



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

TEF PROVIDER SUBMISSION 2023

A foreword from UCL's President & Provost,

"The first thing that strikes anyone coming to UCL for the first time is how hugely impressive UCL's students are. Passionate, eloquent, proactive, socially and globally aware and determined to make a difference. UCL's education is about co-creating with our students an experience that will best set them up to be confident, independent thinkers, doers and problem-solvers who will make tangible impacts in the search for solutions to some of the world's most urgent challenges. Our teaching and assessment practices consistently deliver outstanding student outcomes, at scale, and for a diverse range of students. We have made significant and sustained improvements across the whole student experience, but we know that there are still challenges for us to address, particularly around assessment. However, we have developed tools and strategies to tackle these challenges and we are already seeing a significant, positive impact. Our overall vision for the next five years is to ensure that, across the board, our students' experiences are as exceptional as their outcomes".

How we have worked with the Students' Union UCL on our submission

UCL has a strong partnership with our Students' Union, and they have been involved in every stage of the TEF process. The TEF Student Contacts are members of UCL's TEF Steering Group, and we have given them open access to all our data and documents. UCL has further supported the independent student submission by funding a six-month secondment in the SU. We have also worked in partnership to co-create a new and ambitious definition of Educational Gains at UCL.

1 PROVIDER CONTEXT

UCL is one of the world's leading multi-disciplinary, research-intensive universities¹ and was **ranked 8th in the world** for the 2nd year in a row in the QS World University Rankings 2023². Established nearly 200 years ago, our university community has helped to shape the modern world through ground-breaking discoveries, including the inert gases, the structure of DNA, the 'inner GPS' in the brain, and predicting the Higgs boson³. Our founding principles⁴ of **academic excellence, inclusivity and addressing real-world problems** continue to shape our educational excellence today, helping UCL to prepare tomorrow's leaders, researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs to tackle some of the most complex challenges facing our global society⁵.

UCL is the **largest on-site HE provider in the UK**⁶ with around 46,000 students (22,000 UG and 24,000 PGT) and 15,000 staff in 2020/21. There were 3,400 more undergraduates in 2020/21 than 2017/18, primarily driven by changes to A levels during the pandemic. This follows a period of planned growth over the past 30 years through mergers with several small and specialist institutions. Today, UCL is a truly comprehensive university with **expertise in 30 out of the 34 CAH2 subjects**. Our 94 academic departments are grouped into 11 faculties: Arts & Humanities, Brain Sciences, Built Environment, Education & Society, Engineering Sciences, Laws, Life Sciences, Mathematical

& Physical Sciences, Medical Sciences, Population Health Sciences, and Social & Historical Sciences. Each academic department or institute has its own strong history and distinctive identity. Students tell us that one of the major attractions of UCL is the huge choice of modules from across these different centres of excellence, and the opportunity to personalise their programme so that it is intellectually stimulating and tailored to their chosen futures.

UCL sits in the heart of London, a dynamic, multi-cultural centre which was recently named **World's Best Student City** by QS 2022⁷. Upholding one of UCL's founding principles, our community is proudly diverse. UCL was the first university in England to welcome students of any religion or social background, and to admit women to university education on equal terms with men⁸. We have challenged inequality ever since and were one of the first universities to join Athena SWAN⁹. In 2020/21, 54% of undergraduates were from overseas, and 61% of UK and international students were from a Black, Asian or other minority ethnic background¹⁰. UCL has the **6th highest average entry tariff in England**¹¹ at 179 points, and 38% of students enter with A-levels of AAA or higher. However, we also have a strong commitment to widening participation: in 2022/23, **30% of UK students entered through 'AccessUCL', our contextual offer scheme**¹² and, in March 2022, UCL was one of only 20 universities to appear in the English Social Mobility Index¹³.

In 2020/21, our UG portfolio¹⁴ included 285 programmes leading to a Bachelors (71% of students) or Integrated Masters (29%) degree. 47% of UG students were on programmes **accredited or endorsed by professional bodies**, helping to create the next generation in essential fields such as Medicine, Engineering, Pharmacy, Law, Psychology, and Architecture. 42% of students were on programmes with integrated or optional **professional placements**, while 12% were on programmes with integrated or optional **study abroad**, including students on dual and joint degrees with international partners. Our UG programmes are nearly all **Full Time** (99.8%), with students registered on a one-year, part-time Certificate. While these students are very important to us, and are included in all our education provision, our TEF submission focuses on the data for Full Time, Undergraduate students who are registered and taught by UCL.

2 STUDENT EXPERIENCE

2.1 ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE AND ASSESSMENT

In the NSS 2022 (n=3522, RR 71%¹⁵), three Teaching and Learning Opportunities questions were **materially above benchmark**: students said that their programmes were intellectually stimulating (+3.3% above benchmark) and challenging (+2.7%), with plenty of opportunities to bring ideas together (+3.7%). They also told us that staff were good at explaining things (+/-0%) and made the subject interesting (+1.5%), and that their courses included opportunities to explore concepts in depth (+2.1%). This was echoed in the NSS free-text questions, where **'Teaching & Learning' received the most positive feedback** (over two thirds of all positive comments in 2022). 'Teaching' also received the most positive feedback in the Students' Union's annual **Student Priorities for Education** reportⁱ in 2022¹⁶. This report also found that:

"Students were most positive about [the] excellent teaching delivery they received, expressing their appreciation for passionate lecturers who provided effective feedback and utilised a variety of engaging teaching styles."

UCL's approach to education is designed to stretch students in a positive way and equip them with the tools to become tomorrow's leading practitioners, researchers and innovators. This is evidenced

ⁱ Based on an analysis of feedback from 403 UG and PGT departmental Staff-Student Consultative Committee meetings.

in our attainment rates, where UCL has been in the top ten UK universities for the proportion of ‘good degrees’ awarded **in each of the past ten years**¹⁷, and by the fact that **24% of UG students go onto further study**, with a quarter of those students choosing to do so at UCL

Our high Progression rate (**84.3%, 11th in the UK**) demonstrates that employers seek out UCL students for their knowledge and skills, and our graduates tell us that our teaching and assessment practices have prepared them effectively for meaningful and useful futures (**89% agree, 5th in the UK**, GOS 3-year aggregate).

Almost half of UG students are on programmes which are **accredited or endorsed by professional bodies**, who consistently confirm that our teaching and assessment practices are meeting the most rigorous standards. For example, a recent accreditation commended the Department of Mechanical Engineering for the quality of their programmes, and their focus on research excellence, industrial partnerships and creative education, which together were preparing students to be as ‘industry-ready’ as possible¹⁹. UCL has also **pioneered new routes to accreditation**. For example, the Royal Institute of British Architects’ accreditation visit in 2021 commended two new programmes – MSci Architecture, and MEng Engineering & Architectural Design – for offering distinctive new routes into the profession²⁰. Meanwhile, UCL’s Natural Sciences team were one of the founding partners of the Society for Natural Sciences²¹. The accreditation scheme has gained formal recognition with the Science Council, and now provides a national hallmark of quality and excellence in UK degrees which are genuinely committed to interdisciplinary science higher education.

UCL’s degrees have also been used as an **international exemplar of good practice**, helping to make advances in the quality of higher education across the world. In one example, we worked closely with HRH Princess Chulabhorn College of Medical Science to develop a new medical degree based on UCL’s MBBS curriculum, which then led to changes in national undergraduate medicine standards across Thailand²². In a further example, UCL is a leading partner in ‘CORE Econ’, a global community of learners, instructors and researchers which has transformed the undergraduate Economics curriculum, helping students across the world to apply their learning to the societal problems that they care about most, such as climate change, inequality and the future of work. Their seminal open-access textbook, ‘The Economy’, was first published in 2014 and is today used by almost 400 institutions across 66 countries, with two thirds using it as their main textbook²³.

In order to maintain this level of excellence, our teaching and assessment practices deliberately stretch students to achieve the highest possible standards. However, we know that this can be very challenging for students, and we have undertaken an extensive programme of work to make our teaching and assessment practices as **inclusive and supportive** as possible. For example, in 2017/18, UCL took part in an **OfS-funded consortium project** led by Kingston University²⁴ on eliminating the gap in the proportion of ‘good degrees’ awarded to UK BAME students compared with their White counterparts. This laid the foundations for a major programme of work involving students and staff from across UCL, including our flagship **Inclusive Curriculum Health Check**²⁵, which helps departments to embed inclusivity and ensure that all students are able to participate fully, and our **BAME Awarding Gap Staff Toolkit**²⁶, which is centred around BAME student voices and practical tips. UCL’s **BAME Awarding Gap Fund** encourages departments to initiate student-centred and student-led projects by offering funding of up to £25,000 each, while faculty-based **BAME Awarding Gap Leads** have been appointed to champion the case for change at a local level and encourage **grass-roots intervention projects**. As an example, one programme team developed a ‘Science of Bias’²⁷ module exploring the neuroscience of bias and prejudice, which has since been adopted across the Faculty of Brain Sciences. Another team created a ‘Decolonising Global Health Toolkit’²⁸ which won a Faculty of Population Health Sciences Teaching Award for its

ability to improve both critical engagement and the student experience. **UCL ChangeMakers**²⁹ - our framework for engaging students as partners in education enhancement - has been woven throughout the project. For example, student interns in Statistics received the London Living Wage to analyse Awarding Gap module data³⁰ while a new **Student Curriculum Partner** role is supporting students to work with their lecturers to review modules, re-design assessments and update learning materials. One student said, *“I feel like I was able to make an actual impact on the studies of future students from a similar background as me.”*³¹ This cross-institutional programme of work is already having an impact: **in 2019/20 and 2020/21, the gap in module marks between BAME and White students fell to nearly zero for the first time**³².

