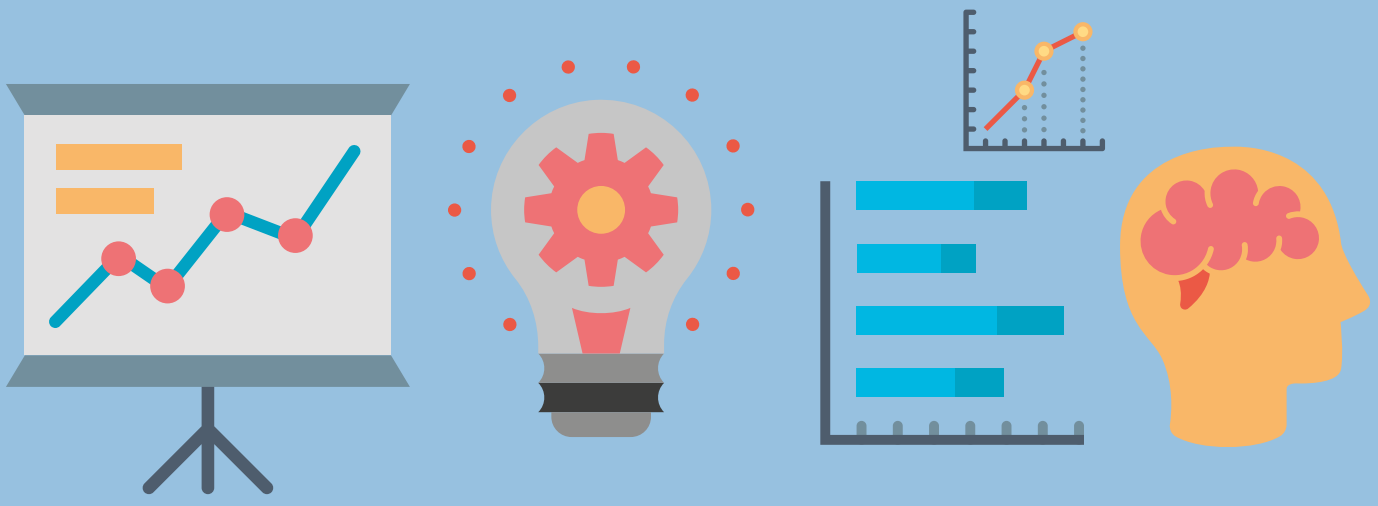
LONDON'S GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

