

Students as Change Agents at UCL



Do you think you can make a difference to how things work at UCL?

Of course you can! And we're offering £500 funding to those who want to try

Introducing Students as Change Agents

'Students as Change Agents' is a new scheme to be piloted next academic year (2014/15) at UCL. The scheme is run through the Centre for the Advancement of Teaching & Learning (CALT), working closely with UCLU.

The idea of 'Students as Change Agents' is to create opportunities for you to actively engage with your departments.

We're inviting you to undertake a piece of action research investigating an aspect of your education or develop a new idea that you have always thought would really make a difference to your, and other students', experience at UCL. And it doesn't necessarily have to be a problem. You might think things are, yeah, they're going fine. They're ok... BUT...a little tweak here, using an App there, producing some online resources for everywhere...well that would just make it perfect.

You may not be an educational expert. You are, however, the expert when it comes to knowing what matters to **you** most and what issues are affecting **your** learning experience. You are also better placed to go out and talk to your peers, gathering the evidence and support from the student community so that you can work with your department to improve things.

We hope that through engaging with 'Students as Change Agents', you will see yourself as an active participant, able to shape your education and development.

"Students as partners is not just a nice-to-have, I believe it has the potential to help bring about social and educational transformation, as long as we know what we are trying to do and we maintain a critical attitude about the ways the concept is adopted and used."

Rachel Wenstone, Vice President (Higher Education), NUS



Benefits:

'Students as Change Agents' is a new opportunity for you to engage with university life that we hope is pretty exciting. If not exciting, at least interesting and challenging.

- Get involved in advocating the changes that will directly affect **your** experience at UCL
- The impact of this change will directly benefit not only your own education but it will leave a legacy for future students
- You will be developing some real-world skills, like project management, leadership & research skills, that will look really good on your CV and help you on your course
- Don't just voice your opinions and ideas but act upon them, with the backing of a strong evidence base that surely no one can argue with, right?
- Hopefully you'll feel a greater sense of ownership over your education as a valued and engaged member of the UCL community
- Gain recognition for your achievement. We'll give you a certificate and give you the floor to share what you are doing with staff and students across UCL

How it works:

1. Identify a topic of interest to you and formulate a research question

You can do this by yourself but it is probably best done in small groups to share ideas and distribute the workload.

2. Identify a staff partner you would like to work with

A staff partner is someone who will be an advocate for your project within in your department. They will also be able to give you advice and guidance on how things are done within your department.

3. Develop your idea with your project partners, get it signed off by your Head of Department (or equivalent) and submit a project proposal

There will be plenty of support for you while developing your project from CALT. Once you are happy with it, you will need to get it signed off by your Head of Department (or equivalent). This is to ensure that you have support for the project and the changes you will recommend as a result of the evidence you are gathering.

4. Successful projects will receive up to £500 funding

All project proposals will go before a panel of staff and students, this is really just to make sure they meet the criteria, that the project is viable and that the data collection and analysis is ethical. It's unlikely that any project will be unsuccessful, but some might need tweaking, so we will work with you on that.

The money is to support you in running your project and any materials you might have to buy.

5. Carry out your research project

You've talked about it, designed it, got support for it. Now's the time to do it.

6. Communicate your findings

Once the data has been gathered and analysed, you should have a body of evidence that will support recommendations for change. You need to think about who you need to communicate the results with in order to get that support and start making changes. Initially, this will probably be the staff and students in your department.

7. Work with your department to implement the changes recommended as a result of your research

Instigating change is as important as carrying out the research in the first place. The changes you are suggesting might be something that you as students can take charge of, such as producing resources. It might be something you need to work on with staff in your department. Whatever it is, this is the time for you to make a difference.

8. Present your project at an annual UCL Change Agents event and receive a certificate

We want to recognise the commitment you have shown to the scheme by presenting you with a certificate. We also want you to share the work you have been doing with the rest of UCL, because it will be of interest to them and the impact of your project could potentially inspire wider institutional change. It will also hopefully inspire other students and staff to get involved.

Get involved!

Work in partnership with us to build the best change agent scheme that we can. One that you feel proud of, that suits your needs and that you can take ownership of.

Join the discussion, volunteer your services, suggest and vote on the name for the scheme, download the form to start working on your project proposal and much more.....

- <https://sites.google.com/site/uclchangeagents/>