UCL is also ensuring that our rigorous teaching and assessment practices are accessible and inclusive by investing in large-scale digital assessment reform. At the start of the pandemic in 2020, our extensive experience in online assessments gave us a head start in rapidly developing and rolling out one of the largest bespoke digital assessment platforms in the UK. In its first year, **AssessmentUCL** delivered over 1,000 separate assessments for 49,000 candidates, with 98% of students submitting successfully without any reported issue³³. Through this ambitious change programme UCL has demonstrated the future potential of a digital assessment platform, and we are regularly invited to share good practice both in the UK and internationally through conferences and events hosted by organisations such as the University of London, the League of European Research Universities and North-West University South Africa. UCL also **leads the platform supplier’s HEI User Group**, helping to share ideas and good practice with eight major UK universitiesⁱⁱ, and is the **lead partner in the annual Academic Practice & Technology Conference**, a collaboration with LSE, Imperial and King’s. **Student ChangeMakers** were embedded from the start of the AssessmentUCL project, helping UCL to understand student experiences through focus groups, interviews and surveys (n=2,042 in 2021; 2,056 in 2022³⁴), and producing in-depth analyses which have been instrumental in continuously enhancing the platform. UCL has also contributed to JISC student partnership case studies³⁵ and was invited to **host the JISC Change Agents Network conference 2022**³⁶. JISC commented that UCL *“has embedded students as partners into the culture of their organisation and this has enabled students to play an active role in the design and development of their digital environment”*³⁷.

While the pivot to online assessment was necessitated by the pandemic, it showed us that digital assessment can have wide-reaching benefits for students. Many told us that they found online assessments comparatively less stressful, while students with a disability, parents and carers, and critical NHS workers told us that online assessments were more inclusive (AssessmentUCL survey, n=2,042 in 2021³⁸). Our use of a capstone project to replace individual assessments for all first-year undergraduates during the first lockdown was **promoted as an example of good practice by the Office for Students**³⁹, and our analysis indicates that this more inclusive approach to assessment was also instrumental in closing the gap in module marks between BAME and White students in 2019/20 and 2020/21. An **open letter from our Students’ Union to the UCL teaching community**⁴⁰ further demonstrates the hard work and commitment of staff in delivering high quality, inclusive teaching and assessment practices during a time of enormous stress for students:

“On behalf of all the students at UCL, Students’ Union UCL would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Academic Community at UCL for your response to the coronavirus pandemic and your commitment to delivering teaching and world-class learning opportunities in the most inclusive and engaging way despite the dire situation that the world as a whole is facing”.

ⁱⁱ Birmingham City, Brunel, Coventry, Imperial, King’s, Open University, Warwick and York

Post-pandemic, UCL – like much of the sector – is carefully considering how best to retain these benefits while returning to in-person teaching. We know that the greatest barrier to some forms of online assessment is increasingly sophisticated Artificial Intelligence. UCL is taking this challenge to **academic integrity** very seriously and has established a task force of students, digital experts and UCL academics who are leaders in AI research. The task force is working to support staff to review and improve assessment design and provide new guidance to students, with a particular focus on the nexus between the appropriate use of AI-generated work as a learning tool and the inappropriate use of AI-generated work in assessment.

UCL has further improved students' assessment experiences through a **root-and-branch review of our assessment regulations**⁴¹ which minimised the high number of historical regulatory variations across different institutes and departments. All programmes now use common progression, classification and reassessment rules which allow for subject-specific variation where it is academically appropriate. We have also revised our procedures for anonymous marking, second marking and Boards of Examiners and, in response to student feedback, revised our Extenuating Circumstances procedures to achieve greater consistency across departments. These changes, combined with UCL's extensive work to close the BAME Attainment Gap, have contributed to substantive improvements in the NSS question 'Marking and assessment has been fair', where UCL has moved from -3.1% below benchmark in 2019 to within -0.5% of benchmark in 2022⁴².

While we have made good progress in making our assessment processes fair and supportive, we know that there are still challenges for UCL to address – particularly around the **clarity of marking criteria, and the timeliness and helpfulness of feedback**. The split metrics tell us that, while many programmes have achieved considerable improvements in these areas, we need to do more to help all departments improve assessment and feedback practices. Our students' voices are at the heart of our enhancement plans, and we are working closely with the Students' Union to identify students' core concerns. Here, the SU's Student Priorities for Education⁴³ reports have been invaluable in understanding and tackling the roots of these challenges. By triangulating the reports' findings with other student feedbackⁱⁱⁱ we have identified four core areas for improvement:

- **Bunching of assessments:** Students tell us that one of the major attractions of UCL is the huge choice of modules which allows them to personalise their programmes. However, because students' modules are managed by different departments, it is extremely difficult to avoid assessment clashes, especially in term 2 and in the main exams period in term 3. This bunching affects student wellbeing and makes it harder for departments to return feedback in time for students to apply it to their next assignment.
- **Student workload:** Some students struggle with the number of separate assessments, especially on some of our professionally accredited programmes which need to meet external requirements. This high volume of assessment also exacerbates deadline clashes and further affects departments' ability to return feedback quickly.
- **Clarity of marking criteria:** Students tell us that marking criteria need to be clearer and communicated earlier.
- **Adapting our teaching delivery:** Following the return to in-person teaching post-pandemic, students tell us that they want more varied teaching methods as well as online content to supplement in-person teaching.

In 2021, UCL welcomed a new Provost (equivalent to Vice-Chancellor) and, in 2022, a new Vice-Provost Education & Student Experience. This renewed strategic leadership has brought a fresh

ⁱⁱⁱ Including: UCL Student Experience Survey of penultimate-year undergraduates (n=1,028 in 2022); AssessmentUCL student surveys (n=2,042 in 2021; n=2,056 in 2022); NSS Open Comments (e.g. n=2,901 in 2022).

perspective, and one of their **top institutional priorities for 2022/23 is improving students' assessment experiences**. This major programme of work includes actions at all levels of UCL, with both shorter-term, practical steps that are already in train and longer-term, strategic projects.

For immediate impact, we are encouraging departments to take swift action so that current students see visible improvements in response to their feedback. In summer 2022, University Management Committee (UCL's most senior executive committee) established **new Faculty Education Plans**, a streamlined, ground-up approach which targets the specific needs of each individual programme by helping departments to identify and concentrate on a small number of actions which will have the greatest impact in their local context. A new UCL role, the **Pro-Vice-Provost Student Academic Experience**, has been created to support faculties in devising and delivering their action plans, and the process is being carefully monitored by University Management Committee. From 2023, the Faculty Education Plans are being expanded to include data-led and action-oriented **Department Education Plans** to further embed the ground-up approach.

As part of the Faculty Education Plans, every department is required to **review their feedback turnaround** times and work with student reps to **refresh their marking criteria**. For example, the Faculty of Mathematical & Physical Sciences has co-designed an 'Improving Assessment & Feedback Practices' project with their Faculty Student Reps to support departments to provide constructive and timely feedback, and help students to recognise, understand and reflect on it. The Faculty has already seen evidence of impact: in a follow-up survey at the end of Term 1 'The criteria used in marking have been made clear in advance' was almost 14ppt higher than the faculty's NSS 2022 score, while 'Feedback on my work has been timely' was 12ppt higher⁴⁴.

We are also encouraging more departments to utilise our **Assessment Load Model**⁴⁵ and **CHART Assessment Visualisation Tool**⁴⁶ to think deeply about the volume and timing of assessment on their programmes. Launched in 2020/21, the Assessment Load Model illustrates assessment methods, word counts etc. that are suitable for different-sized modules across a very wide range of disciplines, while the CHART Tool helps programme teams to visualise, evaluate and redesign their students' journeys. Over 80 academic teams have already made use of the tool, and it has been particularly effective on cross-disciplinary programmes where teaching teams have been able to experiment with different scenarios. For example, the Computer Sciences team used the CHART Tool to rebalance the spread of coursework and exams and remove over 80 assessed components from across the department, while the Applied Medical Sciences team say the tool was instrumental in improving NSS Overall Satisfaction by 39ppt between 2018 and 2022⁴⁷.

In addition to these immediate actions, UCL is putting in place a series of longer-term, strategic actions to make fundamental, structural changes to improve our students' experiences. In 2022, we **revised our education governance structures** to ensure that the student voice and experience are at the heart of our decision-making, and that our most senior Education Committee receives the essential information it needs to assure itself that UCL is delivering excellent experiences and outcomes for all students. From January 2023, a single Quality & Standards Committee is now overseeing regulatory and quality assurance matters. We have **refreshed our quality review processes**, replacing the former Annual Student Experience Review with the new Faculty Education Plans, and we are now taking a more risk-based approach to Internal Quality Review by using key performance indicators to identify departments which would benefit most from additional support.

Our students' teaching and assessment experiences are also at the heart of our strategic priorities for the next five years⁴⁸. This includes a major project to **redesign UCL's programme architecture** and review the shape of the academic year, with a specific focus on reducing workload pressures for students and staff, and opening up new opportunities for different types of learning. Our aim is to

improve students' experiences of assessment and give staff more time to focus on the things which students value - such as helpful, timely feedback - whilst also retaining the academic rigour, breadth of choice and opportunities for personalisation that attract students from around the world.

2.2 COURSE CONTENT & DELIVERY

In the NSS 2022⁴⁹, students told us that their programmes were intellectually stimulating (+3.3% above benchmark), with plenty of opportunities to bring ideas together (+3.7%) and explore concepts in depth (+2.1%). This was echoed in our own UCL Student Experience Survey of penultimate-year undergraduates where 85% of respondents agreed that their course was intellectually stimulating and 85% agreed that 'Staff are good at explaining things' In our New to UCL Survey, 55% of respondents cited 'Content of Degree Programme' as one of the factors which most influenced their decision to study with us (n=7,032, of which 2,265 UG, RR 31%, 2021⁵¹).

