

THE **UCL** ACADEMY



VICE PRINCIPAL Candidate Pack



'Learning to make a difference together'

A Letter from the Principal Designate

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in this exciting role of Vice Principal at UCL Academy. The role has arisen because one of our Co-Principals is now moving to a new role locally, and I am grateful to have been asked by Governors to serve as sole Principal from Easter. The Academy leadership structure currently has 1 Vice Principal (Conduct and Culture), and now requires this second post to lead the curriculum.

The Academy's curriculum is of course core to the vision for the Academy. It is ambitious, broad and rich. Under the banner of "Learning together to make a difference" this vision is for a transformational curriculum and pedagogy that ensures students make excellent progress and benefit from the richest possible opportunities whatever their background and circumstances. Since our first set of GCSE results in 2017, student progress has been in either the average or above average category, and now needs to be more consistent. ***We are looking for someone who will lead on the next stage of this vision, who is committed to raising standards and can develop them in and expect them from others.***

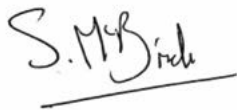
The second main part of the vision is that students flourish and grow to become socially responsible young people ready to take their place in the world and fulfil their potential. Education of the Whole Person has been a foundation stone of the growth of the Academy. Personal development and the taught curriculum are tightly linked at UCL Academy. Students benefit from powerful links with UCL's own "Grand Challenges" which give real world meaning and relevance to the curriculum. ***We are looking for someone who will sustain this vision and hold in balance the taught subjects with personal development priorities.***

The Academy's cohort is year on year in the top quintile nationally for each of: students from disadvantaged backgrounds, with SEND, and with EAL. Over 65 home languages are represented across our families. It's a community we are proud to serve and as we move into our twelfth year, we are particularly proud of welcoming back alumni who have become socially responsible, successful adults deeply grateful for the unique education and exceptional opportunities that UCL Academy provided for them. ***We are looking for someone who shares our commitment to a comprehensive education that adapts to need and where no one is left behind.***

Since inception the Academy has harnessed powerful partnerships to strengthen the curriculum. Our Sponsor UCL is fundamental to this and students and staff benefit from a wide range of inputs from university students and staff, now including UCL IoE. The Academy is an active partner in the Camden family of schools and students benefit from a wide range of opportunities in this thriving space. We have broadened in so many other ways too, such as now being a pilot school with Google DeepMind to develop AI in the curriculum. ***We are looking for someone committed to engaging with our Sponsor, our community and others in harnessing the best opportunities available.***

The 2022 Ofsted report made two clear recommendations as to how the school must improve further. Those recommendations have since been responded to and remain ongoing priorities. The report also outlined in detail many of the strongest aspects of our practice. These areas continue to be highlighted and celebrated by Challenge Partners and other peer reviews. The Academy subjects itself to regular external quality assurance. ***We are looking for someone who also sees themselves as a leader of culture and conduct, in partnership with all other leaders in the Academy, and who will play a critical role in strengthening the Academy's improvement journey.***

This is an exciting and unique opportunity for an outstanding, ambitious leader who is seeking to demonstrate that they are an inspirational role model for high standards, research-informed teaching, lifelong learning, a commitment to the education of the whole person and education for the common good. The successful candidate will work alongside the Principal, the Senior team, the Sponsor and Governors to further develop the ambitious curriculum, to lead outstanding practice in teaching and learning, and ensure the systems that support these are truly effective. If you are someone with passion, expertise and vision, we offer an opportunity to work in partnership with one of the world's leading universities at a ground-breaking school. I hope you are as excited by this opportunity as I am, as this is a challenging yet immensely rewarding opportunity.



Simon McBride
Principal Designate

About the Sponsor

UCL is one of the top universities in the UK, and one of the top 25 universities in the world. It has extensive, world-class facilities and employs some of the world's leading academics. Sponsorship of an Academy allows us to make those facilities and that expertise available on a formal basis to secondary school students: as a means of extending the traditional curriculum, providing access to new ways of learning and promoting the principle of 'lifelong learning' from a young age. We believe that this supports students of all ability levels to higher levels of attainment and enthusiasm for further study.

