

Policy Proposal: The Union should urge UCL to evaluate the expenses involved in enhancing the lighting infrastructure across the campus vicinity.

What would you like the Union to do?

The Union should urge UCL to evaluate the expenses involved in enhancing the lighting infrastructure across the campus vicinity. Considering London's decreased illumination during winter and the frequent late departures of students, especially during off-peak travel times, it is essential for UCL to prioritize student safety in their responsibilities

Why would you like to do this?

Improving lighting on and around campus is crucial due to several reasons:

1. **Safety Concerns:** Inadequate lighting poses a significant safety risk, especially during the darker months of the year (4 pm sunset in London in January). Studies have consistently shown that well-lit areas can deter criminal activities and enhance overall safety.

- Reports from organizations like UN Women UK and the Office for National Statistics indicate a concerning rise in sexual harassment and assaults in public spaces across the UK. Dark or poorly lit areas often become hotspots for such incidents, making students, particularly women and vulnerable groups, more susceptible to harassment and assault.

- Research from the British Journal of Criminology has highlighted the correlation between inadequate lighting and increased crime rates, including sexual offenses. Improved lighting has been proven to reduce the likelihood of these crimes by increasing visibility and the perception of safety in public areas.

2. **Student Well-being:** Insufficient lighting can also impact the mental well-being of students. Dark and poorly lit areas can evoke feelings of unease and discomfort, affecting the overall sense of security and contributing to stress and anxiety.

3. **Late Departures:** Many students leave campus late, so as to travel during off-peak hours. With London experiencing reduced luminosity in winter and the prevalence of late-night activities or part-time jobs, ensuring adequate lighting becomes crucial for their safe commutes.

4. **Equality and Inclusivity:** Adequate lighting contributes to creating a more inclusive environment, allowing everyone, regardless of their gender or background, to feel safer and more comfortable accessing campus facilities during darker hours.

By addressing these issues through improved lighting, UCL would not only enhance the safety and well-being of our student body but also promote a more inclusive and supportive campus environment. The Students' Union has the responsibility to voice its members' concerns.

How will this affect students?

Improving lighting on and around campus will have a direct and varied impact on students:

1. **Safety and Security:** Enhanced lighting directly affects students' sense of safety. It provides a feeling of security, especially for those who navigate the campus during darker hours. (see above)
2. **Mental Well-being:** Insufficient lighting can contribute to feelings of anxiety and discomfort, impacting the mental health of students. Adequate lighting creates a more welcoming and comfortable environment, reducing stress and fostering a sense of ease for everyone accessing campus facilities.
3. **Accessibility and Inclusion:** Better lighting contributes to accessibility, benefiting students with disabilities who may require clearer visibility and safer pathways. It ensures that the campus is more inclusive and accommodating for all individuals, regardless of their physical abilities.
4. **Academic and Social Activities:** Many students engage in academic and social activities that extend into late hours. Improved lighting facilitates safer late departures from libraries, study spaces, and social venues, ensuring that all students can participate in campus life without compromising their safety.

By voicing its members' concerns to UCL, students would feel better represented by their Union.