UCL believes that it is a deep **commitment to disciplinary excellence**, and to creating space for subjects to collaborate and innovate, that has placed us amongst the world's leading universities⁵². Central strategic leadership provides the frameworks for this combination of subject-specific expertise and cross-disciplinary opportunity to flourish. Our **Programme and Module Approval and Amendment Framework**⁵³ guides departments in developing and enhancing their curriculum, while the **UCL Arena Programme Development Unit** provides one-to-one support as well as Programme Design and Assessment Design workshops which are tailored to each programme team's local context. **Student Quality Reviewer**⁵⁴ workshops give teams a student perspective on their proposals. One student said, *"It's really great being able to express your opinion and have people listen and take it into account"*, while Programme Leaders said, *"we felt quite rigorously assessed"* and *"their enthusiasm was reassuring and exciting."*⁵⁵

The Programme Development Unit has also supported the development of 60 new UG and PGT programmes for our new second campus, **UCL East**, which opened in 2022. Drawing on expertise from our existing faculties, 11 new schools and centres are expanding UCL's disciplinary excellence into new and emerging fields - such as architectural design, robotics, media, heritage and advanced propulsion - and giving our students new opportunities to engage with cutting-edge research. For example, our new **Global Disability Innovation Hub**⁵⁶ is the World Health Organisation's first 'Global Collaborating Centre on Assistive Technology' and is specifically designed to accelerate innovations which will create a fairer world for people with disabilities.

UCL is a global leader in educational research, ranking **1st in the world for Education for the 9th year in a row** in the QS Rankings by Subject 2022⁵⁷. We use this expertise to support the UCL community to embed excellence in their teaching and assessment practices. For example, **Liberating the Curriculum**⁵⁸ encourages staff and students to work collaboratively to ensure that black, queer, disabled, and feminist contributions and critiques challenge and influence the content and delivery of the curriculum. Through this project, experts from across UCL support departments to make their teaching more inclusive, as well as stimulating projects with the potential for wide-reaching impact - examples include an LGBTQ+ Toolkit⁵⁹, an armchair discussion on the educational impact of Sophisticated Racism⁶⁰, and an online event, 'Where next with decolonising the curriculum?'⁶¹. UCL scholars have also authored **open-access publications to share good practice across the sector** – for example, 'Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Perspectives from UCL'⁶² and 'Developing the Higher Education Curriculum'⁶³ are practice-focused guides to curriculum development, while 'Good Practice in Assessment'⁶⁴ is a compendium of practical examples developed by experts in the UCL Institute of Education. Staff across UCL are also **encouraged to engage in scholarship**. For example, 'Individual Peer Assessed Contribution'⁶⁵

- which was developed by a cross-disciplinary UCL consortium led by academics in Medical Physics & Biomedical Engineering - provides a framework for the fair assessment of student group work.

Individual disciplines have also established their own **centres for pedagogy** to identify and share good practice. Three such centres are currently based in Economics, Engineering and Politics, supporting some of our largest programmes (over 4,000 UG students in total), while a new Centre for Humanities Education is in development. For example, the **Centre for Teaching and Learning Economics (CTaLE)** has developed an 'Adaptable Education Model'⁶⁶ which responds directly to student feedback. It uses flexible teaching methods, resources and assessments to help educators address the challenges of learning in a large, culturally diverse university, and to make programmes more resilient to shocks such as COVID-19. CTaLE's work has contributed to an increase in Overall Satisfaction in the Department of Economics from 72% in 2019 to 88% in 2022⁶⁷, and the centre has received an honorary mention in the European Economic Association's Education Awards 2022⁶⁸.

In a further example, the UCL Centre for Engineering Education⁶⁹ supports the delivery of the **Integrated Engineering Programme (IEP)**, which is the Faculty of Engineering's pedagogical framework. The IEP is embedded in degree programmes, with an interdepartmental curriculum in years one and two based on intensive and immersive projects. Students work on topics of immediate societal relevance, with international outlooks and inclusivity built in – for example, 'How to Change the World' is an intensive two-week multidisciplinary project with industry partners, based on the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. The framework has contributed to UCL Engineering achieving some of the highest Progression rates in the Russell Group (90.3%). One alumnus said, *"It's accelerated my development at the company that I'm at now – I managed to get promoted pretty quickly as well. And that's just because I have got these other sets of skills that I've built throughout university that I think have put me on an elevated playing field."* The IEP has won an HEA Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE)⁷⁰ and was identified as **one of the top four emerging world leaders in engineering education** in a key report published by MIT.⁷¹

2.3 EMBEDDING RESEARCH, INNOVATION & EMPLOYABILITY

UCL's educational excellence is grounded in our exceptional research: in the REF 2021, UCL was **2nd in the UK for research power** and **93% of our research was rated as 'world leading' or 'internationally excellent'**⁷². One of the core principles in our long-term strategy is to be a global leader in continuing to find new ways to further embed this outstanding research throughout our students' education⁷³. Our research-education integration attracts highly motivated students from around the world and has been cited as one of the main benefits of a UCL degree in a wide-reaching alumni survey. 80% of respondents said that **'integration of research and education to provide an excellent student experience'** was a key factor shaping their perceptions of UCL.

UCL's Connected Curriculum⁷⁵ is our educational framework which encourages and supports academics to ground their teaching in the very latest knowledge and thinking, and to engage taught students in research, innovation and professional practice throughout their programmes. The Connected Curriculum is recognised internationally (67,000 downloads in 185 countries⁷⁶) and UCL continuously shares this good practice to inspire other universities to embrace research-led education through open-access collections of practical examples⁷⁷, peer-reviewed articles exploring the impact of the Connected Curriculum on students⁷⁸, and a growing library of case studies⁷⁹.

In 2018/19, all departments across UCL benchmarked their programmes against the Connected Curriculum, and our Programme Development Unit now uses the Connected Curriculum as a guiding framework to support departments when creating new programmes. The framework has inspired teams across UCL to **engage students in research, innovation and professional practice from**

the very start of their programmes. For example, first year Biological Sciences students meet researchers at the Crick Institute, the largest biomedical research centre in Europe, which is led by a UCL Nobel laureate⁸⁰. For their assessment, students write a summary of an individual scientist's research in the style of a scientific abstract. This exposure to different fields also broadens the possibilities for their third-year research project. In a further example, the Faculty of Laws has used the Connected Curriculum to frame the teaching of key legal skills in Year 1 within a real-world context. In their first two weeks, students take part in blocks of intensive teaching framed around social problems (e.g. the gig economy, the financial crisis) rather than legal categories (e.g. crime, public law). Case studies enable students to practise legal and academic skills - such as reading their first statute - within a supportive classroom environment. In a 2022 Internal Quality Review, the external subject expert *"noted the great efforts by UCL Laws to place legal study in its wider social context, reflecting a desire to ensure that students reflect on the subject and ethos of legal study"*⁸¹.

UCL Grand Challenges⁸² creates further opportunities for students to work with world-leading researchers to identify solutions to global concerns such as the Climate Crisis, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Data-empowered Societies, Inequalities, and Intercultural Communication. For example, the **UCL Living Lab** enables students to use the UCL campus as a test bed for sustainability research⁸³, while a new project funded by UCL and a grant from UKRI is working in partnership with UCL students to develop an online course exploring **Intercultural Communicative Skills** in learning, teaching and research⁸⁴. Meanwhile UCL is one of only 14 universities across the world to offer the highly competitive **Laidlaw Research & Leadership Scholarship**. This gives selected first-year students the opportunity to take part in world-leading research and develop their leadership skills. For example, one scholar worked with UCL's European Institute⁸⁵ to set up 20 interviews in Brussels, and even conducted interviews with high-level officials. The research team said their experience of working with a Laidlaw scholar was *"overwhelmingly positive."*

Individual faculties also create extra-curricular opportunities to engage in research, innovation and professional practice. For example, the Faculty of Mathematical & Physical Sciences created a series of London Living Wage **Summer Research Internships**. In 2022, 29 project proposals were received from staff (e.g. 'Asteroids that go bump in the night') leading to over 600 applications from 364 unique students. 24% of students were placed with BAME and widening participation students. 95% of student respondents said they would recommend the internship to a friend. 100% of academic respondents were happy with the work completed and 95% recommended running the internships again. One student said, *"I was hesitant about pursuing a further career in physics, but this internship might be the reason I switch to an MSci and maybe even pursue a PhD."*⁸⁶ In a further example, **UCL's Integrated Legal Advice Clinic (iLAC)** is the only university law clinic with a legal aid contract, allowing students to work under supervision on client cases from start to finish (students at many other law schools have more limited involvement). In 2022, iLAC became the first university law clinic to receive the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Award⁸⁷.