UCL was founded in 1826 to provide equality of education for all, and The UCL Academy is a school which supports each and every child to succeed. To this end, UCL will use its extensive resources to support the Academy to raise students' aspirations and to invigorate the secondary curriculum. In particular, the school's science, engineering and mathematics focus allows us to draw on UCL's own scientific strengths to bridge the gap between secondary and higher education in those subjects.



Students at the UCL Academy benefit from a programme of masterclasses, seminars and summer schools, given by UCL staff and making use of UCL's laboratory, library and other teaching facilities. These are designed to build on the teaching undertaken in class and help to extend students' understanding of core topics. They also help to prepare older students for the transition between school and university teaching.

Additionally, UCL's students support the Academy: well-established networks of UCL student mentors and tutors provide practical and classroom support to Academy students, acting as role models, classroom assistants and sources of informal advice and guidance.

Finally, the Academy acts as a hub to support education across Camden more broadly. UCL has a long tradition of collaboration with schools in Camden, and the Academy is a base from which UCL is able to extend the support it currently provides to these schools. We are strongly committed to ensuring that the Academy makes a genuine contribution to the Camden family of schools.



The UCL Academy is co-located with Swiss Cottage Specialist SEN School, which is also accommodated in new buildings. The school merged with Jack Taylor Special School in 2012 to form one of the largest specialist SEN schools in the country, with around 230 students from 2-19, catering for the full spectrum of special education needs, including children with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Although the Academy and Swiss Cottage are not formally linked, UCL considers that the co-location to be a tremendous benefit to the Academy, and the relationship between the two schools is an important part of the vision for the Academy. The Swiss Cottage buildings house a Research Institute which support collaboration between staff at Swiss Cottage, UCL's neuroscientists and educational psychologists and the Academy as well.



The education vision for the school is the product of wide consultation and research. UCL explored models from around the world – looking both at pedagogy and teaching spaces –and has developed its ideas following consultation with its academic staff, colleagues who work closely with schools in the secondary sector, and with our Careers and Library Services. We have built on our experience of students joining us as undergraduates and sought to identify ways of aligning practice in the secondary and tertiary sectors more closely. We have also benefited from the expertise of a number of educational consultants and practising teachers.

2 Particular Features of the Academy Curriculum



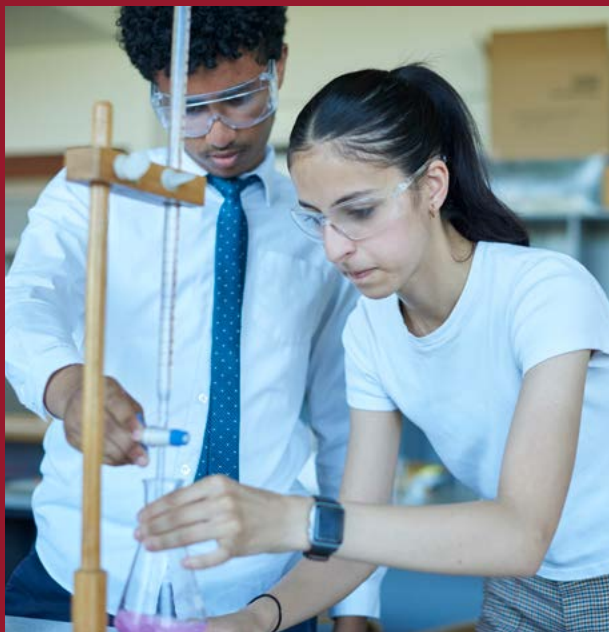
The Academy's Connected Curriculum has evolved into a highly regarded broad, balanced and academic curriculum with authentic interdisciplinary principles inspired by UCL's Grand Challenges. The carefully designed learning journey for students emphasises specialist subject teaching within an interdisciplinary framework. These Grand Challenges act as a link across all areas of a student's learning which can then be applied to a range of subjects and concepts inside and outside the classroom.



A key element of the Connected Curriculum and the Sponsor's vision for the education of the whole person is the Self-Directed Curriculum. The whole school programme of compulsory extra-curricular activities incorporates sports, performing arts, community activity and creative pursuits. Students are encouraged to treat these activities as part of their school timetable and activities are coordinated as part of the school's extended day. This approach has resulted in an exceptional sixth form culture, where students take ownership of their own enrichment programmes; organising, promoting and running them independently of staff.