UCL



# The PhD Road Map

## UCL Institute of Epidemiology and Health Care

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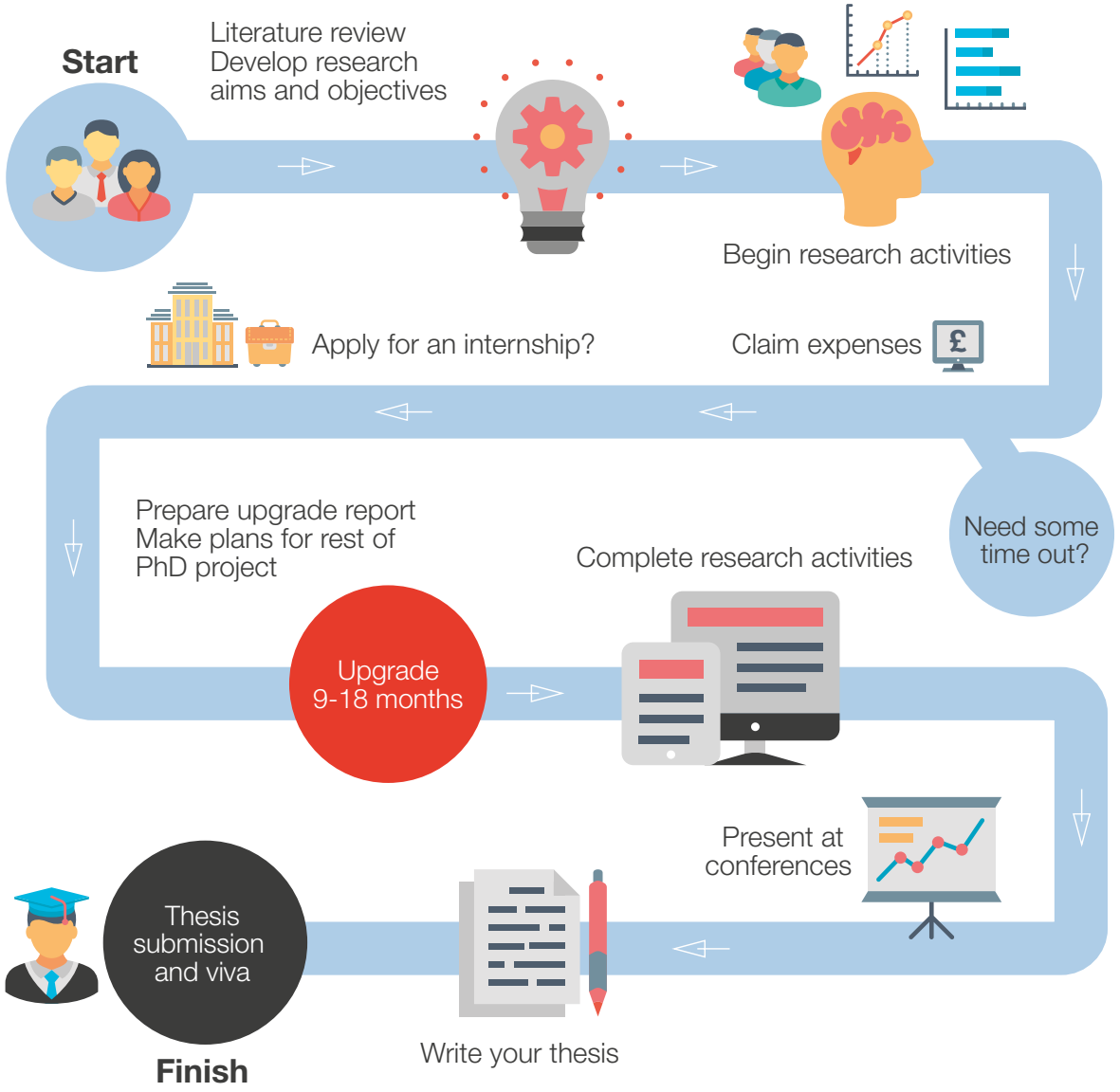
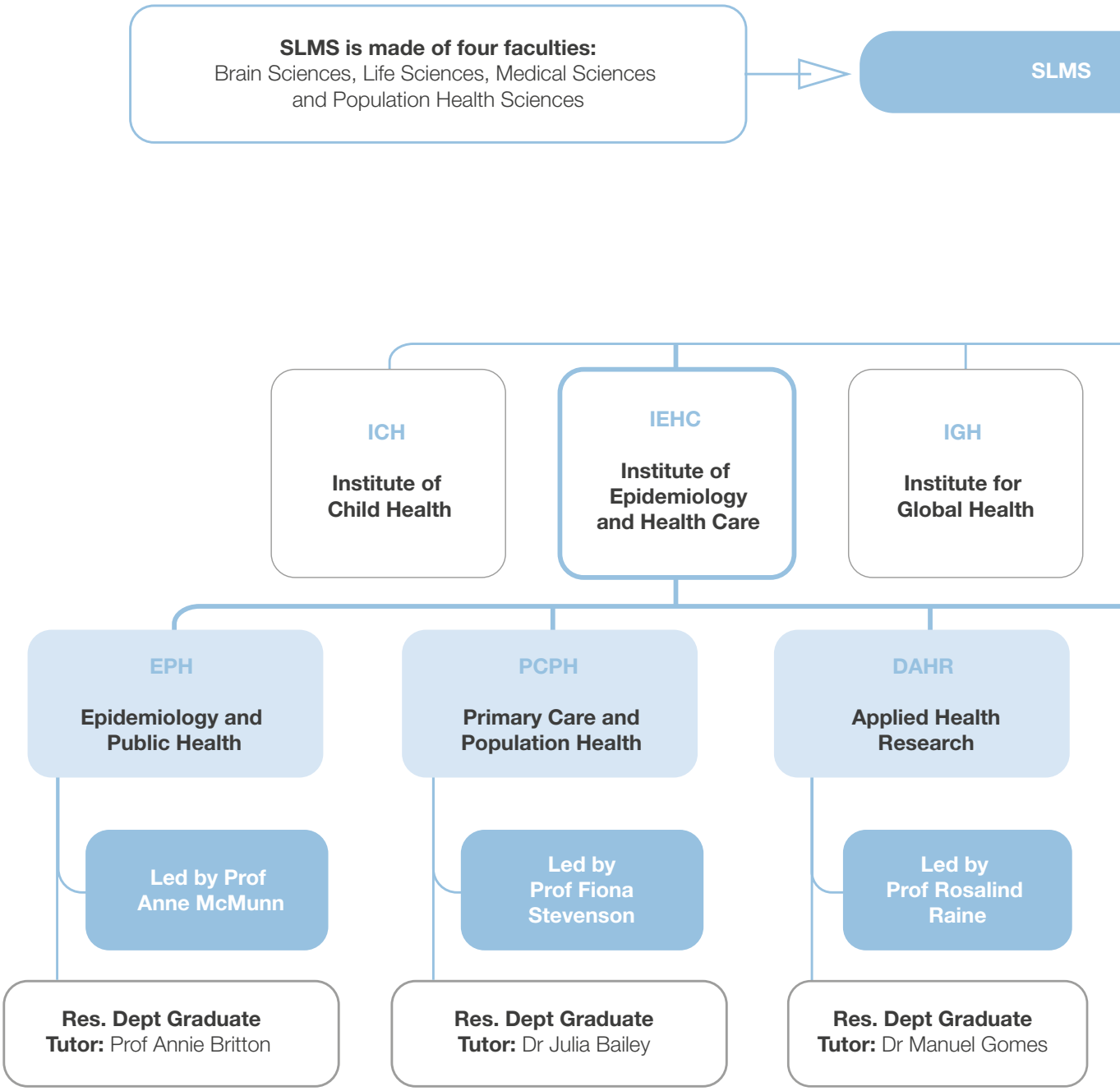
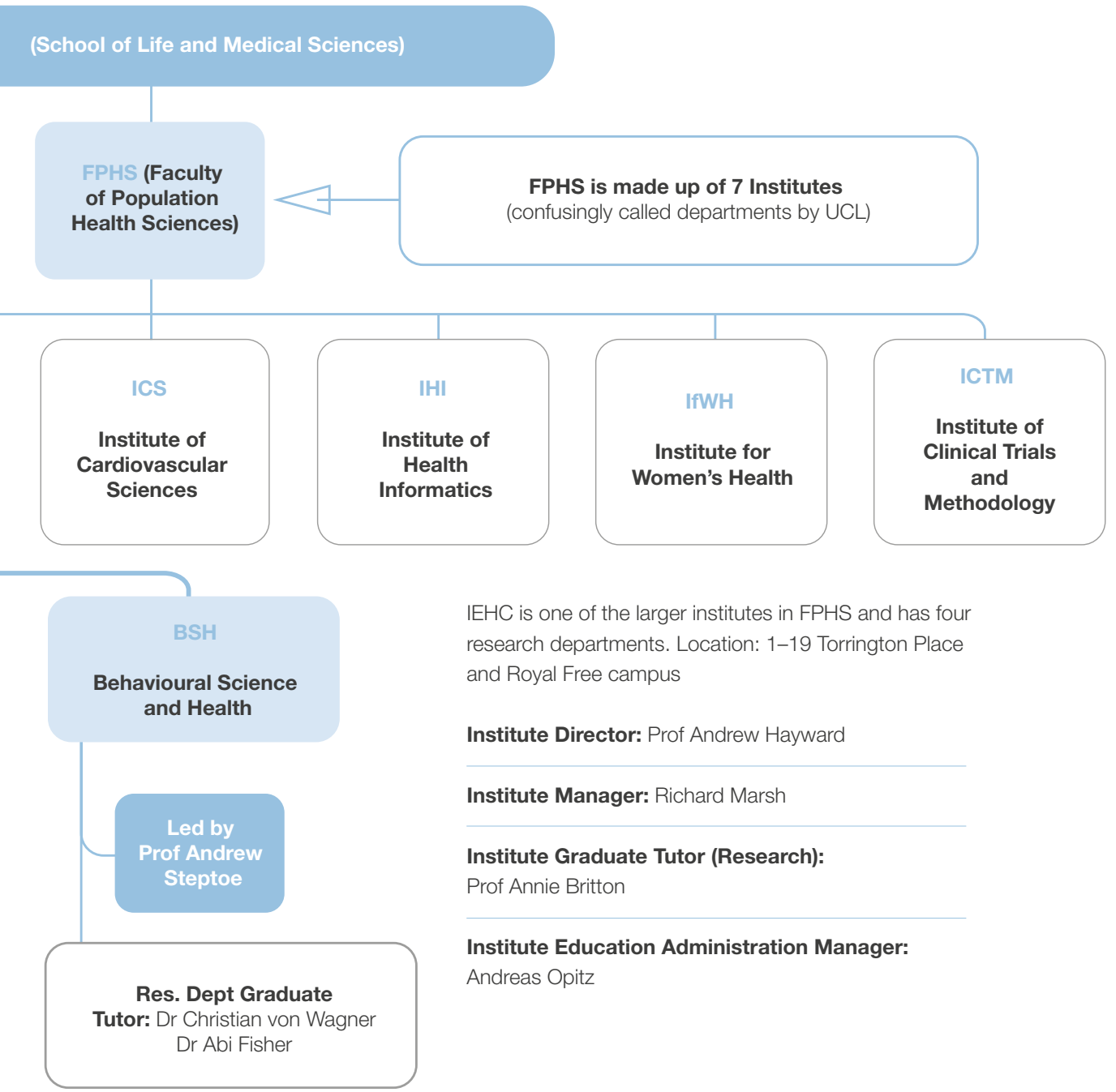
# The PhD Road Map




SLMS is made of four faculties:
Brain Sciences, Life Sciences, Medical Sciences
and Population Health Sciences
SLMS
ICH
Institute of
Child Health
IEHC
Institute of
Epidemiology
and Health Care
IGH
Institute for
Global Health
EPH
Epidemiology and
Public Health
PCPH
Primary Care and
Population Health
DAHR
Applied Health
Research
Led by Prof
Anne McMunn
Led by
Prof Fiona
Stevenson
Led by
Prof Rosalind
Raine
Res. Dept Graduate
Tutor: Prof Annie Britton
Res. Dept Graduate
Tutor: Dr Julia Bailey
Res. Dept Graduate
Tutor: Dr Manuel Gomes




IEHC is one of the larger institutes in FPHS and has four research departments. Location: 1–19 Torrington Place and Royal Free campus

**Institute Director:** Prof Andrew Hayward

**Institute Manager:** Richard Marsh

**Institute Graduate Tutor (Research):**
Prof Annie Britton

**Institute Education Administration Manager:**
Andreas Opitz

# First Steps

## The student-supervisor relationship

All PhD students should have one principal supervisor (aka primary) and one subsidiary supervisor (aka secondary). You may have more than two supervisors on your supervisory panel though, which can also include external supervisors.