Students further benefit from **UCL's Innovation & Enterprise team**, who help students to think and act like an entrepreneur. For example, they supported a group of UCL students to set up **Rice Inc.**⁸⁸, which is set to revolutionise the way rice is produced, tackle food poverty and empower Southeast Asian farmers. The students' idea won the highly competitive **Hult prize**⁸⁹ (including \$1 million of seed funding) which challenges young people from around the world to solve the planet's most pressing issues. Another undergraduate student approached UCL Innovation & Enterprise in their second year, which helped them to launch their social enterprise and technology startup, **ZNotes**. The startup has since delivered free revision notes to almost 4 million students in nearly 200 countries, and received the **Diana Award**⁹⁰, one of the highest accolades a young person can

achieve for social action. ZNotes is currently in residence at **BaseKX**, UCL's dedicated entrepreneurship hub located in Kings Cross. Their **Hatchery startup incubator** provides free, tailored support and dedicated office space designed to fast-track success and get students 'investment-ready'. The ZNotes founder said, *"I learned a whole host of things, from the legal side, to financing. But more than anything it gave me the confidence to speak about what I was doing and share our ambitions. From there, things just happened."*

Departments also engage with a broad spectrum of employers to **embed opportunities for innovation and work-related learning in the curriculum**. For example, the **UCL Industry Exchange Network (UCL IXN)** has been running for over a decade, giving thousands of students the opportunity to work with big tech companies. Through the IXN, UCL Computer Science undergrads spend 25% of their time in every year of their programme working on industry projects. An IBM Master Inventor said, *"students are supported in developing cutting edge technology skills in an industry environment, creating the technology leaders of tomorrow"*, while a former student who now works at Google said, *"it was incredibly useful for my career"*⁹¹. The initiative has developed into a complete teaching methodology which has been cited as good practice in the UK government's 'Topol Review: Preparing the healthcare workforce to deliver the digital future' 2019⁹².

This approach to designing-in employability is central to delivering UCL's outstanding student outcomes, and our **Pillars of Employability**⁹³ framework gives us a common language with which to support more departments in analysing their curriculum through an employability lens. It is the result of an extensive literature review of global recruiters' skills requirements and sector good practice, as well as consultation with employers, students (n=776) and the Students' Union. This enabled UCL to triangulate the skills and capabilities that are most sought after by students and employers, and to identify six focus areas to help departments **embed personal development in the curriculum**. For example, the MSci/ BSc Information Management for Business team used the Pillars as the basis for a survey of alumni. The outcomes informed a course content redesign as well as an Emerging Trends Week of work-related learning activities with employers including Deloitte Digital, Burberry and Salesforce. The Pillars were also used to embed employability in our new programmes at **UCL East**. For example, UCL is a founding partner of the **East Bank**⁹⁴ - alongside the BBC, V&A, Sadler's Wells, and UAL's London College of Fashion – which is creating exciting new opportunities for UCL students to engage with the creative industries.

2.4 EXCELLENT ACADEMIC PRACTICE

The **UCL Arena Centre for Research-based Education** is our education and staff development team focussed on enhancing the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment practices across UCL. Reflecting UCL's ground-up approach, each faculty works in partnership with an **Arena Centre Faculty Liaison** to explore and enhance subject-specific approaches. For example, the Arena Liaison for the Faculty of Life Sciences has designed and delivered workshops to explore alternatives to exams as assessments; collaborated on a digital education blog; and supported a review of Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) in Pharmacy. Meanwhile the Faculty of Mathematical & Physical Sciences worked with their Arena Liaison to develop their Faculty Education Plan; facilitate local discussions around 'authentic assessment'; support student ChangeMakers projects; and host the 'Horizons in STEM' annual conference⁹⁵.

The **UCL Arena AdvanceHE Fellowship programme**⁹⁶ encourages all staff who teach, supervise, assess or support students' learning to gain national recognition. Fellowships are part of the **UCL Academic Careers Framework**⁹⁷ which offers colleagues on both teaching and research tracks the opportunity to be recognised for educational achievement, innovation and leadership in the

promotions process. This includes a dedicated track for education-focused staff that provides a clear career path up to Professor. UCL is also investing in senior education leaders by providing a customised CPD opportunity, **Leading Change in Education**. The first cohorts have used the programme to achieve wide-reaching changes which have benefitted students across UCL, including the development of UCL's new Student Support Framework.

The **Teaching & Learning Portal**⁹⁸ is UCL Arena's open-access hub for news and resources to support staff in developing their teaching practice. It includes a rich library of **case studies**⁹⁹ which celebrate inspiring teaching and assessment practices across UCL - examples include 'Transforming feedback practices', and 'Creating personalised video feedback for remote learners'. Our **Teaching Toolkits**¹⁰⁰ include practical resources to inspire and guide both new members of staff seeking to extend their knowledge and more experienced teachers looking for a fresh perspective. Examples include 'Designing assessment for academic integrity'¹⁰¹, 'Recognising and including LGBTQ+ identities in language teaching' and 'Designing open book exams'. Our new peer led **UCL MicroCPDs**¹⁰² build on sector good practice by facilitating peer sharing of 'what works'. Within a 90-second video, staff can quickly check whether the topic is relevant and whether they want to access the additional information provided. The first MicroCPDs in 2022 focused on sharing good assessment practices – for example, in 'Planning Effective Assessment' an expert from UCL's Institute of Education shared their advice, and in 'Improving Students' Writing Skills' colleagues discussed introducing scientific writing into formative assessments.

UCL Arena also delivers **events and workshops** for all colleagues who teach and support learning¹⁰³. Sessions are delivered both centrally and in faculties to reach the greatest number of staff. 'Giving Effective Feedback' has been particularly successful, with nearly 1,000 attendees since 2018. Each year, staff and students join our flagship **UCL Education Conference** to share innovative and exciting academic practice. Staff and students present in a range of formats with sessions designed to facilitate discussion. The 2022 conference focused on 'Transforming Assessment'¹⁰⁴, reflecting UCL's strategic priority of improving students' assessment experiences.

We also recognise exceptional academic practice through our annual **UCL Education Awards**¹⁰⁵ which we run in partnership with the Students' Union. This includes the **Student Choice Awards**¹⁰⁶ which give students the opportunity to thank members of staff and let them know that their hard work makes a difference. Every aspect of the awards is student-led: they set the criteria, nominate recipients and decide the winners. In 2021/22 there were over 900 nominations for 500 individuals. The winner of the Award for Inspiring Teaching Delivery (based in Social & Historical Sciences) was nominated because "*concepts which often seem abstract, complex, and dull, suddenly become exciting and thought-provoking*", while the winner of the award for Award for Exceptional Feedback (based in Arts & Humanities) was nominated because "*He always provides constructive, inspiring, tailored feedback on my essays, helping me to progress and succeed*". The SU's accompanying **'What do students value most?'** report celebrates this excellence, highlights what students value and, crucially, helps UCL to understand what works¹⁰⁷. The Education Awards also recognise staff who have enabled excellent academic practice but who might be less visible to students. All nominees are recognised on the SU's **Roll of Honour**¹⁰⁸, and individuals and teams who have made exceptional contributions to our students' education receive the **Provost's Education Award**.

2.5 ACADEMIC SUPPORT

As a large institution we know that we must work particularly hard to support our students and ensure that they feel a sense of belonging to our community. In UCL's previous Education Strategy (2016-21¹⁰⁹), Objective 1 was "*Personalising Student Support*" and making sure that every stage of the

student journey is designed to help students achieve the very best outcomes. Our progress is reflected in our Academic Support data where we have **successfully moved from -5.9% below benchmark in 2019 to within -1.1% of benchmark in 2022**.

This improvement is in large part driven by UCL's investment in **raising the profile of Personal Tutoring**. This includes a suite of new workshops, which have been designed with Changemakers students and external experts, including the **Introduction to Personal Tutoring**¹¹⁰ which is offered both in departments and via central sessions, and which has received very positive feedback (average rating for central sessions 4.97/5 in 2021/22). Additional workshops are designed to help staff further develop their practice, including 'Developing as a Personal Tutor', 'Coaching Conversations', and 'Approaches to Supporting Students for Professional & Technical Services Staff' (average rating across all three: 4.7/5 in 2021/22). Face-to-face opportunities are complemented by our online **UCL eXtend Personal Tutoring course** which enrolled over 670 staff in 2021/22

80% of initial participants gave a score of 'good' or 'excellent'¹¹¹. In 2021, UCL became an Institutional Member of the **UK Advising and Tutoring association (UKAT)**¹¹², encouraging staff to apply for professional recognition as a Personal Tutor or other advisor who supports student success, which is comparable to that currently offered by AdvanceHE.

In 2021/22, UCL introduced a **new Student Advisor role** to help address student concerns about inconsistent academic support across different departments. This significant institutional investment now includes Student Advisors who work closely with Personal Tutors and departmental staff to provide first-year undergraduates with a comprehensive, local support system that is tailored to their individual needs. The Advisors are based in departments but are also part of UCL's central **Student Support & Wellbeing team**, which creates a robust link between academic departments and UCL's extensive health and wellbeing services. In 2021/22, Student Advisors had over 8,000 supportive conversations with more than 5,000 students¹¹³. In student feedback **94% said that their overall experience with the Student Advisor was excellent**; 93% felt better supported after meeting their Advisor; and 95% said they would recommend the Student Advisor to other students. One student said, "*I also felt like she really cared and wanted to help, and as a byproduct of that so did UCL*", while another said, "*she made me feel supported, listened to, returned my confidence, guided me well, assured me she was available to me.*"¹¹⁴

These developments in personal tutoring build on a range of **Academic Support change programmes** instigated by individual faculties. For example, the Faculty of Laws established '**Deconstructing the Personal Tutor Role**', which moved welfare and careers support out of the Personal Tutor role and into newly created professional roles. Personal Tutors then became 'Academic Mentors', concentrating on what they are best placed to offer – academic support and guidance. Student feedback indicates that this has led to significant improvements: in the NSS, Academic Support in Laws moved from 66% in 2017 to 80% in 2020. Meanwhile, the Medical School has implemented a **comprehensive review of Personal Tutoring**. They appointed a dedicated Personal Tutoring Lead, two new Senior Tutors at their main hospital sites, eight Personal Tutors with enhanced training for early years MBBS students, and Deputy Programme Leaders with responsibility for student experience. The school also provides dedicated support for students on clinical placements and was the first medical school internationally to introduce **Schwartz Rounds** to support the emotional impact of clinical care on students. This model is now used in over 20 UK HEIs for healthcare learners¹¹⁵.

