



At this year's Education Conference, UCLU asked attendees to reflect on the upcoming UCL Education Strategy 2016-21. UCLU have enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to feed into the drafting of this strategy. With this almost complete, we wanted to take the opportunity to ask students how they would define successful completion of its aims, and what kinds of practical changes they would like to see implemented.

What follows is a summary of the ideas students at the conference put forward. Each group was asked to prioritise three or four points for each theme within the strategy. Six of the strategy's themes were discussed. The text below is taken directly from the slides each group of students presented to the conference. An asterisk indicates which priority attendees at the conference felt was the highest priority, which was taken through a vote of attendees.

We very much hope that this work by the students at the conference will inform UCL's implementation plan for the strategy.

Assessment and Feedback

- **'Pre-assessment'**
 - More work should be done to ensure marking criteria are available to students; this availability should be clearly communicated to students on an ongoing basis
 - The importance of marking criteria, feedback, and other elements of assessment should be explained to students during induction
 - The way the marking criteria will be applied should be clear, either through model answers, past papers, or opportunity to discuss verbally with staff
- **'Variety & Type of Assessment'**
 - Assessment should relate practically to the discipline being studied
 - Written exams should be used less regularly, and more opportunity to be assessed on research should be available
 - Assessment should be flexible and based on the students' learning style – more than one mode of assessment could be available for a single module
 - Modules should not be assessed at only one point, though this does not mean students should have more assessment and modules could be larger to compensate
- **Consistency & Fairness of assessment**
 - Support and training should be available for all staff and PGR students assessing work
 - Proper support and training should be available for students doing peer assessment
 - How and who marks work should be transparent
- **High quality, useful feedback***
 - Feedback should always be provided to inform students' future learning
 - The feedback should be detailed and explain the mark the student has been given, as well as comment generally on the work
 - Students should also have opportunity to verbally discuss work
 - This should be the case regardless of whether anonymous marking is in place



Personalised Student Support

- **Better Personal Tutoring***
 - Everyone student should have at least one member of staff assigned to them who they know.
 - Staff should want to be the tutor and should be trained/supported to enable them to do this
 - The tutee should be the centre of interest
 - Tutee and tutor should agree on frequency of interactions and focus of these interactions, they should meet with their tutor within a month of arriving at UCL
- **Academic Support**
 - An introductory programme for new students in advance of arriving should be started, to help with transitioning into university. This could be online and/or in person
 - A coherent programme of academic writing, language support, skills development and statistical/mathematical support – maybe through a central portal
 - Interaction across disciplines and potential challenges – differing academic support needed
- **Emotional Support**
 - Local aspect and centralised professional service
 - Empathetic individuals are needed
 - There is potential for students to support students from more junior years – postgraduate students supporting undergraduate students, for example.
- **Careers Support**
 - More information about the experiences of alumni and the barriers they were up against – learn from them
 - Importance of industry specific advice to complement the central support provided by UCL Careers

Creating cultures of student engagement and leadership

- **Alumni Network and sense of community**
 - Linking Alumni back to course to increase opportunities and engagement
 - Create an ethos of engagement and community amongst people of UCL
 - Feedback into the course
 - Increase engagement by having a engaged alumni community
- **Student – Institution Partnership**
 - Relationship development within the institution
 - Collaboration and partnership, really working together. Develop a feeling that staff and students have a real say over the development of the institution.
 - Involvement with all aspects within the institution, effective representation.
 - Students being given the opportunity to pioneer change within their education
- **Feedback and Communication**
 - Very important to feedback to the student community about what is being done
 - Surveys carried out, what feedback is given to students after the results are taken in?

Student Priorities for Educational Change

Outcomes of the UCLU Education Conference 2016



- What action and improvements are being implemented on departmental to institutional level?
- Two way system, giving feedback and receiving it as well
- **Institutional acceptance of change***
 - Institutional wide policies implemented into all departments, accepting same practices and not doing different things
 - Change in culture, taking on challenges to create a better student environment and experience
 - Students taking a lead and being actively involved in improving their educational experience

Developing the teaching estate at UCL

- **Restrict student numbers**
 - Overcrowded lecture theatre, seminars, study spaces.
 - More manageable class sizes.
 - Divide popular lectures/modules
 - This will result in more quality education for UCL students
- **Home sweet home***
 - Students should have the opportunity to study in their own departments. No more classes at Birkbeck.
 - Common rooms and classes in a 'home' building. This will help students with timetable complaints.
- **More diverse kinds of contact hours**
 - This could take several forms and take place outside the classroom: peer to peer, field trips, work placements.
 - Online learning should supplement not replace face to face teaching.

Expanding Co-Curricular Provision

- **Tailored professional development**
 - Subsidised training courses
 - Research experience within departments
 - Links between departments & external companies
 - Make all of this information public
- **Networking opportunities**
 - Regular social networking opportunities within departments & faculties
 - More networking opportunities at the beginning of the year
 - Opportunities to bring together, UGs, PGs, staff.
- **UCL Community***
 - Clear values which link all parts of UCL
 - Collaborative work & skill-sharing across departments
 - Effectively communicating what's going on

Student Priorities for Educational Change

Outcomes of the UCLU Education Conference 2016



Reviewing & Revitalising PGT Education

- **Academic improvements**
 - Lecturers as specialists
 - Different perspectives from lecturers
 - Guidance on research
 - Clear expectations for the course
- **Better Resources**
 - Space- study and social
 - Equipment- Computers, Lab resources such as microscopes
 - Induction- Virtual office
- **Assistance with Fees**
 - Bursaries
 - Value for money- more engagement
 - Too great a difference between Home and International fees
- **Forming a Community***
 - Students are here for a short span of time, hence the importance of encouraging the formation of communities
 - Academic societies
 - Faculty based activities
 - 'Orientation camp'