There is a useful workshop in the UCL **Doctoral School Skills Development Programme**: 'Getting the most out of your supervisory relationship'. Another useful resource is this article by Hugh Kearns and Maria Gardiner in Nature Jobs on the care and maintenance of your supervisor: **https://www.nature.com/articles/nj7331-570a**

### Supervisory meetings: expectations

No two supervisors will have exactly the same expectations or management style. Use supervisory meetings in the first few months of your PhD to establish what you both want, and how you're going to get there. The following checklist may be helpful to consider for discussion in supervisory meetings:

- Annual leave, working hours, and working from home arrangements
- Reading lists or materials
- Training and development plan
- Timeline of work (short-term and/or long-term)
- Publication plan
- Conferences (abstract submissions, presentations, expenses)
- Academic procedures/forms (see **Milestones**)
- Teaching and other activities
- Funder terms and conditions
- Future career

> "Set expectations about frequency of contact, updates and when to ask for help up front. Clear expectations will help to avoid misunderstandings. Try not to worry so much about whether you're doing the right thing or enough work. It'll suddenly start to make sense but you can't rush it."

See the FPHS Handbook (available on the Moodle page (requires UCL log-in) **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/epidemiology-health-care/intranet/education**) for further questions you may want to ask your supervisor when you start your PhD e.g. How do I report progress?

## Training and professional development

The UCL **Doctoral School Skills Development Programme** provides a broad range of free training for PhD students across UCL. Browse what's on, and book courses on their website **https://doctoral-skills.ucl.ac.uk**.

In addition to the above, there are many other providers of courses within UCL (some may have a fee):

UCL Information Services Division (ISD) (aka IT services) run courses on a range of topics such as Excel and STATA: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/services/learning-teaching/digital-skills/courses-materials/student-courses-training-materials.**

The Institute of Education (IoE)'s IT services also run courses on a variety of topics: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/it-for-ioe-institute-education.**

You can also attend local courses within IEHC or at other departments for example:

UCL Institute of Child Health Centre for Applied Statistics: **http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ich/short-courses-events/about-stats-courses.**

IEHC short courses: **http://www.ucl.ac.uk/iehc/study/short-courses.**

Arena One has a selection of PhD diaries designed to improve research supervision. They are based on real PhD experiences; you may find them interesting and helpful for your own experience. **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/professional-development/arena-open/research-supervision/phd-diaries**

Institute for Health Informatics short courses: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/farr-short-courses.**

Research students may also attend (aka "audit") Masters modules provided at the Institute and wider Faculty; ask the course administrator for permission beforehand.

You can of course attend courses outside of UCL. Ask your supervisor and colleagues working in the area for recommendations, and also look at those provided by The National Centre for Research Methods (**https://www.ncrm.ac.uk/training/**). These usually have a fee but if you are on a funded studentship there should be a budget for training and development.

ThinkWell **http://www.ithinkwell.com.au/resources** provides free planners and guides to help with writing and planning led by Maria Gardiner and Hugh Kearns (they run courses under the Doctoral School from time to time which are very popular).

## Support and wellbeing

Doing a PhD is tough and there may be times when you need to talk to someone. UCL offers general support and wellbeing **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/student-support-and-wellbeing** and psychological services **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/student-psychological-services** which are dedicated to providing support to students with personal, emotional and psychological concerns. They run several workshops on a range of topics such as perfectionism, mindfulness and imposter syndrome. These workshops can be booked on the **Doctoral Schools Skills Development Programme** website and are completely confidential (i.e. your supervisors will not be notified when you sign up).

> "It was useful to be put in touch with a mentor at the start of the year, to meet a friendly face. It's quite a rollercoaster doing a PhD but keep talking to others and sharing how you feel and that will help. Once you step outside the PhD world for a bit you realise there was no need for the stress."
>
> **https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=21303**

## Thesis Committees

All MPhil/PhD students within IEHC starting after 1st September 2019 will be provided with a Thesis Committee (TC). The purpose of the thesis committee is for its members to support the student throughout their PhD programme. Specifically, they will hear reports from the student periodically and will feed back on these to the student and supervisors. It is the student's responsibility to organise the meetings of the TC. However, if the student experiences difficulty in getting an agreed date from the TC members, they should seek help from their Primary Supervisor or Graduate Tutor.

Find out more: **https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=21303**

## Equality Action Group

Led by **Julia Bailey** and **Richard Marsh**, the Equality Action Group facilitates and assesses equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) for staff and students within the UCL Institute for Epidemiology and Health Care (IEHC).

**Equality:** the absence of unjust social hierarchy such as those based on age, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and religion. **Diversity:** the presence of different cultural traditions and identities. **Workplace inclusion:** ensuring that no one feels left out because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, or other factors such as social background.

The EAG provides visible leadership concerning EDI and evidence-based contributions to strategy, implementation, continuous improvement and learning.

The EAG IEHC Athena SWAN Action Plan outlines IEHC staff and student equality initiatives and objectives for the next 3 years.

Find out more: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/iehc/equality-support**.

## Tips for students on getting the most from your supervisors

**Convey your enthusiasm about your work**. Seeing students developing their skills and confidence is incredibly rewarding, and can be very enjoyable for all concerned.

**Take responsibility for yourself and for your work**. It is your work – supervisors are keen to support you, but you should be the one leading the research and thinking deeply about it.

**Make the best use of your time and that of your supervisors**. Be prepared by sending out documents several days in advance and by having a clear agenda for what you want to discuss. Take the time to think about what you want to get out of the meeting. Be 10 minutes early to meetings. Print documents and set up IT in advance. Make the most of each opportunity.

**Keep really good notes and communicate clearly**. Write minutes after each meeting, as soon as you can. It's very hard to recall what's been said afterwards, so either take notes as you go along or record meetings if that's okay with your supervisors. Put records of minutes on the student log. Agree targets and timelines with supervisors, to monitor whether you're on target.

**Act on your supervisors' advice**. Act on it by the next meeting, or discuss the reasons that you've decided against the advice, and propose alternative ideas.

**Do your best to answer your own questions before asking supervisors**. For example by reading papers, reading other PhDs, asking other students, and looking online.

**Cultivate an adult relationship with your supervisors**. You are independent researchers, you are not empty vessels for your supervisors to fill! Supervisors are there to guide and advise you, but not to teach basic principles, and not to comment in huge detail. Your supervisors will enjoy thoughtful academic discussions about your work.

**Tell supervisors about problems early**. If there are any factors impacting on your work, or things you're stuck on, it's best to be honest about this early on, to reach jointly agreed solutions.

**Dr Julia Bailey**
**Graduate Tutor of PCPH**
(see Who's Who)

> "See if your supervisor can recommend you courses and especially MSc courses, which you are allowed to attend as a PhD. Balance courses, don't do too many (as they can quickly become a great procastination technique ... ) – be reasonable."

# Local Academic Life

## Cumberland Lodge

IEHC organises a weekend retreat at Cumberland Lodge on an annual basis, usually in June. This is an excellent opportunity to network with other PhD students and members of staff and is great value as it is heavily subsidised for students!

The theme of the weekend is relevant to the Institute's cutting-edge research, and a number of speakers, internal and external, are invited to give talks. A team of PhD students is actively involved in organising the event, along with the Institute Graduate Tutor.

### Research poster competitions

**Institute-wide**
Every year IEHC hosts an open day for potential PhD students, which also serves as a research poster competition for current PhD students (see section on Academic Posters).

**Faculty-wide**
The annual FPHS PGR symposium also offers PGR students an opportunity to display posters (with prizes to be won). This is followed by the Faculty 3MT heats (see below).

**Doctoral School (UCL-wide)**
UCL Doctoral School also hosts an annual poster competition across all PhD students at UCL with very generous prizes. Previous winners are described on the UCL Doctoral School website: **https://www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/comp/2019-2020/research-poster-competition/**

Check your email announcements for details of all competitions!

### IEHC 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition

The 3 Minute Thesis Competition challenges PhD students to give an oral presentation on their research topic and its importance in only 3 minutes, in language appropriate to non-specialists. The competition is run annually at IEHC with generous prizes, and winners go on to Faculty and University level heats. Winners of the UCL final will receive a cash prize and be entered into the national semi-finals.

