



UCL

# Risk assessment for UCL Access and Widening Participation Office online activities

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October 2024



## Description of activity:

- This risk assessment covers online events and activities organised by the UCL Access and Widening Participation Office (AWPO) for groups of prospective students (referred to here as participants).
- UCL's AWPO works with prospective students from primary school age to mature students of any age; the majority of participants are under 18. Events can be one-off interactions or regular activities with the same participants that take place over a period of time.
- Depending on the activity, participants attend unaccompanied or alongside teachers or parents/carers.
- Online activities include, but are not limited to, the use of online platforms for instant messaging/chat, recorded sessions streamed live, live lectures, webinars, mentoring, Q&A sessions, and long term or intensive programmes delivered online such as summer schools.
- Participants take part in online programmes, workshops, study sessions and other activities organised by the AWPO and designed and delivered by UCL students, staff and external providers.
- Online events and activities are supervised by a designated member of AWPO staff. They are supported in administrative tasks such as platform moderation by other AWPO staff or UCL student staff who are recruited and trained by the AWPO for this purpose.

## Hazard 1. Working with young people under the age of eighteen – safeguarding

Concerns related to the safeguarding of young people must be noted and dealt with appropriately to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all participants. Safeguarding concerns may relate to incidents that take place during or after an event, or that a staff member or participant has become aware of as a result of the event. This could include something a staff member or participant has said, something about a participant's appearance, typed comments in the chat, a breach of safeguarding procedures or something that was seen or overheard in the background of a video feed.

Existing control measures:

- All UCL AWPO staff must have a clear DBS check and complete an online child protection training module as part of their induction. Face-to-face child protection training is arranged on an annual basis for new staff and those requiring a refresher.
- There are allocated AWPO staff who have received training to act as a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and AWPO staff consult a DSO if any safeguarding issues arise.



- There is a system in place for a DSO to be available on the phone during out-of-hours events.
- All student staff who are working on a regulated activity or have an administrative role in an online activity (such as moderating content or monitoring registers) have a clear DBS check.
- All student staff who will be supervising young people receive child protection training from AWPO staff, complete online child protection training, are made aware of the UCL Child Protection Policy and sign a code of conduct.
- Staff working on online programmes in any other capacity are made aware of the UCL Child Protection Policy and complete our code of conduct.
- Participants or parents/carers are required to provide details of any medical or additional needs and keep AWPO informed of any changes.
- Any concerns regarding a participant's wellbeing are communicated to the lead member of AWPO staff for the event who may contact the young person's school, parent/carer and/or the DSO as a matter of urgency.

## **Hazard 2. Working with young people under the age of eighteen – staffing of online events**

UCL AWPO must ensure sufficient staffing arrangements to maintain a safe and enjoyable online experience and reduce the risk of any harm to participants.

Existing control measures:

- When any aspect of an online event is underway, a member of AWPO staff acting as a Coordinator is on duty and acting in a supervisory capacity. The Coordinator must have access to all sessions that are taking place. They are supported by staff or student staff acting as Administrators, who assist with administrative duties such as registration, moderation of comments and monitoring of verbal exchanges.
- Within any online session, regardless of group size or participant interaction, two members of staff must be present at all times and at least one of these must be an Administrator or Coordinator.
- If there are thirteen or more participants in a group, three staff, including at least one Coordinator or Administrator, must be present at all times.
- Staff members must not take a moderation role at the same time as presenting or teaching and sufficient cover must be in place to avoid this.
- If staff numbers fall below the required level, an event will be suspended or stopped completely if sufficient cover cannot be found quickly.

## **Hazard 3. Working with young people under the age of eighteen – behaviour during online events**



UCL AWPO must arrange events to ensure a safe and enjoyable online experience and mitigate the risk of harmful behaviours such as bullying or offensive language.

Existing control measures:

- The structure and content of activity is carefully planned to ensure discussions stay on topic.
- Online events take place in a specific online space at a specific time. Staffing is arranged to ensure that minimum ratios can be met at all times.
- When applying for an activity as an individual, all participants (and a parent or carer) are required to agree to a code of behaviour prior to taking part. Participants will be reminded of expected behaviour during the programme. In the event of serious misbehaviour, AWPO staff will inform a young person's parent/carer and school, and they may be removed from the programme.
- For group events organised through a school, teachers are responsible for ensuring that pupils adhere to the code of conduct.
- Before an event, participants are given adequate instructions to ensure a safe environment on the platform that is in use. For example, on certain platforms they may be asked to join with their first name and the first initial of their surname only.
- At the beginning of the event, a designated member of staff will ensure that all attendees are registered programme participants and anyone else will be asked to leave. All participants will be reminded of the code of conduct standards they have agreed to follow.
- Staff acting as Coordinators or Administrators ensure that the privacy settings of the online learning environment are correct for the event. They know how to moderate comments, mute speakers or remove someone from the event, if necessary.
- Throughout an event, designated staff are responsible for monitoring cameras, verbal exchanges and instant messaging/chat.
- Inappropriate behaviour or comments are dealt with immediately. This may involve muting or removing a participant from the activity or the platform (temporarily or permanently) or suspending the session.

## Hazard 4. Use of online platforms

UCL AWPO must ensure that online platforms are suitable for the activity and that staff are able to use the platform in a way that minimises risk of harm to participants or staff.

Existing control measures:

All AWPO online activity takes place on an online platform approved by the Head of Access and Widening Participation. These platforms must have the following features:

- The platform is appropriate to the age group of participants.
- Only registered participants are able to take part in an activity.
- Participants' personal contact details must not be visible publicly, to other participants or to anyone except authorised staff.
- If any staff contact details are visible, they are limited to the UCL email addresses and UCL phone numbers of staff.
- Staff are able to review and moderate messages.



- Staff are able to temporarily mute or remove a participant from the platform if necessary, or stop an event temporarily to facilitate this.
- In the case of serious or repeated inappropriate behaviour, staff will permanently exclude a participant from an activity.

Risk level with existing controls: B – Low/Tolerable