All students can access additional academic support from our experts in **Digital Education**, who provide workshops in areas such as data visualisation and assistive technology; the **Centre for Languages & International Education**¹¹⁶, who offer English language and modern foreign

language courses; and the **Academic Communication Centre**¹¹⁷, which works with departments to deliver study skills workshops and resources. **Subject-specific study skills** are also delivered by individual departments, with a particular focus on supporting students' transitions into university. For example, the Institute of the Americas designed a first-year study skills course which introduces basic History and Politics skills - such as identifying sources, editing and peer review - and supports students' assessments through a dedicated 'understanding feedback' session. Meanwhile, Neuroscience students benefit from an online pre-enrolment skills training course centred on practical maths, data literacy, and reading and writing in English which helps students to understand UCL's expectations, acclimatise to self-driven learning, and experience university assessment.

Personal Tutors and staff in departments are guided by UCL's **new Student Support Framework**¹¹⁸. Launched in September 2022, the framework was developed through extensive consultation and responds directly to student and staff feedback^{iv}. It includes **new 'Academic Adjustments'** which give departments a clear framework for supporting students who are pregnant, parents and carers, students who work alongside their studies, students who observe religious beliefs, students affected by war or trauma, and students affected by any form of harassment or discrimination. This is accompanied by our **new Support to Study process**, which provides a much more supportive and less medicalised alternative to Fitness to Study. New 'Support Plans' give departments a comprehensive framework to support students who might be facing long-term challenges that are preventing them from fully engaging with their studies. A new 'Support to Study Panel' provides expert help for students with particularly complex needs.

The Student Support Framework also includes improved **Summaries of Reasonable Adjustments** (SoRA) for students with a disability. This includes new Service Level Agreements, named SoRA Contacts in every department to improve consistency, and new Departmental SoRA Statements to help disability advisors tailor adjustments to subject-specific considerations such as professional accreditation or lab work. The project builds on the **Improving the Experience for Disabled Students Working Group**¹¹⁹ which was established in 2020 in response to concerns raised in a report from UCL's Disabled Students Network (DSN), and to NSS feedback which indicates lower satisfaction levels for students with a disability. A multi-stranded programme of improvements has included a new forum to ensure that disabled student voices are heard; working with Disability Rights UK to analyse and enhance disabled students' journeys; inclusion training for senior UCL leaders; and a 'Towards Inclusivity' framework to guide departments on good practice in digital learning. From 2022/23, a new **Inclusive Environments Action Plan Working Group** has been tasked with developing innovative solutions to ensuring that UCL's historic campus buildings are inclusive to all.

UCL has also made a commitment to ensuring that mental health is a university-wide priority. Our world-leading experts in the UCL Institute of Mental Health are playing a pivotal role in improving student mental health support, both within UCL and across the UK. For example, UCL is a central partner in a **project commended as good practice by the Office for Students** in a new initiative: 'Joint working between providers and the NHS to support student mental health'¹²⁰. Reflecting our whole-university commitment, the project included UCL ChangeMakers Student Fellows who co-designed and conducted a student research project; UCL academics who acted as critical friends; and UCL's Student Support & Wellbeing team who gave expert advice. The resulting 'SPEQS Toolkit'¹²¹ is designed to help universities across the UK to develop and enhance their partnerships with the NHS. UCL is also **one of the first UK universities to be awarded the University Mental Health Charter**¹²². Our submission was developed by a cross-institutional team of students,

^{iv} Including: NSS and UCL Student Experience Survey data; Extenuating Circumstances student survey run in partnership with the Students' Union (n=183); Extenuating Circumstances staff survey (n=252); Student Reasonable Adjustments survey (n=289); as well as multiple task and finish groups of staff and students from across UCL.

academics, professional services, and external partners including the NHS. The assessors found that the 'Student Voice and Participation' theme demonstrated excellent practice and noted that there is a *"genuine commitment from the leadership team, managers and staff to honestly identify problems and to seek evidence based, strategic approaches, through cultural change."*

While the upward trajectory in our Academic Support data is encouraging, there is more work to do. For example, the SU's Student Priorities for Education 2022¹²³ indicates that some students are still reporting limited interaction with their Personal Tutor and so, from November 2022, a new UCL **Pro-Vice-Provost Student Academic Engagement** role has been created and appointed, with the specific remit of supporting departments to develop their personal tutoring and academic support. The SU's report also highlights student communications as an area for enhancement. UCL has recently appointed a **new Vice-President for External Engagement** who is spearheading a range of projects to co-create communications with students, including a paid Student Journalist scheme and Social Media scheme to amplify student voices, and a series of focus groups to help us better understand students' needs. We are also further developing the **UCL Go App** and the **askUCL** student enquiry system to provide a more personalised student experience.

The SU also identifies **module selection**, and the advice available to students, as an area of concern. Students often tell us that they are drawn to UCL because we offer a huge variety of modules and the flexibility to personalise their programmes. Yet some students find this choice overwhelming, and disappointment can arise when the most popular options are over-subscribed. In 2022/23, our **Student Experience Change Portfolio** is aiming to make fundamental improvements in this area, with projects to build a new UCL **programme architecture**, review the **structure of the academic year**, introduce more curated lists of optional modules, implement a **new module choice system**, and transform our **timetabling systems**¹²⁴. Together these changes aim to provide a better experience for our students whilst also retaining the breadth of choice that they value.

2.6 LEARNING RESOURCES

Our students tell us that UCL has outstanding Learning Resources that effectively support their learning. **UCL is materially above benchmark (+3.2%)** and in the top sector quartile, reflecting our commitment to investing in our physical and digital learning environment.

Our **Bloomsbury campus** neighbours the British Museum, the British Library and six leading NHS trusts who are crucial partners in our education and research. Students learn in close proximity to academic institutes, start-ups and multi-national organisations, and have ready access to collections, galleries, theatres and cultural resources. In recent years, UCL has invested £1.25 billion in transforming our physical learning environment¹²⁵. In 2019, we opened our **new Student Centre**, creating 1,000 new study seats, as well as social learning settings of different sizes. The centre was designed in partnership with students, with a café, quiet contemplation room, showers and lockers, alongside our walk-in Student Enquiries Centre which was recently awarded the **Customer Services Excellence Standard**¹²⁶. However, our central London location has made it difficult for our community to grow and adapt. In 2022, in the biggest development in our 200-year history, we opened a brand-new second campus - **UCL East** - in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. This inclusive and accessible campus offers comprehensive student facilities including apartments, cafés, shops, workshops, and public art installations, as well as cutting edge learning spaces.

Students tell us that our **library resources** are outstanding (**+4.6% above benchmark**, NSS 2022¹²⁷) and, in a recent Customer Service Accreditation (2022), UCL Library Services was awarded **20 Compliance Pluses for exceptional performance** (+10 since the last accreditation)¹²⁸. UCL has 18 libraries and dedicated learning spaces across London, and almost one million digital

holdings. Our **Digital First** strategy is UCL's commitment to providing students with the learning resources they need to succeed – including textbooks, data and audio-visual materials - wherever they are. Between 2018/19 and 2021/22, 260,000 ebooks were added to our collections. This strategy gained momentum during the pandemic, and now underpins UCL's support for students during the 'Cost of Living' crisis by removing the need to buy expensive textbooks and resources. Students are further supported by **LibrarySkills@UCL**, our information literacy skills training programme. Our Digital First approach has led to a greater focus on online sessions, which has helped more students to access our workshops - attendance rose from 2019/20 to 2021/22. Our accompanying Library Skills Guides draw on the latest research and student feedback, with usage rising from 47,000 in 2019/20 to 1.2 million in 2021/22¹²⁹.

UCL was the **first UK university to have a fully open access press**, helping the global community to both learn from and push forward our research. Launched in 2015, **UCL Press** has quickly established itself as a high-quality source of free-to-access digital imprints which have been downloaded more than 6 million times in 246 countries and territories¹³⁰. A new series of textbooks is currently in development and will mark out UCL Press as the first UK-based academic publisher to produce a dedicated programme of high-quality, **open access textbooks** which are free to download from anywhere in the world¹³¹.

Students also tell us that they have easy access to the **course-specific resources** that they need (**+3.5% above benchmark**, NSS 2022¹³²). Students benefit from award-winning learning environments, such as the School of Pharmacy's **Green Light pharmacy collaboration** - the only teaching pharmacy of its kind in the UK¹³³ - which gives UCL students a 'live' community learning experience throughout their degree programme. In another example, '**MechSpace**' is dedicated to the integration of education and research, and to helping students develop the skills they need to become a successful engineer. In each of the last three years, MechSpace student teams have won first prize in the Institution of Mechanical Engineers' national design challenges¹³⁴. MechSpace was also pivotal in the collaboration between UCL Engineering and Mercedes-AMG which rapidly developed the **UCL Ventura CPAP device** early in the pandemic¹³⁵. The space enabled the team to develop their first prototype in just 100 hours and gain regulatory approval for use in a clinical setting in just 10 days, helping to keep patients across the world out of intensive care.

All UCL students have access to the UCL Art Museum, Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, Grant Museum of Zoology, and UCL's **Special Collections**¹³⁶ of rare books, archives and manuscripts. In 2021/22, our collections supported 6,500 students to gain practical experience within their curriculum. For example, a session with the Department of Political Science explored the history of eugenics at UCL to illustrate the principles of ethical research design. Students were introduced to this challenging part of UCL's history through evocative objects associated with eugenicists Galton and Pearson. UCL's **Institute of Making**¹³⁷ also facilitates hands-on learning through their 'Materials Library', which gathers together some of the most extraordinary materials on earth to fire the imagination and advance conceptualisation, and the 'Makespace' which allows members to make, break and combine advanced and traditional tools, techniques and materials.