The Academy Building: Supporting the Education Vision

The UCL Academy is housed in brand-new, purpose-built accommodation on Adelaide Road in Swiss Cottage, North London. The new buildings have specifically designed to support the curriculum and pastoral structures that the school will offer.



The Academy's Facilities include:

- State-of-the-art science laboratories, and a science demonstration theatre for interactive lectures, experiments and talks by visiting academics from UCL;
- An engineering science suite, which include workshops and technology and science labs (for electronics and for engineering physics) designed to give students the experience of 'being engineers';
- Suites of rooms for art, music and drama, including highly-equipped performance spaces;
- 'House' spaces, providing comfortable, welcoming places for students to eat together, and to use for informal study during breaks and before and after school.

Around 60% of the teaching in the UCL Academy takes place in 'Superstudios'. A Superstudio is a group of linked teaching spaces which encourage students to move between activities, to work collaboratively and across disciplines. They bring together traditional classrooms, small and larger seminar rooms and open learning space to create a vibrant and dynamic learning area which can accommodate a range of teacher and student-led activity at any one time.



The UCL Academy curriculum puts emphasis on interdisciplinary and problem-based learning works, with students making personal choices to build a curriculum that meets their needs and aspirations. The Superstudio concept has been developed specifically to support this vision, and it draws upon research into highly successful schools from across the world.

The Superstudios are zoned by faculty area and allow flexibility for teams of teachers to use the classrooms and open learning spaces as they see fit. They also allow us to zone the spaces by age group or level should the need arise. The Superstudios accommodate all teaching not requiring specialist equipment and most theory-based teaching for subjects which have a practical element.

The Academy is committed to providing an education for global citizenship and places a particular premium on modern foreign language learning. We are equally committed to ensuring students have the chance to experience exceptional opportunities across the arts, sports, humanities science, english, maths and engineering.



Pastoral Care

As part of the mentoring system which forms the basis of the school's pastoral support structure, students have regular contact with their older peers and with students from UCL, many of whom come from schools and communities within London. These older teenagers will be role models for younger students, providing opportunities for them to discuss problems with those closer to them in age, and to come into regular contact with young people for whom school has led to further study post-16 and at university. These relationships help to support students who might otherwise be disengaged from learning. The Academy staff are particularly sensitive to the needs of students with mental health and emotional difficulties, and seek to identify issues at an early stage and put together appropriate support packages, tailored to the individual child. Additionally, the school has designated and appropriately equipped a separate space for those students whose emotional or behavioural needs may require them to be removed from their learning community for a substantial number of regular sessions each week over an extended period of time. This enables specialist Academy staff to work in a targeted way with these young people, nurturing their emotional and social development with the aim of addressing issues which might otherwise result in exclusion.

The school is fully accessible to students with physical disabilities. Learning support activities are delivered alongside other curriculum courses, so that students receiving additional help in key areas are not isolated or stigmatised. Students deemed to be under-performing are monitored discreetly, with a view to ensuring early intervention with tailored support as appropriate. A significant proportion of the Academy's students require EAL support. Many of these are 'advanced bilingual' learners, with a need for targeted help to develop their ability to use English at the highest conceptual level, as a tool with which to reason and develop ideas and arguments. The Academy employs an EAL teacher, within the inclusion team, to work directly with these students. In line with the school's commitment to modern foreign languages, basic EAL tuition and work with more advanced ESL speakers are accommodated within designated slots in the timetable, and every effort is made to remove the perceived distinction between EAL and MFL in the way the subjects are presented and promoted across the school. Where appropriate, EAL resource is targeted at students in the Foundation Year to provide intensive booster sessions and after-school support.



Since the Academy opened in 2012, we have evolved and adapted how we support staff well being at the Academy. We remain deeply committed to our ambitious and exciting vision for education at the same time as recognising that an inspired, creative and cared for staff body are central to delivering this vision. Outlined below are the key principles and current strategies in place at the Academy to support this work. We continue to work with the staff association, the staffing committee, our Sponsor and the NEU to explore and implement further systems and strategies to support all staff at the Academy.

