

UCL Peer Dialogue Scheme

Enhancing research-based education at UCL

What is the Peer Dialogue Scheme?

The Peer Dialogue scheme is open to all staff who teach and/or support students' learning at UCL. Its aim is to inspire you to develop your teaching and your students' learning, by working closely with others. It enables you to focus on developing a range of dimensions of your practice, such as classroom teaching, feedback on assessment or development of resources. You are invited to engage in a constructive discussion about enhancing student learning and/or the wider student experience in your subject.

Peer Dialogue is not a judgmental process, but an opportunity for creative thinking about developing your educational practice. Departments will keep a brief record of engagement with the scheme, to demonstrate commitment to ongoing, collegial enhancement of academic practice.

For further information or guidance on how to engage with the UCL Peer Dialogue scheme, please contact: arena@ucl.ac.uk

What do I need to do?

You have three options, and can choose which to undertake in each academic year. We recommend using the range of options overtime. Staff on probation should take advice from their subject leader on which option would be the most helpful.



UCL Arena Centre
for Research-based Education

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Option A: collaborative enhancement of a specific area of practice

Colleagues work in twos, threes or small groups (same subject OR interdisciplinary clusters).

1. Identify an area for development for the academic year; for example, assessment methods; feedback to students; e-learning materials and resources; flipped lectures; inclusive teaching for diverse groups; research-based education. See the UCL Teaching and Learning Portal for more examples: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/>.
2. Support each other by:
 - visiting each other's teaching sessions, and/or
 - studying course design: face to face session plans; modules; programmes of study; the design of online learning activities, and/or
 - reviewing a wider area of practice for development.
3. Agree on your approaches to enhancement.
4. Try out the new approaches and then get together to review them.
5. Write a very brief account (50-150 words) of what you have done, of how practices have developed and of what impact this has had on student learning and engagement.

Option B: Pair-based Teaching Observation

1. Identify with a colleague one or more aspects of your face-to-face teaching, digital education activities or feedback to students, which you would like feedback on. You are encouraged to select a new partner for the Peer Dialogue each academic year, so that you can draw on and contribute to the expertise of diverse colleagues.
2. Plan times to observe each other's teaching, digital education activities or feedback.
3. Spend time on preparation before the observation. It will be very helpful if you understand the context of each other's teaching and the aim and content of particular session, activity or assessment.
4. When observing, make notes on what you will feed back to your colleague and on what you can apply to your own teaching/course design/feedback practice.
5. Engage in a constructive follow-up discussion, exploring how your practice can be mutually enhanced.
6. Write a brief joint report (50-150 words) summarising any changes you plan following the Peer Dialogue, focusing particularly on suggestions of benefit to others in the department.

Option C: Reflection and dialogue with student reviewers

Staff work in partnership with one or two students, who are not taking the course under consideration, to reflect on their educational practice through dialogue as follows:

1. The staff and student(s) meet to introduce themselves and their motivation for working with each other. They should agree the focus for their joint investigation into the staff member's educational practice and the format of this.
2. The student(s) spends a minimum of 5 hours observing educational practice (such as a combination of classroom/laboratory teaching, a Moodle site/other VLE and/or assignment brief/ other course documentation).
3. Prior to each observation the staff and student(s) discuss the context, aim and content of the observation.
4. When observing, the student(s) should make some notes to aid their memory of it. They should spend some time following the observation reflecting on it from their perspective.
5. Following each observation the staff and student(s) should engage in constructive dialogue about their different perspectives on the observation. This will focus on how the teaching practice can be enhanced; what the student has learnt about how to learn effectively and whether this learning can also be shared with course participants to enhance their learning.
6. The student may additionally discuss the experience of taking the course with course participants, to inform their reflections and feed these insights into the discussion with the member of staff teaching the course. In this case, the focus of the dialogue with course participants should be discussed with the staff member in advance and the outcomes discussed afterwards.
7. The staff and student(s) should collaboratively write a short report (50-150 words) summarizing any changes that are planned following the education dialogue, focusing particularly on suggestions of benefit to others (staff and students) in the department.

Peer Dialogue follow up (Options A, B and C)

You are invited to:

- Present and discuss your account of Peer Dialogue at your appraisal
- Present your enhancement work to your departmental teaching committee
- Share with your departmental teaching committee any generic issues arising, for example suggestions for changes to the use of space or of technology
- Present the outcomes of the Peer Dialogue to Student Staff Consultative Committees
- Develop a case study for the UCL Teaching and Learning Portal: email ConnectedCurriculum@ucl.ac.uk to discuss possibilities
- Lead a UCL Arena exchange seminar, to share your developments with colleagues beyond your Faculty: see <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/arena/events/seminar-proposal-form> or contact arena@ucl.ac.uk.