfaction in the National Student Survey and International Barometer, placing us in the top quartile of performance of Russell Group universities

Rather than treat this as a separate objective, we believe that this should be one of the main outcomes of this Education Strategy, and the end goal of our investment of staffing, resources and energy over the next five years. Levels of student satisfaction will be a key indicator of the success of this strategy.

For each of the objectives outlined above, we will measure our progress against the following quantitative indicators.

Objective 1: To move towards personalised student support, from first contact to graduation and beyond

- Student satisfaction with induction (home and overseas split)

- UCL: Student satisfaction with halls integration (home and overseas split)

- Provision and Participation in academic writing programmes

- Institutional BME attainment gap

- Take-up of the Introductory Programme (once launched)

Objective 2: To embed the Connected Curriculum across the university

- Number of programmes evaluated as exemplifying the Connected Curriculum framework

- Engagement with online CC materials by staff

- Attendance at CC-related events, conferences workshops

Objective 3: To address and resolve the persistent challenges of assessment and feedback

- Number of programme leaders participating in assessment and feedback CPD annually

- Student satisfaction with assessment (aggregate of NSS questions)

Objective 4: To create cultures of student participation and leadership

- New to UCL; Student Experience Survey; NSS; PTES response rates

- Numbers of trained StARs annually

- Number of Students participating in institutional level committees

- Number of projects supported through UCL ChangeMakers

- Number of students participating in quality enhancement or institutional change projects

Objective 5: To review and revitalise our approach to postgraduate taught education.

- Overall satisfaction

- Aggregate of student satisfaction with support services

- Reduction in long tail of PGT modules

Objective 6: To develop a teaching estate that is fit for purpose

- Responses to NSS question 16 "timetable works for me"

- Student satisfaction with learning spaces quality

- Efficiency of timetable construction (utilisation rates; percentage of external space) used

- Room refresh programme stats (% of estate refurbished to new quality standards)

Objective 7: To establish a digital learning infrastructure that connects students with each other, with staff, with research and with the wider world.

- Student satisfaction with IT provision

- Numbers of programmes developed with Arena Blended Curriculum framework

Objective 8: To expand our extra-curricular offer in response to student feedback about employability.

- Applications to GCP and evaluations

- Applications to Laidlaw and student evaluations

- Careers "readiness" data obtained through registration

- Students supported by the careers system

- Number of programmes with work-based learning dimension

Objective 9: To extend our global reach, reputation and impact from Life Learning through an extensive portfolio of short courses and CPD for personal and professional development.

- Number of courses

- Number of learners

- Number of learner days

- Number of departments delivering Life Learning

- Income generated by Life Learning activity across UCL

- Income / surplus generated in Life Learning Pathfinder courses

Qualitative indicators:

- Number of staff accredited by the HEA

- Internal visits to the T&L Portal and downloads

Investment profile:

- Show investment (capital; human resources; project costs) by each strategy objective for team to monitor

An Education Strategy Implementation Group, chaired by the Vice-Provost (Education & Student Affairs) will be established in April 2016 to monitor progress towards the objectives outlined in the strategy. The group will receive progress reports on each of the objectives identified including progress against the various measures of success.

This strategy will be reviewed in 2018-19.

UCL 2034

A new 20-year strategy for UCL

Our vision for 2034

Our distinctive approach to research, education and innovation will further inspire our community of staff, students and partners to transform how the world is understood, how knowledge is created and shared and the way that global problems are solved.

Our mission

London's Global University: a diverse intellectual community, engaged with the wider world and committed to changing it for the better; recognised for our radical and critical thinking and its widespread influence; with an outstanding ability to integrate our education, research, innovation and enterprise for the long-term benefit of humanity.

Principal themes

- Academic leadership grounded in intellectual excellence

- A global leader in the integration of research and education, underpinning an inspirational student experience

- Addressing global challenges through our disciplinary excellence and distinctive cross-disciplinary approach

- An accessible, publicly-engaged organisation that fosters a lifelong community

- London's Global University: in London, of London and for London

- Delivering global impact through a network of innovative international activities, collaborations and partnerships

Key enablers

- Giving our students the best support, facilities and opportunities

- Valuing our staff and delivering on equality and diversity

- Financing our ambitions

- Delivering excellent systems and processes in support of UCL's vision

- Maintaining a sustainable estate to meet our aspirations

- Communicating and engaging effectively with the world

Founding principles

This strategy is formulated within the context of our proud history and our values.

By 2021:

All students to be learning through research and connecting with each other, people, places and subjects beyond their courses and UCL

To have implemented a programme to improve the student digital experience, providing a quality technology-rich blended environment for student study

To have expanded our extra-curricular offer so that all students can have an internship and feel better prepared for the workplace

Students and staff to be working together as partners to improve UCL

A significantly enhanced campus including a new building containing all student services

To have addressed and resolved problems with assessment and feedback

To be providing much more support to all students, particularly for academic writing and integrating into student life

www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/2016-21