The UCL **Doctoral School Skills Development Programme** offers a variety of training courses on giving an effective presentation.

To watch videos of previous winners, visit the website: **http://studentsunionucl.org/3MT**

Check your email announcements to find out when the IEHC will be holding its competition!

Confused about the difference between departments, institutes, and faculties? Check out "Who's Who" on pages 2-3.

UCL

# Research Dissemination

## Conferences

Conferences are an excellent opportunity for PhD students to communicate their research, to exchange ideas with like-minded colleagues, and be inspired by senior investigators. Students are recommended to attend *at least one* UK conference, *and one* international conference during their PhD. Speak with your supervisors about conferences relevant to your field but also keep your eyes and ears open for relevant conferences.

Funding is usually provided by your studentship. However, if you are self-funded or need additional funds, there are several sources of additional funding:

**http://www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/funds/conference-and-research-funds.html**

**https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=21303**

**https://www.ucl.ac.uk/school-life-medical-sciences/about-slms/office-vice-provost-health/academic-careers-office/graduate-conference-fund**

The UCL **Doctoral School Skills Development Programme** offers a variety of related training courses (see Training and professional development section above).

> “Networking is daunting – but look out for researchers whose work you have read or are interested in, and try using this as a conversation starter. Twitter is also great for keeping on top of conferences.”

## Academic posters

UCL branded poster templates can be found here under “Research Posters” (requires UCL log-in): **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/cam/brand/brand-resources/templates**

The UCL **Doctoral School Skills Development Programme** offers training courses on making effective poster presentations and writing conference abstracts (see **Training and professional development section**)

More tips on poster design can be found here: **https://projects.ncsu.edu/project/posters/index.html**

Step-by-step guidance on poster production and printing is provided by the UCL Digital Media team: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/services/digital-media/ucl-poster-printing-service**

You can get your poster printed by UCL Digital Media team, or at a commercial printers – there are lots of options in the Fitzrovia/Bloomsbury area including:

The Printing Centre (Store street)
**http://theprintingcentre.co/**

Liquid Imaging (Tavistock place)
**http://www.liquidimaging.co.uk/**

Online Reprographics Centre (Upper street, Islington)
**https://www.onlinerepro.co.uk/**

Remember to save your poster as a pdf file and send it to the printers in good time, as printers can have widely varying turnaround times. Check the **Expenses section** on how you can pay for your poster on page 17.

## Open Access

If you end up publishing any work during your PhD, it is important to be aware of UCL policies on Open Access (OA). This ensures that the published research reaches the widest possible audience and is easily shared. UCL's OA policy is that the final accepted manuscript (after peer review, but before it is published) must be uploaded to UCL's Research Publications Service (RPS). Manuscripts are then made OA through UCL Discovery, a publicly available open access repository. There are two types of open access, **Green and Gold**:

- **Green OA** means the paper remains behind a paywall for an embargo period (6-24 months) but is then made freely available on the publisher's website.
- **Gold OA** usually involves a one-off payment to a publisher before publication (£1500 per paper on average), and then the final published version of the paper is made freely available on the publisher's website immediately after publication.

If your PhD is funded, Gold OA fees are considered a research expense and should be costed as such (most research funders will require you to make any publications OA). For self-funded PhDs, talk to your supervisor about how research expenses may be managed.

If you're not sure which OA to use, email UCL's open access team by completing this form: **http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/open-access/request-form** and they will advise you on your options. Detailed information on UCL OA policy and guidance can be found on the following websites:

**http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/open-access**

**https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ion/library/publications/rps**

## Press releases and media coverage

Your research may be of wider public interest (beyond academia), and you may have to deal with general media enquiries. Talk to your supervisor about preparing a press release to accompany any news-worthy publications if appropriate. There is media training available (see **Training and professional development section**), and support from **UCL Press Office** on any media interviews (radio/television) you may have to do including out of hours support.

**https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/services/contact/index**

# Practical aspects during your PhD

## Student Enquiries Centre

You may need to visit the Student Enquiries Centre: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/life-ucl/student-enquiries-centre** for matters, such as:

- a statement of student status (important for student council tax exemption/ opening a bank account/ tuition fees and funding)
- 16-25 Railcard forms for mature students
- submitting your thesis before the viva, and submitting the final thesis after your viva (see **Milestones** section).

## IT support

All research degree students should be given access to a desk and computer during their studies. While computers may not always be brand new, it may be replaced during your PhD, so get in touch with your local IT team if there are any issues.

**Students based at the Royal Free Campus should contact IT services via:**

**Email**: **pcph-itsupport@ucl.ac.uk**

**Telephone**: 020 7794 0500 (internal 34230)

**Hours**: 09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Friday (with exception of college closure days & bank holidays)

**Location**: Room 601, Lower ground floor, Royal Free Hospital

**Students based at Torrington place should contact IT services via:**

**Email**: **EPH-ITsupport@ucl.ac.uk** OR **DAHR-ITsupport@ucl.ac.uk**

**Telephone**: 020 3108 7926 (internal 57926)

**Hours**: 09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Friday (with exception of college closure days & bank holidays)

**Location**: Room 340, 3rd floor, 1-19 Torrington Place

## Printing

UCL operates through a central print system, **print@ucl**, which uses your UCL ID card to authorize printing at any of the main UCL printers. As a research student, you should **not have to pay for any printing costs at UCL**. When printing, your job will be queued and you will need to present your card to a print@ucl printer before it will print for you. See the UCL Library Services website: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/photocopying-printing-and-scanning-services** for more guidance on how to use the printers. If you need to do colour printing or change customize your print output, there is guidance on the ISD Services website**: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/services/print-copy-scan-services**.

## Remote working

Check UCL's software database to see what software you can download on your work computer and personal computer: **http://swdb.ucl.ac.uk/** (requires UCL log-in).

You can remotely access your UCL desktop via Desktop@UCL. **https://my.desktop.ucl.ac.uk/my.policy** This allows you to access certain software you may not have on your personal laptop e.g. STATA and Endnote.

To access your desktop remotely and access services that are not usually available from outside UCL you can connect to the UCL Virtual Private Network (VPN) or the remote desktop.

More information about how to do this is available online: **http://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/services/get-connected/remote-working/vpn**

You can also add your UCL Home (N:) drive to your home computer/laptop so that you can access your UCL files and documents on your own computer as if they were local files: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/services/file-storage-sharing**

You can also log in to your UCL email via a web browser: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/services/email-calendar**

## Study Spaces

There are several study spaces available just for post-graduate students, including:

- The Science Library Graduate Research Grid on the 4th floor
- The Graduate Hub in the South Wing basement opposite the Print Room Café
- UCL Senate House Hub on the third floor of Senate House (link below)

**https://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/libraries-and-study-spaces/ucl-senate-house-hub**

For more information go to the Doctoral School website: **http://www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/resources/** and **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/sites/postgrad-spaces**. Have a look at the IEHC handbook for more information / rooms (available on the **IEHC PhD Moodle page**).

You can book study rooms via the UCL Library website: **https://library-calendars.ucl.ac.uk/allspaces**

## Annual leave

Research students, like staff, are required to be in continuous attendance, apart from periods of leave to be taken in line with UCL staff holiday entitlements. You are entitled to 27 days plus six UCL closure days (at Easter and Christmas). Find out more here: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/policies/2020/jul/annual-leave**.

Typically students will notify their supervisors of any periods of leave but exact processes will differ between supervisors and by department. Ask your supervisor about managing annual leave early on in your studies to avoid confusion! See the section on **student-supervisory relationship** for more information.

## Interruption of study

An interruption to your studies can include:

- maternity or paternity leave;
- extended sick leave;
- internships.