Students tell us that our **IT resources and facilities** are outstanding (**+5.4% above benchmark**, NSS 2022¹³⁸) and that our online resources support their learning effectively (UCL Student Experience Survey, 85% Agree, 2022). This exceptional performance has been achieved through large-scale, reliable services; discipline-specific applications that support deeper learning; and a wide range of training, guidance and people to support teachers and students. UCL's Digital Education team delivers **one of the largest VLEs in the UK** (accessed 20 million times in 2021/22); an educational media infrastructure which captured around almost 150,000 physical and online

events with 4 million views in 2021/22; and one of the largest bespoke digital assessment platforms in the UK, **AssessmentUCL**¹³⁹. A team of **Digital Assessment Advisors** has helped departments to onboard thousands of assessments to online platforms and been instrumental in continuously enhancing AssessmentUCL by feeding on-the-ground student and staff feedback into the central project team. In direct response to feedback from UCL students and staff, they have also supported alternative **discipline-specific platforms** such as 'Crowdmark', which resolves many of the challenges of online assessment in maths-related disciplines where students need to hand-write equations and graphs. We are continuously developing our online resources, and UCL's collective, research-informed experience of online education has led to the development of our **Connected Learning Framework** which helps programme teams to deliver a rich and effective blended learning environment. The **Connected Learning Baseline**¹⁴⁰ sets out the minimum expectations for digital resources and ensures that courses are well laid out, intuitive and easy to navigate, while our **Digital Accessibility Hub** provides guidance and templates. **Connected Learning Leads** have been appointed in every faculty, and a comprehensive staff development programme, **UCL Connected Learning Essentials**, explores key concepts and practices for blended and online learning.

While students consistently rate our Learning Resources as outstanding in the NSS, there are still opportunities for further enhancement. Students have raised concerns that some lectures are not being recorded, and that videos sometimes have poor sound quality or live captioning. Over the past two years UCL has ensured that every centrally managed space is digitally enabled: all spaces with a capacity over 20 (75% of spaces) now have full **Lecturecast** or basic hybrid capabilities, while all smaller spaces have cameras and mics as a minimum¹⁴¹. UCL has also successfully lobbied the supplier to improve sound quality and live captioning, resulting in a noticeably superior product. In this era of increased interest in blended learning, the Students' Union has also highlighted a need for more study spaces, plug sockets for laptops, social study spaces, and quiet spaces to support students with disabilities. In response to this feedback we are increasing the number of study spaces by 200 seats in time for the main exam revision period in March 2023. More strategically, we have established a new **Student and Campus Experience portfolio** (budget £50m+ over five years) to improve our teaching and study spaces. We are also developing **Teaching and Learning Space Design Standards** which set out principles for future refurbishments, including guidance on power and data provision for different-sized spaces, and detailed accessibility design guidance to address access challenges in some of our aging and listed buildings.

2.7 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Over the past four years, UCL has made meaningful changes to the ways in which we engage with students. Our progress is demonstrated in our year-on-year Student Voice data where we have **moved from -3.3% below benchmark in 2019 to within -0.6% of benchmark in 2022**. This reflects our close partnership with the Students' Union as well as a cultural shift over the past few years. The pandemic helped both UCL and the SU to fully appreciate the wider benefits of working together. Students were already represented across senior committees, but Sabbatical Officers and Student Reps were at the centre of UCL's COVID-19 crisis response structure. The impact of this partnership is demonstrated in the Students' Union's 'Open Letter' to UCL's teaching community¹⁴²:

"We are also grateful that you have welcomed the Students' Union as members of numerous governance bodies within UCL to ensure that the student voice and perspective is factored into every decision that is being made. This is perhaps part of why the policies and decisions that we have made have been cited by the OfS as an example of good practice¹⁴³, other institutions are looking to us as best practice, but most importantly, the student body largely still feels that they are receiving a valuable learning experience this year".

Our shared UCL-SU framework for Student Engagement enables students to determine the level of engagement that works best for them. At the heart of this framework is a network of around **2,000 Student Academic Representatives** at programme, department and faculty level. We maintain a recommended ratio of 1 to 30 reps to students (or better)¹⁴⁴ to ensure that students are represented effectively. Academic Reps play a core role in departmental Staff-Student Consultative Committees - each year, the SU analyses the minutes from over 400 UG and PGT meetings to create reports on **Student Priorities for Education** and **Student Priorities for Wellbeing**, which are critical to UCL's understanding of student perspectives. Actions from the reports are tracked by UCL Education Committee via the **Student Priorities Action Tracker**, elevating local feedback to an institutional level. The SU delivers an annual Student Rep training programme (63% of Reps attended in 2021/22) supplemented by 'top-up training' in areas such as surveys, working collaboratively and faculty-based training. An annual Handover Process ensures that knowledge is retained from year to year (30% increase in uptake from 2020/21 to 2021/22). Student Reps who 'go the extra mile' are recognised through the **Student Academic Rep of the Year Awards**¹⁴⁵.

UCL ChangeMakers¹⁴⁶ is our flagship programme of support and funding for students to work in partnership with staff to improve education. In 2021/22, a total of 73 projects were chosen for funding by a joint panel of students and staff. 88% of teams who completed projects felt that the partnership aspect was essential, *"Just knowing that there are so many passionate people who wanted to use their experience to help others was rewarding in itself"*¹⁴⁷. ChangeMakers projects have led to substantial improvements for students across UCL, including diversified rich course content; more flexible and varied assessments; new mentoring schemes; new departmental societies and social events; and many examples of new resources and technologies¹⁴⁸. We work continuously to develop the scheme - for example, in 2021/22, we introduced project themes which were generated from student feedback. UCL also shares and inspires good practice across the sector. We currently manage the 'Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change'¹⁴⁹ and UCL scholars have co-authored national guidelines on scaling-up staff-student partnerships¹⁵⁰.

In 2021/22, we launched **ChangeMakers Student Fellows**¹⁵¹, giving more students the opportunity to influence institutional change. Fellows have taken part in activities such as workshopping a vision for an Assessment Co-creation Space; creating Personal Tutoring online courses; and producing materials to support Transition Mentors¹⁵². They supported the JISC Change Agents Network Conference hosted by UCL in 2022¹⁵³, delivering a plenary on assessment co-creation and acting as panel members for the opening keynote. Student Fellows have also represented UCL at national and international conferences, such as RAISE in September 2022. *"The role helped me articulate my insights regarding student experience on a wider platform, and share them with key stakeholders to catalyse tangible changes"*.

Students can further influence change as **Student Quality Reviewers**¹⁵⁴. In 2021/22, students were recruited as Curriculum Partners, Reviewers of Teaching, Programme Design Reviewers, Assessment Design Student Partners, and Internal Quality Reviewers. In recent feedback, 96% of reviewers felt that their contribution would lead to improvements in the student experience; and *"I have also noticed there have already been some positive changes since I took the modules so I am confident that my review/suggestions will also be considered seriously."* In addition, our **Student Experience Panel**¹⁵⁵ helps UCL project teams to make connections with students who are keen to share their views and ideas. The Panel currently includes students who receive a regular newsletter highlighting opportunities to shape the direction of new initiatives through focus groups, workshops and online polls. For example, the Panel made a

significant contribution to **UCL's recent Strategic Plan consultation** - students actively participated in focus groups, workshops and drop-ins, and helped to co-create the Students' Union's formal submissions to the UCL-wide consultation¹⁵⁶.

Through our **student voice platform, ShapeUCL**¹⁵⁷, students can raise an issue amongst their peers before it is passed to staff for comment or action. First pioneered at UCL by the Department of Computer Sciences, the platform has gained significant traction across the institution. In 2020/21, the platform had almost 300,000 unique views, 45,000 votes and 12,000 comments. The platform is moderated by Student Reps - in 2021/22, 79% agreed that ShapeUCL had increased transparency on how action was taken. **ChangeMakers students** have helped to create good practice guidelines, while the **Together We Changed** section allows staff to demonstrate when students' feedback has been actioned. The Bartlett School of Architecture has made ShapeUCL a core tool for staff-student dialogue as part of a comprehensive programme of improvements that respond directly to student and alumni feedback. A new Faculty Student Voice Forum, new PG Teaching Assistants Forum and new module evaluation process are supplemented with changes to their Staff-Student Consultative Committee and Closing the Loop practices. A new Student Experience Manager and a revised Personal Tutoring scheme are helping to support staff in supporting students, and new studio spaces are helping to build a stronger sense of community.

The Students' Union are also strong and effective advocates for students who face additional barriers to learning - for example they have greatly helped to raise the profile of issues faced by **disabled students**, helping to push forward changes such as the new UCL Student Support Framework and the new UCL Student and Campus Experience portfolio. The SU's Student Priorities for Education 2022¹⁵⁸ highlights further areas for enhancement, especially in demonstrating how students' feedback is making a difference, and how Student Reps are helping to improve UCL. In 2022/23, UCL is trialling a new **Continuous Module Dialogue** approach which encourages early and frequent communications with students. By moving away from end of module surveys, staff can respond in real time and students are assured that their concerns are heard. Following a pilot, and the outcome of an evaluation, full implementation is planned for 2023/24. We have also revised UCL's education governance structures to ensure that the student experience is at the heart of our decision-making, and that UCL has the tools it needs to deliver outstanding outcomes for all students. A **new Student Access & Success Committee** is focusing on widening participation throughout the student lifecycle, and a **new Student Life Committee** is working in partnership with the SU to embed a new UCL Student Life Strategy. UCL's former Student Engagement Steering Group has been elevated in the committee structure to become a **new Staff-Student Partnership Committee**, reflecting the centrality of the student voice in everything that we do. It is co-chaired by the SU and a new UCL role, the Pro-Vice-Provost Student Academic Engagement, and gives Faculty Student Reps a direct channel to senior education leaders.

