



Education Conference

Session Guide

Session One (10.40-11.00)

Assessment beyond the essay and test

This session will report on a 2016-17 Connected Curriculum Fellowship project exploring how “Students learn to produce outputs - assessments directed at an audience” - Dimension 5 of UCL’s Connected Curriculum for a research-based education. Recruited from across UCL, pairs or threes of students and assessors from different modules sat down together to discuss:

- What kinds of digital work are students producing at UCL, and in which media?
- How are students supported to conceptualise their audiences?
- What approaches are taken to assessing this often diverse work?

UCL ChangeMakers: Students as drivers of change

UCL ChangeMakers supports more than fifty student-led projects every year. It is an initiative that supports students and staff to work in collaboration by empowering students to take an active role in their education and university life. It has also changed the perception of staff with regards to having students as partners in the implementation of a project. The session will provide examples, insights, and outcomes from past projects and participants. It will also discuss why it is important to ensure that student’s views are channelled into concrete changes.

Student Leadership in Research-based Education

In this presentation, we first provide an overview of examples of students working in partnership with academics. We then showcase two innovative initiatives with students leading the development of research-based education beyond their departmental contexts. First, students from across UCL have been co-hosting events for staff and have co-written a book to inspire research-based education beyond their disciplines in the R=T consortium project. Second, Student Fellows are leading collaborative work on the Connected Curriculum at the institutional level. We finally invite students to work in partnership with staff not only to enhance their own research-based education but also to help shape higher education together.

What do you want from your Personal Tutor?

Personal Tutoring is a key support mechanism for students at university. The Students’ Union has been working with UCL to look at making personal tutoring work better for students. In particular, we have been reviewing the role and expectations of personal tutors and tutees. This session will outline what students and staff are telling us about personal tutoring at UCL and give you the opportunity to shape our work in this area in order to ensure you get the best support you can

Session Two (11.05-11.45)

Rapid Innovation or How to solve UCL's problems ... in 40 minutes

Beware, this session will be extremely fast-paced!

We will teach you a practical technique for coming up with new ideas and for looking at problems from a new perspective. You will also hear about #LearnHack, and how this hackathon series is transforming UCL one project at a time by bringing students, staff and alumni together to tackle some of the daily challenges we experience at UCL.

The death of public education - and how to push back

This session will outline the processes and the reasons behind the marketization of higher education over the past two decades - from the introduction of tuition fees, to the higher education reforms under the Coalition/Tory government, and looking ahead to the future. It will also look at the repercussions that this has had for the student population. It will also outline ways in which students and activists have pushed back against this agenda locally and nationally, discussing campaigns both existing and potential. It will encourage people to think about campaigns they could run linked to marketization, and how these campaigns would look.

Closing the undergraduate BME attainment gap: Introducing the BME attainment project

This presentation will first briefly outline the background to the BME attainment gap in the UK. Data shows that consistently, there is a significant difference in achievement measured by final undergraduate degree grades between UK BME students and their white counterparts. There is variation in this gap between different degree disciplines and between different universities. UCL has joined a project that is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England that aims to develop successful interventions to reduce or remove this attainment gap. The presentation will outline the aims of the three year project, what has been achieved so far and the ways in which students can be involved.

Where's your digital at?

Discover your digital capabilities! The digital discovery tool helps you to reflect on your digital expertise and confidence. Find out how to make digital technologies work for you – and get noticed for the skills you have already. Workshop participants will register on the JISC platform and through using the tool will receive a personalised report on their current digital capabilities, access to development information, and resources on the platform. This is part of a beta pilot of the platform being run at UCL, and you'll be asked to provide input and feedback on the tool.

Session Three (12.10-12.30)

Developing library skills training at UCL

Students need to know how to find and use information effectively in order to produce high quality academic work. UCL Library Services provides training in searching, accessing, evaluating, managing and referencing information, but the extent of this training offered as part of academic programmes is inconsistent.

We are currently expanding and enhancing library skills training opportunities at UCL and this interactive presentation will seek input from students to inform this development.

Bringing London's communities into the curriculum

This session outlines the Volunteering Service has done to connect up academic departments with London's voluntary and community sector, and discuss our plans for the future. We'll highlight subject-related volunteering opportunities, student-led volunteering projects based within academic departments, course placements in the voluntary sector, linking research students with the voluntary sector, the UCL Statistics Network, and the Science Shop dissertation matching service. Lastly, we'll encourage you to explore how we might create closer links between your departments and other communities within London.

Ensuring student perspectives inform educational development

This interactive session will examine how we ensure that student perceptions inform educational development. UCL has three major initiatives that aim to do just that: Student Academic Representatives enable student views about academic matters to be represented within departments. Student Quality Reviewers help students to learn about best practice in other departments. UCL ChangeMakers enables students and staff to work in partnership to make identified enhancements a reality. This interactive session will seek your views on how to better co-ordinate these efforts in order to make education at UCL truly world-leading.

How can we raise women's academic aspirations?