Your funder may pay for the interruptions but you should check your funders' terms and conditions. Further information can be found on UCL research Services website: **http://www.ucl.ac.uk/research-services/res-stud/student-interruptions**

## Statistical support

For any student who would like to discuss or seek statistical support, **Dr Paola Zaninotto** (based in Epidemiology and Public Health, Torrington Place) has kindly agreed to be the first point of contact: **p.zaninotto@ucl.ac.uk**

## Study leave

If you are conducting research away from UCL for more than 4 weeks you must make an application for study leave. Find out more: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/status/research-students/studying-away**

## Qualitative research support

Students are invited to attend a new qualitative research methods student group to address research conundrums, generate ideas, learn new skills and deepen existing knowledge in a supportive peer-led environment. It will also connect other research students using qualitative methods across IEHC.

Formats of meetings are variable with a mixture of focused discussion, group exercises and teaching from colleagues. The group is student led which means that students decide the topics covered and meetings can take the form that will serve them best. For further information please contact: **Julia Bailey julia.bailey@ucl.ac.uk**

You can also join the Qualitative Health Research Network and attend monthly qualitative research discussion groups, details can be found here: **http://www.ucl.ac.uk/qualitative-health-research-network/who-are-we**.

## Careers advice

UCL provides a very broad range of advice and information on career choices and opportunities as well as planning for interviews and CV writing through the UCL Careers Service (see **http://www.ucl.ac.uk/careers**, or in the Doctoral School Handbook). Moreover:

- Career events by the IEHC and the FPHS (check your email announcements).
- The IEHC/FPHS Careers Advice Surgeries are an opportunity to obtain career advice in an informal and confidential way (these are arranged throughout the year, so watch out for emails advertising sign-up).
- The Moodle Careers Page for students in the FPHS provides useful information on appointments, jobs and PhD's, work experience, application and interviews and UCL wide training events. (To access this course, log on to Moodle and search for: '**SLMSCAR2: Health Sciences Careers**'). Any issues contact **fphs.education@ucl.ac.uk**
- There are several early career groups and networks that host seminars and events for PhDs and other early-career researchers to attend. They include:
  - IEHC Early Career Forum – see **Key websites** section
  - UCL Health of the Public Early Careers Network (ECN): **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/health-of-public/early-careers-network** Other domains at UCL have early career networks so watch out for these.

### Internships

Internships are encouraged and supported for research students as they can enhance career prospects. For Information on internships check the careers website: **http://www.ucl.ac.uk/careers/opportunities/jobs/internships-and-placements**. Your funder may also offer internship programmes so do check their website.

## Teaching opportunities

For information on teaching opportunities, students are encouraged to talk to programme administrators (**www.ucl.ac.uk/iehc/people**).

You can also view UCL's Postgraduate Teaching Hub (PGTA) opportunities, which lists UCL-wide opportunities of varying duration, from short 'as-and-when' contributions to longer contracts. **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pg-teaching-opportunities-hub/**

The Faculty of Population Health Sciences also advertises opportunities across all Institutes via the FPHS Teaching Portal: **https://liveuclac.sharepoint.com/sites/FPHSEducation/SitePages/FPHS-Teaching-Portal.aspx**

The IEHC PhD Moodle page includes information and guidance on teaching activities including responsibilities and payments (all PhDs should be paid for teaching activities): **https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=21303** (in the Guidance on teaching-related activities for PhD students section).

**NB**: It is mandatory for students with teaching responsibilities at UCL to attend the **Gateway workshop offered by UCL Arena One**. For more information on the workshop, see **www.ucl.ac.uk/arena/one**

It is recommended that PhD students undertake no more than 6 hours of teaching-related activities per week, including time as secondary and/or tertiary MSc dissertation supervisor for up to a maximum of two dissertations per year.

For more information on payments, check out: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/iehc/staff-intranet/hr** in the IEHC casual worker policy.

> If you are interested in teaching, ask your supervisor and introduce yourself to those involved in teaching so they are aware that you are interested. Your second PhD year is a great time to gain experience with teaching.

## Money Matters

### Funding your PhD

PhDs are funded in a variety of ways and while not everyone receives a studentship, many of you will receive funding from the UK research councils, charities, or private Foundations. One of the first places to ask if you have any questions about your funding should be your funder, as most will have a grant conditions policy which they expect you to follow.

## Financial support

If you experience financial issues, the Student Funding Team or the Student Funding Welfare Adviser at UCL can provide support via appointment or drop in sessions (See the UCL Financial Support Website: **(https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/funding/financial-support/welfare-adviser)** or the IEHC PhD Handbook on moodle **https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=21303**.

You can also seek financial support from the Students' Union Advice Service: **http://studentsunionucl.org/help-and-advice/advice-service**

### Other sources of funding e.g. emergency funds, conference funding

The School of Life and Medical Sciences (SLMS) offers a Graduate Conference Fund for PhD students who do not have alternative sources of funding for conferences. Information can be found here: **http://www.ucl.ac.uk/slms/aco/gc-etcf/gcf**.

A Doctoral School Fellowship supports research students who, due to unforeseen circumstances, have their funding interrupted or completely withdrawn. Applicants must not have entered completing research status (CRS) (go to **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/funding/financial-support** to find out more).

Limited cash loans of up to £250 are available to students who have experienced a delay in their normal funding being paid. To see if you're eligible to apply go here: UCL Financial Support Website – Emergency loans **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/funding/financial-support/emergency-loans**.

If you are facing financial difficulties or hardship the Financial Assistance Fund may be able to help. To see if you're eligible to apply go here: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/funding/financial-support/financial-assistance-fund**.

The UK government also provides postgraduate doctoral loans if you're not funded by a research council; check out the eligibility and terms of repayment here: **https://www.gov.uk/doctoral-loan**.

## Expenses and Purchasing

The main services you'll need are: **accommodation**, **travel** (including trains), and **printing services** (including posters). Ask your Research Department Administrator, who manages your budget and is able to raise Purchase orders, for advice on how to proceed. Purchasing items should be done through UCL finance system, in the first instance. This is done by the company invoicing UCL and the department raising a Purchase order. This means that the money will come straight out of your PhD grant, rather than having to pay out of pocket, than claim an expense. This is not always possible however, so you may have to pay out-of-pocket and then claim an expense to be reimbursed later.

## Posters

You can get your posters printed by UCL Digital Media and pay via Internal Departmental Transfer (IDT) **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/services/digital-media/ucl-poster-printing-service**.

An alternative is to order poster printing via a purchase order (PO) if you go through a UCL Approved supplier such as "Design Factory".

## Key Travel

For meetings and conferences, travel and accommodation relating to your PhD should be organised by UCL's travel provider, **Key Travel**, usually through your research department administrator. If you are able to find cheaper options yourself and would prefer to pay out of pocket, evidence of this will have to be provided with your expense forms.

## Research costs

Other costs related to your research such as costs for transcription services should be paid for using a PO provided by a UCL approved supplier, in the first instance. You should contact your Research Department Administrator or supervisor for advice on which companies to use.

## Claiming back expenses

Please ensure you read UCL's Expenses Policy **http://www.ucl.ac.uk/finance/policies-procedures/expenses-policy** so you know how much you're allowed to claim back.

UCL registered students with UK bank details are able to follow a fully paperless process for the submission of expense claims via UCL's iExpenses System. Please visit UCL's Digital Expenses Student guide (**https://www.ucl.ac.uk/finance/sites/finance/files/digital_student_expenses_-_ucl_student_guide.pdf**) to find out more. If a student only has a non-UK account, they will need to use the general manual expense form (**https://www.ucl.ac.uk/finance/spending-money/policies-forms-info/forms-relating-expenditure**) for foreign bank accounts. Accounts Payable will only accept manual student claim forms relating to foreign bank accounts.

Personal expense claims must be presented for reimbursement **within three months** of the expenditure being incurred; failure to submit within this time frame can result in the claim being rejected by UCL finance. **NB**: Please check with your department administrator about the expenses procedure for students in your department as procedures may vary slightly.