3 STUDENT OUTCOMES

3.1 CONTINUATION AND COMPLETION

UCL has outstanding Continuation rates: 96.2% of Full-time students continue from Year 1 to Year 2, exceeding one of the highest possible benchmarks of 95.3%, putting UCL in the top sector quartile and 5.5% above the sector average. **UCL has outstanding Completion rates:** 95.2% of Full-time students achieve a qualification, exceeding a very high benchmark of 94.8%, putting UCL in the top sector quartile and 6.6% above the sector average. We believe that these exceptional Continuation and Completion rates reflect UCL's commitment to **supporting the wellbeing of all our students and helping them to feel a sense of belonging to our academic community**.

Support and belonging are embedded from the very start of students' experiences at UCL and our extensive programme of **welcome activities** plays a vital role in helping students to settle in. We work closely with the Students' Union to design welcome events - at the start of 2021/22, the SU hosted over 600 activities, including a **new student-led 'UCL 101: A guide to your first term'** which received very positive feedback: one student described it as "*a great opportunity to hear the student perspective*" while another said that "*it helped normalise what I'm feeling right now.*" UCL's Student Advisors also run pre-arrival activities to help first-year students settle in and build a network of friends. In 2021/22, they organised more than 300 events which attracted almost 3,000 attendees¹⁵⁹. In student feedback, **99% felt more prepared for university** after the sessions and **99% agreed that the sessions were a great way to meet other students** UCL's New to UCL Survey helps us to evaluate our welcome activities 95% of UG respondents agreed that staff in their department had made them feel welcome, while **94% were satisfied with their overall arrival experience.**

Students also play a pivotal role in building a sense of community. Every first-year student is matched to a **Transition Mentor**¹⁶¹, a second- or third-year student from the same programme who gives advice and support. **Student Ambassadors** give campus tours and welcome students to their accommodation, which helps new students to start making connections in a safe, inclusive environment as soon as they arrive. 'Flourish', our growing **Student Residence Life programme**, works to create a culture of positive wellbeing by supporting PG students to live in halls as Student Resident Advisors. They run events, respond to welfare issues, and proactively reach out to new students. In the New to UCL Survey, **93% of UG respondents said that halls staff and Student Ambassadors had made them feel welcome**¹⁶². **Departmental societies** further help to build a strong sense of community. UCL has provided targeted funding to boost the number of societies across UCL and encourage more students to engage, and works closely with the SU to create new opportunities via our Departmental Societies Steering Group.

Throughout the year, UCL **Student Advisors** work with Student Reps to organise guest speakers, study groups and social events, and deliver workshops to help students develop skills that are essential to a positive university experience. In 2021/22, the Student Advisors delivered over 230 sessions attracting almost 8,000 attendees, covering topics such as 'The art of receiving feedback'; 'Managing tricky thoughts in exams'; and 'Strategies for successful sleep'¹⁶³. The Student Advisors are part of UCL's wider **Student Support & Wellbeing team**, who provide a comprehensive range of health, wellbeing and support services tailored to the needs of individual students. They also provide enhanced support for students who may face additional barriers to study, such as AccessUCL, care experienced, estranged and forced migrant students, while the **International Student Support team** helps overseas students to acclimatise to life in the UK and make the most of their time in London. UCL's recently established **Academic Adjustments** process (see section 2.5 above) is also helping us to focus on the needs of **mature students** who can find it harder to continue to Year 2. This framework helps departments to put in place tailored reasonable adjustments for students who are pregnant, parents and carers, students who work alongside their studies, NHS staff and other critical workers.^v

Student Support & Wellbeing also support staff to support students. Their **Student Health & Wellbeing Community of Practice** aims to increase collaboration between central services and

^v There are some issues with our Part-time student data which make it difficult to draw useful conclusions. Much of the data is very old (e.g. cohorts entering as early as 2012/13) and some cohorts are pre-merger Institute of Education PGT students who were incorrectly reported as UG many years ago. In 2022/23, only the Certificate in Medicines Management for Pharmacy Technicians is still running, with 10 students enrolled. This certificate is an assessment which UCL runs on behalf of the NHS, and students are not recorded as having completed an award. As a result, we will not comment separately on our Part-time metrics (these students are fully covered by all our provision), but we are continuing to investigate the data so we can surface genuine issues and ensure these students are well supported.

departments, while their training for Personal Tutors and other staff in student-facing roles covers topics such as 'Supporting students during exceptional circumstances' and 'Disability equality awareness training'¹⁶⁴. A new **Student Triage and Referral Tool (STaRT)** guides Personal Tutors and departmental staff through the range of available options so they can direct individual students to the best support. In the New to UCL Survey 2021¹⁶⁵, 81% of UG respondents agreed that they knew how to access wellbeing, mental health or psychological support services, and in our UCL Student Experience Survey 2022 71% agreed that they had received the help they needed from wellbeing and mental health appointments (up 4.7% from 2021).

For 2022/23, UCL is working in partnership with the Students' Union to co-create a new **UCL Student Life Strategy**¹⁶⁷ which aims to create extra and co-curricular opportunities for students to challenge themselves, try new activities, question the world around them, and discover and hone their talents. We believe that these activities can be transformative in developing well-rounded individuals who excel in their education and beyond. The strategy is part of UCL's wider Strategic Plan, which was developed in consultation with the whole UCL community, including over 500 students who actively contributed via face-to-face workshops, online focus groups, and campus drop-ins¹⁶⁸. Through this process we have identified six priority areas: Sport and physical activity; Performing and creative arts; Community volunteering; Intercultural engagement; Departmental societies; and Vibrant student life in the heart of London. Each of these is framed by ambitious key performance indicators over a five-year period, with a particular focus on entry-level opportunities and supporting students who may be deterred by additional costs. **We will have succeeded when all students feel a sense of belonging at UCL, with a genuine ability to shape and develop their own experiences.**

3.2 PROGRESSION

UCL has outstanding Progression rates: 84.3% of students go on to higher managerial or professional careers, further study or other positive outcomes, exceeding one of the highest benchmarks in the sector (83.6%) and putting UCL 12.2% above the sector average.

UCL uses a '**hub and spoke**' **employability model** to deliver breadth and depth. In the 'hub', the central Careers team runs employer-focused fairs and events; a suite of 'Career Essentials' workshops¹⁶⁹; and appointments to support students' career planning. Each department ('spoke') has a dedicated **UCL Careers Partner** who designs and delivers subject-specific activities and supports departments to embed employability in their curriculum using UCL's **Pillars of Employability**¹⁷⁰ framework. There is strong student demand for our careers activities: in 2021/22, more than 12,000 students attended a one-to-one appointment and our 'myUCLCareers' online portal supported over 33,000 unique users. 17,000 students attended events led by UCL Careers specialists, and 13,000 attended events which hosted almost 900 employers¹⁷¹.

The UCL Careers Partners also work with departments to **support groups of students with lower Progression rates**. For example, Education & Teaching tends to have more graduates in medium-skilled jobs that are not valued by the Progression measure, such as Teaching Assistants or Nursing Auxiliaries. Other subjects have very good Progression rates but very high benchmarks. For example, Computing has a strong Progression rate of 89%, but a very high benchmark of 92%. There are also some variations in student characteristics - for example, in Chemistry, international Asian female graduates are more likely to be unemployed compared to Chemistry overall (13% v. 5%, 3-year aggregate). While this followed a sectoral trend, the Careers Partner identified that this group would benefit from enhanced support to form career plans and gain work experience.

Our **UCL Careers Extra** team¹⁷² provides further support for students from such under-represented groups. For example, Careers Extra has specifically reached out to Black students and connected

them with work experience opportunities, specialist coaching, and equality advocacy with employers. Students can also get involved while learning new skills - for example five **Careers Extra Champions** were paid the London Living Wage to collaborate on projects, and a **Buddy Scheme** paired first years with second/ third years. Careers Extra students also benefit from UCL's **skills-based alumni mentoring programme**, which connects students with experienced graduates to help them develop the competencies, values, and professional habits which will allow them to thrive in any career. In 2021, a **new Careers & Alumni Partnership Manager** joined UCL and is working to grow the pipeline of alumni into careers volunteering opportunities.

UCL's **Careers Registration Data** also helps us to identify individuals who might need additional support. UCL is one of 16 partners in the **Careers Group**, an initiative which has been **cited by the OfS as an example of good practice**¹⁷³. At the start of each year, UCL asks students about their level of 'career readiness' (Decide, Plan, Compete, Sorted) and work experience. This helps us target support for those without a career plan or work-related learning experiences. We can also match student records to their GOS Graduate Voice responses 15 months after graduation, helping us identify which activities have the most impact. For example, a recent Careers Group analysis¹⁷⁴ indicates that graduates who undertook work experience related to their career aspirations during their time at UCL were more than twice as likely to be in a graduate-level role.

In recognition of the importance of work experience in students' futures, UCL Careers has recently introduced a **Work-related Learning** team. They conducted research to identify sectors of interest, appetite from industry and gaps for students, which helped them to design a pilot programme of activities including career taster sessions, a data masterclass and a Social Hackathon.

The programme was then rolled out across UCL in 2021 and, by Summer 2022, had engaged over 2,600 students. The central Careers team also takes an active role in supporting **internships**. Their large jobs board¹⁷⁶ posted over 37,000 opportunities in 2021/22, including exclusive roles for UCL students as well as internships run by academic departments. In May 2020, UCL Careers partnered with UCL Arena to launch **Connected Learning Internships**¹⁷⁷, which provided internships within UCL to make up for the shortage of external opportunities during the pandemic. Students received the London Living Wage and worked in partnership with staff on a range of activities which helped to prepare UCL for blended learning in 2020/21. In total 406 Connected Learning Interns were placed. After the first cycle, 97% of survey respondents felt that their internship had improved their employability skills. They also cited other benefits such as improving other students' experiences, giving back to UCL, and feeling a greater sense of belonging.