Students have investigated the experiences and academic aspirations of female final-year students within the Arts and Humanities Faculty. The project was inspired by the researchers' own experiences at UCL - all encountered significantly more male academics, as lecturers and on reading lists - and only 20% of UK university professors are female.

Through focus groups with female students and interviews with lecturers, we have sought to understand to what extent female academics – both as lecturers and as authors of reading material on the curriculum – have shaped the academic experiences of female students within the faculty. This session will focus on the findings of our research thus far and how the wider UCL community can be involved.

Session Four (12.35-12.55)

From survey feedback to change you can see: why your voice is shaping UCL

NSS, New to UCL, PTES and the Student Experience Survey, at some point in your university career it's likely that you've been asked to complete a survey. But what's the point? Why does UCL ask for your opinion and what does it do with the feedback you give? This presentation will look at why your feedback is so important, what happens to the survey results and ultimately show how your voice shapes UCL.

Shaping UCL: Improvements to the Student Experience of Assessment

Over the past few years UCL has invited Student Representatives to take part in a range of consultation exercises so that you can help us to shape the student experience of assessment at UCL. This session will include an update on all of the improvements that we have been working on in response to your feedback, including the introduction of Late Summer Assessments and new policies for Extenuating Circumstances, Reasonable Adjustments, Progression, Award and Classification.

Become a Student Leader

Do you have an interest in shaping the way education is delivered at UCL? Could you represent the interests of 40,000 UCL students? This session will outline everything you know about the Union's Leadership elections, and how you could lead our Union in 2018-19.

Extenuating Circumstances: is it a question of trust?

Over the years, the Students' Union has been working with UCL on reviewing various regulations including those around extenuating circumstances. Currently any requests for extenuating circumstances require written evidence. Do you think students should provide evidence, as sometimes this could be challenging in such a stressful time? Should the request be taken on trust value and any abuse be considered as a discipline matter? What might be the challenges if evidence isn't required? Would you feel this is still fair? This session will attempt to respond to these questions as well as any issues raised through the discussions, you will be able to input into how we move forward with this.

Session Five (13.45-14.25)

Student Enquiries Management - Giving you better answers!

We are looking at how we manage the provision of timely answers to enquiries and questions from our current students. We would like to talk about our work so far and get your feedback to help shape the future for UCL students. The session will be led by the Registrar, Wendy Appleby, and colleagues working on student enquiry management. Join us to have your say and ensure students get their questions answered accurately and promptly.

Showcase Portfolios

We're running a project exploring what students might gain from producing work for an audience, rather than for just their tutor. We're interested in the practical aspects of this, for example how students might use an online portfolio or blogging platform to store and present their work to different audiences. We're also interested in the effect it might have on your learning and work: would you think of your work differently if you knew it was being produced for an audience, rather than for your lecturer? Do you think portfolios could offer new and fairer routes into employment by going beyond traditional selection methods such as interviews and qualifications?

Shaping UCL education as student fellows: Connected Curriculum projects

The session will be run by three student fellows from the UCL Arena Centre for Research-based education. We are going to briefly present what the Connected Curriculum framework entails and how can it improve the education experience for UCL students. Furthermore, we will present the projects that we have initiated as part of our fellowships - these include the "Meet your researcher/lecturer" scheme for first-year undergraduate students at UCL and its possible expansion across multiple departments, and improving the way UCL communicates to students about research-based education). The second part of the workshop will be interactive, with a lot of room for discussion about the Connected Curriculum from a student perspective.

Student Engagement: what's this all about?

UCL and the Students' Union have a strong commitment to ensuring students feel that they are a key and integral part of our university community and their opinions and suggestions are valued and acted upon, as full partners in the future of UCL. Over recent years we have established a range of student engagement activities and we want to create a culture of student engagement across UCL, but why are we doing this and what does it mean to engage students. We are working on a vision for student engagement and this session will give you the opportunity to inform what this vision looks like and outline what being engaged means to you.

Session Six (14.30-15.40)

How do you solve a problem like Teaching Space?

Of everything that students would like to see improve, teaching and learning space is the topic that is most consistently raised. Our analysis of Staff-Student Consultative Committee (SSCC) minutes highlights that resolving this is the absolute highest priority for students. As your Union, we are the voice of Students' at UCL. We want to work with you to identify exactly what we should be asking UCL for on your behalf, what can be done in the short and long term, and to think collectively about what should change for the better.

Module Selection – when, why, how?

UCL's Academic Model project aims to produce better systems to support study at UCL, for students and staff. This project will enable simpler, more user friendly selection of modules for students. But how should this work? When should students have to confirm modules by? Should students have a broad selection of module choices, with more chance of clashes, or a narrower selection that can be guaranteed to work? This session, jointly run by the staff responsible at UCL and the Union, will work through these questions, and give you direct access to the relevant decision-makers.

Change Workshop

Is there something you're passionate about changing at UCL? Is there a campaign you'd like to run with the support of the Union? Our workshop will walk you through the basics of planning a campaign, outline the support the Union can provide, and match students with similar interests so that you can think about working together.