**Student benefits**

Many companies offer a student discount including:

- The UNiDAYS app/website provides a discount code for selected retailers that accept student discount **https://www.myunidays.com/GB/en-GB/content/about**
- Student Beans also provides discount codes through their app/website; there's some overlap with UNiDAYS but worth checking! **https://www.studentbeans.com/**
- The Totum NUS Card can provide additional discounts **https://www.nus.org.uk/en/nus-extra/discounts/**
- Transport For London offer a 18+ Student Oyster photocard which gets you 30% off weekly, monthly, or yearly travelcards **https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/18-plus-student-oyster-photocard?intcmp=54727**
- National Rail offer 1/3 off rail and off-peak tube fares with the 16-25 railcard which is available to students who are over 25 **https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/**
- Royal Opera House offers last minute tickets to ballets and operas for £10 – **http://www.roh.org.uk/for/rohstudents**
- English National Opera offers discounted tickets **https://www.eno.org/your-visit/ways-to-save-offers/access-all-arias/**
- Picture House Cinemas offer £30 membership for the year and discounted and free tickets **https://www.picturehouses.com/cinema/Picturehouse_Central/buy-membership**
- You can apply for a Student Art Pass which gives free entry to over 240 museums, galleries, and historic houses across the UK as well as 50% off entry to major exhibitions. Purchase an under 30 National Art Pass for £45 if their £5 offer isn't on! **https://www.artfund.org/national-art-pass**

# Milestones

## Upgrade from MPhil to PhD

All PhD students at UCL are initially registered as MPhil students, and must go through the process of an Upgrade (also known as a Transfer) from MPhil to PhD status – this is your first significant PhD milestone. It is an opportunity to take a step back and check your progress, commit what you've done so far into writing (this often forms the basis of your final **Thesis**), get external input on your future planned work, and get used to the Viva procedure before the final **PhD Viva** at the end of your PhD.

At IEHC, this involves the submission of an **Upgrade Report**, followed by a departmental presentation and an **Upgrade Viva** with an external examiner.

> "It's not as stressful as you think it will be. In the end it was actually an enjoyable experience and helped me to understand my work better."

### Upgrade Timeline

You are eligible to upgrade between 9 and 18 months after starting a full-time 3-year PhD.

- For part-time students, this is 15 to 30 months after starting
- For students on the 1+3 PhD upgrade this should be between 9-18 months after the start of the confirmed project

The timeline for this is flexible however, and you may want to upgrade earlier or later depending on the nature of your research project.

You have two attempts to upgrade. Students who fail on the first attempt will be given specific written feedback and criteria to meet for the second attempt.

A second viva may be necessary, or just a resubmission of the **Upgrade Report**. In the case that you are not recommended to upgrade to PhD status after a second attempt, you may remain registered with MPhil status and follow the processes to obtain a MPhil.

### Upgrade Report

Unlike your final PhD Thesis, there are no strict rules about formatting or length (although 10,000 words is an average length). However, the Report should include the following:

1. Introduction
2. Literature review
3. PhD aims and objectives
4. Methodology
5. Preliminary results so far
6. Planned research (description and timetable e.g. in the form of a Gantt chart)
7. References/bibliography

Plagiarism and self-plagiarism (if you have published papers from your PhD) are taken very seriously at UCL. Remember to pass your report through Turnitin (find the guide here: **https://wiki.ucl.ac.uk/display/ELearningStudentSupport/Turnitin+FAQs**. More information can be found in the FPHS handbook.

The Report needs to be sent to your external examiner 2 weeks before the Upgrade Viva (electronic and/or hard copy, depending on their preference).

**NB** You should not contact the examiner/Upgrade Panel yourself; see Role of your supervisory panel.

Examples of past upgrade reports at IEHC can be found in the online Upgrade Library at: **http://www.ucl.ac.uk/iehc/staff-intranet/education**.

### Upgrade Viva

At IEHC, you must present your **Upgrade Report** at a departmental seminar (45 minutes).

You will have the opportunity to practise and refine your presentation within your research group and/or in the student seminar series.

This is followed by an Upgrade Viva, examined by your external examiner and Subsidiary supervisor (aka the Upgrade Panel).

No member of the upgrade panel can act as the final examiner so take this into consideration when picking an examiner.

Your Panel will ask you questions about your **Upgrade Report**, providing an opportunity for you to demonstrate your knowledge, and defend/discuss your ideas.

After this, your Upgrade Panel should complete an Upgrade Panel Report, which is sent to UCL Student and Registry Services to confirm your upgraded status to PhD candidate.

### Role of your supervisory panel

Your Principal supervisor should organise the Upgrade Viva, contact the external examiner, and send the examiner your Report.

Your Principal supervisor also has to write a short report on your progress and submit this to the Upgrade Panel.

Your Subsidiary supervisor usually organises the departmental presentation, and chairs the Viva.

Your Principal supervisor may sit in within the viva (if you agree) but must not be involved in determining Viva outcome.

## Resources and other links

UCL-wide Upgrade website and guidelines are available here:

**https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/status/research-students/upgrade**

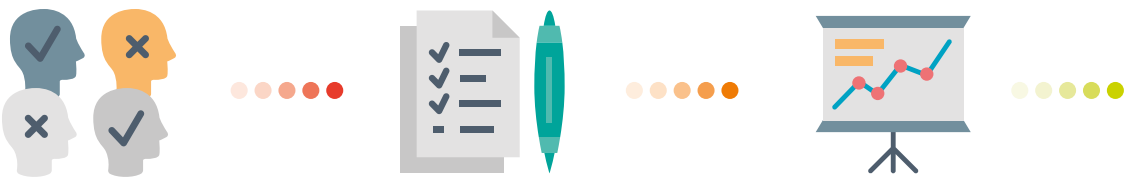
**https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/sites/students/files/mphil_phd_upgrade_guidelines.pdf**

The Department Transfer Form and Upgrade Panel Reports can be found on the IEHC Intranet, Education section: **http://www.ucl.ac.uk/iehc/staff-intranet/education**

Email your Department Graduate Tutor or Institute Graduate Tutor for any further questions on the Upgrade process (see **Who's Who** section).

### Upgrade checklist

**1. Are you ready to upgrade?** **2. Writing your Upgrade Report** **3. Upgrade presentation and viva**



Think about possible examiners with your supervisors

Check your research log is up to date

Complete the upgrade form

Submit your report to Turnitin

Send it to your principal supervisor 2 weeks before your Viva (who will send it to your examiner), usually via email

Prepare a 45 Minute presentation of your upgrade

Defend your Upgrade Report in the Viva

## Writing the thesis

There are two main stages to research degree examination: the thesis submission and the viva. The thesis and all supporting evidence need to be printed, bound and submitted to UCL who will send it to your examiners. A viva is an academic interview (also called a defense) at which your examiners will be looking for an understanding of the subject matter of your thesis, an appreciation of its significance to established knowledge in the field, and an awareness of the breadth of the subject area.

Note that all UCL PhD theses must now include a 500 word Impact Statement at the start to "explain how the expertise, knowledge, analysis, discovery or insight presented in your thesis could be put to a beneficial use." Please see **https://www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/essinfo//docs/Impact-Statement-Guidance-Notes-for-Research-Students-and-Supervisors.pdf** for more details.

The Institute of Neurology have developed a useful FAQ for issues relating to the thesis examination. **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ion/study/postgraduate-research-degrees/research-degree-faqs** (requires UCL log-in).