"It was an amazing opportunity to help the department knowing that this will have an impact on the students".

UCL's **Student Ambassador programmes** also offer paid and voluntary opportunities for students to develop their skills and employability while giving back to the community. For example, Student Sustainability Ambassadors¹⁷⁸ are working to achieve meaningful change across UCL while developing their communication, teamwork and leadership skills. Individual faculties have also established their own ambassador programmes, such as the Bartlett Outreach Ambassadors¹⁷⁹ who are helping to widen access to Architecture education and the built environment professions.

Volunteering is a core part of UCL's ethos. The Students' Union's Volunteering Service connects students with opportunities across London, enabling them to help local communities whilst developing the skills that employers tell us they are looking for¹⁸⁰. In 2021/22, **over 1,700 UCL students volunteered for over 69,500 hours**. In a 2019/20 survey, **91% of student volunteers said they had developed skills that would be useful in the workplace, and 75% said that**

volunteering had improved their wellbeing

The SU's

Student-Led Volunteering Programme also supports students in organising their own projects. For example, 'Impact Initiative' - set up by a student in the Faculty of Social & Historical Sciences - provides tutoring for young refugees from Afghanistan.

*"it is such a simple thing to share my knowledge with others, and yet the impact on their lives is huge."*¹⁸²

3.3 EDUCATIONAL GAINS

UCL has a diverse student body with a wide range of aspirations. What makes a UCL education distinctive is the ability for students to curate pathways of modules from across disciplines so that their programmes are tailored to their chosen futures. In line with this core principle, we do not want to prescribe a set of Educational Gains for UCL; instead, we have worked with the Students' Union to co-create a definition which can be personalised to individual students' ambitions.

Our first step was to undertake a literature and data review. This synthesised some of the wider literature with several internal research projects that had gathered the views of students, alumni and employers. This gave us the foundations to develop a partnership project with the Students' Union to gather insights from current students. In November 2022, we co-delivered a series of six workshops for Student Reps and included some questions in a follow-up survey. We asked Student Reps how they, and the students that they represent, might define Educational Gains at UCL, and whether they felt that UCL was delivering the gains that they were looking for. The data give us a strong steer on the Educational Gains that are most important to UCL students:

- When survey respondents were asked **'What does 'Educational Gains' mean to you?'** the top answers were: 'Critical thinking, analytic reasoning & problem-solving skills' (95%), 'Subject knowledge' (89%), 'Academic writing, research & referencing skills' (68%), 'Communication, team-working & interpersonal skills' (63%), and 'Professional accreditation' (45%).
- When survey respondents were asked **'What is unique about Educational Gains at UCL?'**, the top responses were: 'Cross-disciplinary opportunities' (66%), 'Diverse perspectives' (64%), 'Learning as part of an international community' (63%), 'Learning how to think – not what to think' (57%), and 'Working alongside cutting-edge researchers' (55%).
- A thematic analysis of post-it notes collected from our student workshops identified the following **recurring themes**: Research, Reputation, Networking, Subject Knowledge, London, Opportunities, Connections, Cross-disciplinary, My Field, Diverse.
- In the survey, **89% of respondents agreed with the statement: 'UCL is helping me to achieve the educational gains I am looking for'.**

We then triangulated this student feedback with the literature and data review, enabling us to identify a set of five 'UCL Futures' which feel most meaningful for our students:

UCL FUTURES: MAKING AN IMPACT				
Personal Impact	Academic Impact	Career Impact	Innovation & Enterprise Impact	Social Impact

Our data tell us that UCL students want to make an impact. Some of our 'UCL Futures' - such as Career Impact and Academic Impact - echo models of learning gains in the literature. However, it is clear that UCL students also want to make an impact in two other areas: Innovation & Enterprise Impact – leading the world in finding innovative solutions to Grand Challenges; and Social Impact – belonging to a global community and making a meaningful difference to the world around them. Whatever path they take, our students also want to enhance their Personal Impact - critical thinking,

analytical thinking and problem-solving are particularly important – and they consistently value diversity, inclusion and interdisciplinarity. Our students often want to make an impact in more than one area (for example, Career Impact is often associated with Social Impact, especially for those students pursuing a professional path). The word ‘**Futures**’ emphasises that students can build their own personal definition of Educational Gains.

Our definition is grounded in evidence. Our literature and data review revealed a range of data from student and alumni surveys and national data sets which together demonstrate that UCL is effectively supporting students to achieve their ambitions in all five areas of impact^{vi}:

- **PERSONAL IMPACT** - 89% (5th in the UK) of graduates agreed that their current activity is meaningful and important to them; 84% (6th in the UK) said their current activity fits with their future plans; and 74% (11th in the UK) said they were using what they learnt at UCL in their current activity (**GOS**¹⁸³). 92% of alumni said their UCL degree had improved their critical thinking skills, 92% had improved their analytical skills, and 88% had improved their problem-solving skills (**London Economics**¹⁸⁴).
- **ACADEMIC IMPACT** - UCL has been in the top ten UK universities for the proportion of ‘good degrees’ awarded in each of the past ten years (**Attainment**¹⁸⁵). 21% of UCL undergraduates go onto higher level study (14th in the UK, **GOS**). 87% of finalists agree that their course is intellectually stimulating (+3.3% above benchmark); 78% agree that it is challenging (+2.7%); and 81% had opportunities to explore concepts in depth (+2.1%) (**NSS**¹⁸⁶).
- **CAREER IMPACT** - 87% of undergraduates who are in paid employment 15 months after graduation are in highly skilled roles (14th in the UK, **GOS**). 87% of alumni said their UCL degree helped them better prepare for their career; 81% said it helped them get a better job; 80% said it helped them get a more interesting job; and 90% said it improved their ability to do their job (**London Economics**).
- **INNOVATION & ENTERPRISE IMPACT** - 67% of alumni said their UCL degree had made them more innovative (**London Economics**).

These organisations generated £111 million in turnover in 2018/19, employed almost 3,000 employees and attracted over £600 million in investment (**London Economics**).

- **SOCIAL IMPACT** - Over 1,700 UCL students volunteered in 2021/22, giving over 69,500 hours of their time (**VS data**¹⁸⁷). 95% of volunteers felt they had made an impact; 78% felt they had made connections with their community; and 73% felt they had a positive impact on people’s mental health and wellbeing (**VS student survey**¹⁸⁸). 98% of community partners felt that UCL student volunteers made a positive impact (**VS partner survey**¹⁸⁹).

The next step in our Educational Gains project will be to identify a more sustainable dataset across all five areas of impact. Some of our existing measures include demographic splits which help us to understand different student experiences, but a more intersectional picture across all five areas will help us to ensure that we are **delivering outstanding Educational Gains for all our students**.

For example, in our existing data, the Careers Group has recently conducted regression analysis for UCL¹⁹⁰ examining whether certain student characteristics predict graduate outcomes

The report highlights inequalities in need of further exploration, for example that Asian home graduates were almost twice as likely to agree that ‘my current activity

^{vi} **GOS**: Graduate Outcomes Survey, 2020/21, of which UCL economic and social impact report 2022; alumni survey: Volunteering Services student survey 2020/21 ; 3-year aggregates; RR 48.5%. **Attainment**: OfS Degree Attainment data 2011/12 to 2020/21, RR=71%. **NSS**: National Student Survey 2022, RR 2.6%. **London Economics**: UCL economic and social impact report 2022; alumni survey: Volunteering Services student survey 2020/21 . **VS data**: Volunteering Services data. **VS Student Survey**: Volunteering Services student survey 2020/21 . **VS Partner Survey**: Volunteering Services community partner survey 2021,

fits with my future plans' than White home graduates, and that graduates with a declared disability were 45% less likely to have a positive outcome than those with no declared disability. We can also look to UCL's extensive work to close the BAME awarding gap to consider whether we are delivering excellent outcomes for all and, while there are variations across programmes, UCL has been successful in reducing the gap across the university¹⁹¹. To gain similar levels of insight across all five areas of impact we might also consider surveying alumni or other groups regularly to collate different perspectives, or we could look to our work on the new UCL Student Life Strategy to gain a deeper understanding of Social Impact for different student groups.

Our findings indicate that considering 'Educational Gains' in this way can inform our existing support strategies and help us define UCL's longer-term education plans. One of our strategic priorities is to develop a **new Teaching & Assessment Framework**¹⁹² with a set of shared principles to help us deliver a UCL education which prepares students for multiple new futures. Our work on Educational Gains is informing that discussion by highlighting students' perspectives on those futures.

4 EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AT UCL

UCL's education consistently delivers outstanding Student Outcomes for a diverse range of students. Our Continuation, Completion and Progression rates exceed very high benchmarks, and our new definition of Educational Gains is already helping us to support our students' future ambitions. We have made significant and sustained improvements across the whole Student Experience. Our students tell us that our outstanding Learning Resources are supporting them effectively, and that our research-led Teaching is intellectually stimulating and challenging. We can demonstrate that, in many areas, our comprehensive strategy of continuous improvement is having an impact. We have worked in genuine partnership with students to achieve this change and ensure that the Student Voice is at the heart of everything we do, and we are successfully addressing the challenges of Academic Support in a large and diverse institution. Yet, there is so much more to do. Under new senior leadership, in new educational governance structures, with a new education strategy and in partnership with our outstanding students, we will build on good practice and tackle our challenges, particularly in Assessment & Feedback. Meanwhile, we will continue to deliver exceptional outcomes for our students and support our graduates to make a meaningful impact in the search for solutions to some of the world's most profound challenges.

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