We have developed a generous and supportive staff wellbeing package with Simply health. This program supports staff well being in a range of areas including dental and medical care, physical and mental well being with discounts and reduced costs to support all staff.

Staff Development Time and Additional Holidays

- The Academy has a two week half term in the Autumn term to support staff during this particularly long term;
- The Academy operates more planning days during the academic year than Local Authority Schools. It has approximately 8 per year to allow time for collaborative planning for staff as well as induction at the beginning of the year;
- Every Monday from 1530-1645, all staff take part in our carefully designed and highly regarded training sessions.

Sensitive and Pragmatic Approach to Planning Time and Administrative Expectations

- Marking requirements are that there is a productive process of written feedback with students that each faculty has designed according to their requirements. It is for teachers to plan when they undertake this;
- Data input and reporting processes have been designed to ensure robust assessment processes are combined with pragmatic and minimal data inputting requirements;
- Staff planning days are carefully planned and organised to support staff planning time as well as CPL delivery.

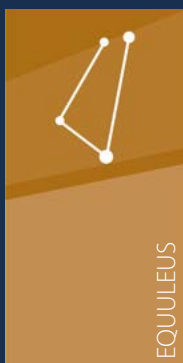
Exceptional Training and Development

- CPL is co-constructed with staff to support school strategic priorities as well as ensuring staff's self identified professional areas of interest in terms of pedagogy and subject specialism, are effectively supported through our unique partnership with UCL IOE;
- On Mondays staff CPL takes place from 3.30-5.00pm. On one other day per week for a minimum of a 10 week block, each teacher will offer a session of Self Directed Learning of their choosing;

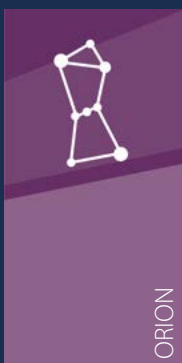
In recognition of these additional activities, staff are paid an additional £600 in their salary on top of their position on the pay spine. Where departmental or other meetings take place our commitment is never to go beyond 5.00pm.



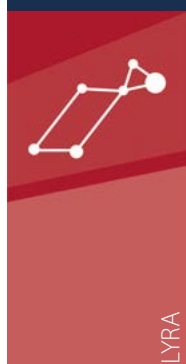
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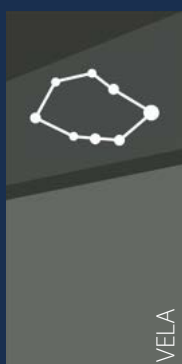
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Enjoyment and Collaboration

- The Academy has an annual awards ceremony (The Golden Lanyards) for staff where peers nominate each other and have the opportunity to write comments and celebrate colleagues professional and personal support for each other;
- A private healthcare plan is also provided for all staff. Staff organise additional sporting and cultural events such as staff football, tennis and staff trips;
- Staff socials and initiatives, such as a Christmas party and cultural events, are supported and encouraged by SLT and Sponsor.

Finance and Travel Support and Incentives

- Travel: the Academy is 2 minutes walk from Swiss Cottage underground station and is in close proximity (by tube) to King's Cross, Baker Street and London Bridge station. Season ticket loans are available for all staff;
- Pay scales match the national scales, remembering the additional £900 on top of that;
- A personal health care plan for all staff that includes free counselling, gym membership discounts and money back on holistic therapies and prescriptions.

Community Support

The Academy is organised around 5 Houses with every student and member of staff belonging to a House. Each House has its own Superstudio and canteen to encourage community and regular inter-House competitions to promote House identity and pride. The Academy operates a full programme of compulsory extra-curricular activities for students of all ages, which include sports, performing arts, community activity and creative pursuits. Students are encouraged to treat these activities as part of their school timetable (i.e. part of their learning programme) and activities are coordinated as part of the school's normal working day.



The Academy also serves as a hub for the university's outreach activity in Camden, providing a venue and facilities for lectures and masterclasses in a range of activities which are open to students at all Camden schools. The UCL Academy operates a volunteering programme and all students are encouraged to regularly participate in projects in their community. The school also provide a venue for adult learning, and the Academy's facilities are available to the local community according to need.