### Requirements of a thesis

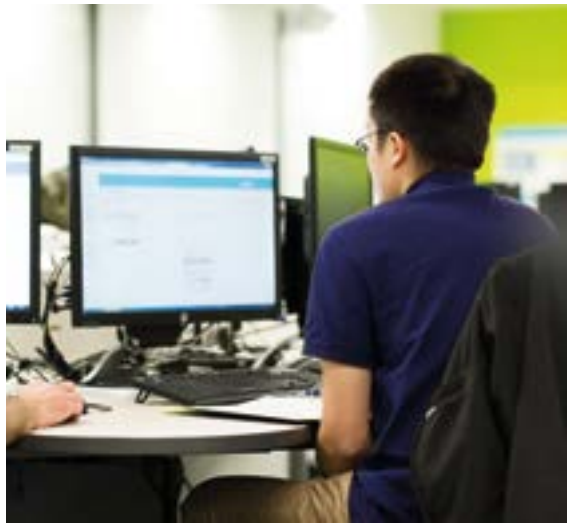
The maximum word length for a PhD degree thesis is 100,000 words. This includes footnotes, tables and figures but excludes bibliography, appendices and supporting data.

Remember that this is the maximum length, not the preferred length! Most examiners will appreciate shorter theses so don't treat it as a target. Students should consult their supervisors on the usual length of theses in their subject area or topic.

Further details on research degree assessment: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/academic-manual/c5/c5-intro#top**

It might be useful to look at theses from other students in your department or online (**http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/view/theses**). If you have any papers (published or submitted for publication) from your PhD research, you may incorporate the material in the thesis. Make sure that you adapt the content to the narrative of your thesis, and don't just copy-paste the paper in.

A series of papers, whether published or otherwise, is not acceptable for submission as a thesis. The full-text versions can be added to the thesis appendix, to demonstrate further research skills.



### Format, bind and submit your thesis: general guidance

PhD theses at UCL must follow a few specified formatting rules regarding margins, spacing, and pagination. For more information see here: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/research-assessments/format-bind-and-submit-your-thesis-general-guidance**

Your PhD thesis is probably the longest document you will ever write. Make sure you are comfortable with managing long documents in Microsoft Word (or equivalent word processor programmes), and bear in mind that most thesis printers will ask for the final copy in pdf format. There are several relevant courses provided by the **Doctoral School Training Programme** (see the Training and Professional Development section).

> If you are printing double sided, convert your thesis to pdf and view in "Two page view" to picture what the final document will looked like.

### Printing and binding your thesis

Most students print and bind at the same place but you can choose to print your thesis yourself before taking it to a binders which can bring down the cost. Printing costs are usually calculated based on the number of black/white and colour pages, so remember to check the colour of tables, figures, and hyperlinks in your thesis. Certain shades of grey may be counted as colour so you may want to check with the printers.

Printing/binding services are available at many places near UCL; watch out for guaranteed turnover times (accounting for printing AND binding time) and costs. You should be able to claim thesis printing/binding costs as research expenses but check this with your funder.

Remember to print out a copy for yourself, to take into the viva (this does not have to be bound professionally).

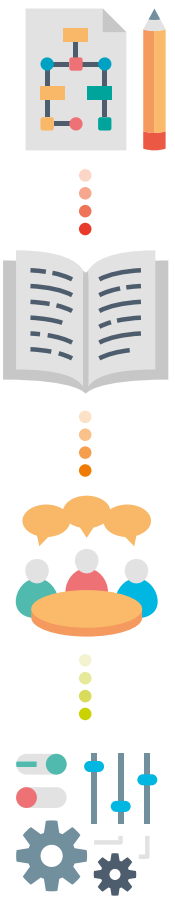
Submitting your thesis is simple: take two soft copies to UCL Student Centre (opening times may vary at Easter/ Christmas). They will issue a form confirming receipt, and send the copies out to your examiners usually within a few weeks. Now take a breather before your viva!

**Thesis submission and viva checklist**

**Exam Entry and Nominating Examiners**

Before submitting your thesis, you need to complete two forms: the **exam entry form** and the **examiner nomination form**. You must submit the exam entry form to the Research Degrees office at least four months prior to the submission of your thesis. These forms are valid for a period of 18 months. The form needs to be signed by you, your principal supervisor and the Institute graduate tutor.

This form is now online via Portico: **https://evision.ucl.ac.uk/urd/sits.urd/run/siw_lgn** The student's user guide can be found here: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/sites/students/files/rsa_user_guide_for_students.pdf** The exam entry form is valid for a period of 18 months.



**1. Thinking about submitting your thesis in the next 4-6 months?**

- Find suitable examiners with your supervisor
- Encourage your supervisor to submit the examination nomination form for approval
- Submit the exam entry form
- Ensure your Research Log is up to date and complete

**2. Submitting your thesis**

- Make sure your thesis is formatted, printed and bound according to UCL guidelines
- Submit two copies of your thesis 4–6 weeks before your viva date at the Student Centre

**3. Viva**

- Bring a copy of the thesis with you

**4. Corrections**

- If you have corrections, address these within the given time frame
- Deposit an electronic copy of your thesis and complete the E-Thesis Deposit Agreement form
- Submit your final copies to the Student Centre

It is the responsibility of the principal supervisor to complete the examiner nomination form with the exception of a 300 word abstract of your PhD. Your supervisor may involve you in the discussion of nominating examiners but they are not obliged to.

Link to form: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/sites/students/files/examiner_nomination_form.doc**

The forms are submitted by the Department Graduate Tutor by email (to **researchdegrees@ucl.ac.uk**).

You will receive notifications when these forms have been received, processed and approved.

### Completing Research Status (CRS)

If you aren't ready to submit your thesis at the end of 3 years Full-time, or 5 years Part-time, you can register for Completing Research Status (CRS). While on CRS you will have continued access to UCL facilities and are not required to pay fees. CRS lasts one year for full-time students and two years for part-time students.

To register for CRS you must:

- have upgraded to PhD status or have confirmed you are entering for an MPhil only
- be in a position to submit your thesis within 12 months (for full-time students) and 24 months (for part-time students)
- have met any other departmental or divisional conditions

To apply for CRS your supervisor must email student records (**studentrecords@ucl.ac.uk**) confirming the effective date of transfer.

You will not remain registered as a student after the end of your CRS status so it is essential that you do not take up CRS unless you are ready to write up your thesis and are confident that you will meet the deadline.

If you are unable to submit your thesis before the end of CRS, you may have to pay submission extension fees with the amount dependent on the length of the extension: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/research-assessments/extension-fees**

### Extension to CRS status

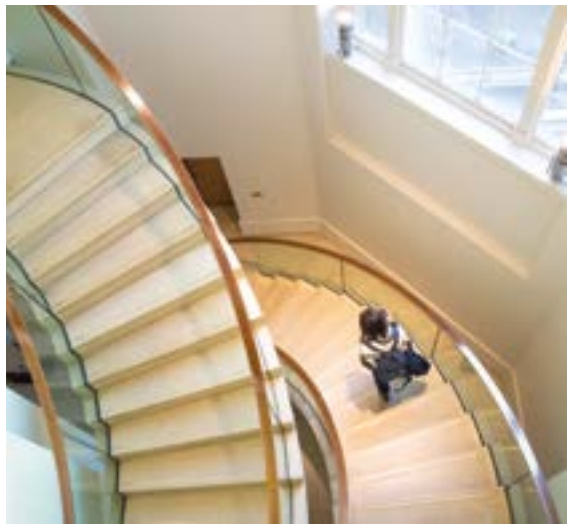
UCL recognises that research can be subject to unexpected difficulties. You can apply for an extension to CRS in exceptional circumstances. You must read the Academic Regulations before applying for an extension to CRS.

Your application for extension must be supported by your supervisor and the head of department and submitted to the Student Records office.

If your research at UCL has been publicly funded you must also apply directly to the research council or charity for an extension. UCL will not do this for you. A copy of the letter from your funding body with their decision in relation to the extension must be attached to this application.

Many of the funding bodies apply sanctions to the department if students do not submit their thesis within 4 years from the start of registration. You should discuss this with both your supervisor and your departmental graduate tutor before submitting this application.

CRS extension form: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/status/research-students/completing-research-status**



# Thesis examination: the viva

## Viva arrangements

Your supervisor will liaise with you and your examiners to arrange and confirm a mutually convenient time and place to hold the viva examination, which should take place at UCL. Your examiners should have enough time to read your thesis before the viva; UCL recommends submitting your thesis around 4-6 working weeks before your proposed viva date. Your viva date should take place within 3 months of the dispatch of the thesis to your examiners.

## Preparing for your viva

The most obvious form of preparation is to re-read your thesis (taking a visibly marked/read thesis into the viva shows your examiners that you're serious!). Try to anticipate questions, comments and criticisms, and think how you would respond. Think about your examiners' backgrounds and expertise; how does your work fit in with their research? What do you think their perspectives may be? Although you may not be able to anticipate actual questions to be asked by the examiners, this approach will encourage you to think actively about your work.

You should also refresh your memory of the relevant literature without re-reading every paper in the bibliography of your thesis! If you have left university after submitting your thesis you may be unaware of very recent work a couple of weeks before the viva whether any work of direct relevance to your thesis has been published since you submitted your thesis.

One way to prepare for your viva is to practise. Mock vivas with your supervisors may help you get ready.

Please ensure that you bring to the viva examination a copy of your thesis paginated in the same way as the copies you have submitted to the Research Degree Examinations Office.

## During your viva

Your supervisor will be invited to attend your viva examination, unless you request otherwise, on your examination entry form. Your supervisor does not have the right to participate in the viva examination but may contribute if invited to do so by the examiners.

The majority of supervisors in IEHC do not usually attend the viva examination but will be there before and after.

The examiners will expect you to:

- show a critical analysis of your own work and of that of others
- appreciate the limitations of the methods employed and the results obtained by yourself and others
- understand how the broad conclusions of your thesis support, add to or conflict with previous work
- know the major concepts and recent developments in your subject

There is no formal procedure laid down for the conduct of the viva examination. Some examiners prefer to work through the thesis in the order in which it is written. Other examiners prefer to discuss topics. Very few examiners will perform a page by page criticism.

You may be asked to prepare a presentation of your work in a suitable format. You are not expected to know your thesis by heart, but to refer to the appropriate page when the examiners wish to discuss a specific point.

You should not simply answer 'yes' or 'no' to questions nor give a prepared exposition. Try to answer the question as it is put, remembering that you are engaged in an academic conversation.

Be prepared to justify your ideas and conclusions. If the examiners challenge your interpretation but you feel that your case is a good one, muster your arguments and be willing to present your case firmly but courteously. However, if the examiners have identified a genuine weakness, concede the point gracefully. Even if you feel the examiners are unreasonably critical do not become argumentative or allow the discussion to become heated. You can agree to differ and to reconsider the point.

If you make any comments to your examiners which put them under moral pressure, for example alluding to what will happen if they fail you, or if you offer any incentive to your examiners to pass you, they must terminate

the examination and report to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee via Research Degrees in Student and Registry Services. For more information, see: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/sites/academic-manual/files/guidance_on_viva_examinations_for_research_degrees-2018-19_v2_1.pdf**

### Possible viva outcomes

You should find out the outcome of your viva on the day. The possible viva outcomes are:

- Pass
- Minor amendments: to be completed in 3 months (**most common**)
- Major amendments: to be completed in 18 months. You will need to re-enter for examination and may need to be re-examined after you have resubmitted your thesis.
- Award of an MPhil
- Fail (not permitted to re-submit the thesis)

If you have corrections, the clock starts ticking from the date you receive the Examiner's report email from UCL, and not your Viva date. Further details can be found here: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/research-assessments/viva** and on UCL Academic Regulations **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/**

### After your viva

After the viva, your examiners submit a joint report to UCL who then email it to you; this will describe any recommended corrections. The allocated time for submitting your corrections (3 months for minor amendments) or resubmitting your thesis (18 months) starts from when your receive notification of the outcome by email. For 3 month amendments, you should send corrections to the designated checker as stated in the report (usually the internal examiner). Sending a Word file with tracked changes via email is common but they may specify the format of corrections. Once they are happy with your edits, they email UCL Research Degrees team and you can proceed to submitting your final thesis.

Once you are ready to submit your final thesis, you need to:

- Deposit an electronic copy (and E-Thesis Deposit Agreement form) using UCL's Research Publications Service (further details here: **http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/e-theses/deposit**)
- Submit a soft-bound hard copy to the Student Centre

Thesis awards are currently processed once a month on the 28th. UCL will not issue the result of your examination until the final copies of your thesis and the associated forms have been submitted. Any outstanding debts (e.g. library fees) must also be cleared. You will receive confirmation of your award approximately five days after submitting the final copies of your thesis. At this point, if you have decided to stay working in academia, you become eligible to be paid as a Research Associate rather than a Research Assistant (this is not linked to the date of award processing).

### Graduation

Graduation ceremonies are held a few times a year, the timing of which is based on your award date **http://www.ucl.ac.uk/graduation**. If you are awarded your PhD before the end of April you will be invited to graduate in the same academic year, otherwise your graduation will be in the following academic year.

# Key websites

## UCL-wide websites

**UCL Doctoral School**:
**http://www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/**

This is a website for all PhD students at UCL; naturally this means information is quite high-level, but it can be useful to find quick links.

**UCL Academic Regulations:**
**http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/academic-manual/overview**

Essentially, this is UCL's rule book describing how all degrees (undergraduate (UG), postgraduate taught (PGT), and postgraduate research (PGR)) can be obtained. It covers essential elements of the procedures involved in getting a PhD at UCL but is quite dense and contains lots of irrelevant information for UG/PGT students.

**Key tip**: use the Google search bar at the top to find PhD relevant information quickly!

**UCL Portico (UCL log-in)**:
**https://evision.ucl.ac.uk/urd/sits.urd/run/siw_lgn**

This is UCL's student information service where you can register/enrol as a student and get a statement of student status.

**UCL Research Student Log (UCL log-in)**:
**https://researchlog.grad.ucl.ac.uk/**

This is a compulsory log that all PhD students at UCL maintain throughout their PhD. Make sure you keep on top of the "formal supervisory reviews" section (where you can reflect on your progress with key milestones such as Upgrade and Thesis submission achieved throughout your PhD) and "skills and courses" section (where you can log points for courses, conferences, etc.) as this is necessary to pass your Upgrade/Viva.

## IEHC-relevant websites

**IEHC main website**:
**http://www.ucl.ac.uk/iehc**

This is our Institute's website. Come here for news, events, information about research departments, and more local resources.

**IEHC PhD Moodle (UCL log-in)**
**https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=21303**

This is an 'exclusive' area for IEHC PhD students. Go here to find more detailed information on various aspects of PhD life.

**IEHC Early Careers Forum**:
**https://twitter.com/IEHC_ECF**

A forum for PhD students and post-docs that organises monthly seminars and events. Events are advertised through email and Twitter.

## Social websites

**Facebook IEHC PhD group**:
**https://www.facebook.com/groups/193152420820717/**

Self-explanatory group that provides a platform for interaction between PhD students: join us!

Yammer group: IEHC PhD student forum:
Yammer is essentially corporate Facebook: anyone with a UCL email address can join in seconds. If you don't have Facebook, this is an alternative way to keep up-to-date on PhD chat at IEHC. Just make an account then search for "IEHC PhD student forum"!

# Credits

This Road Map has been developed as part of a UCL ChangeMakers Project (2017–18), led by Monica Koo, Aradhna Kaushal, Ruth Plackett, and Laura Panagi (all PhD students at IEHC) and two staff members: Professor Annie Britton and Mr Andreas Opitz.

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For more information on UCL ChangeMakers, go to: **https://www.ucl.ac.uk/changemakers/**

UCL Institute of Epidemiology and Health Care
**http://www.ucl.ac.uk/iehc**