

Dear Professor Smith,

We are writing as a follow up to our meeting with you in April about the support that UCL can provide for forced migrants and refugees. The past few years have borne witness to the largest migration ever recorded, with over 59.5 million people forcibly displaced by war, conflict, and persecution in 2014 alone, many of whom are students. This global movement of people has significant implications for UCL's commitment to addressing global challenges, outlined in our 2034 Vision, as well as for the next generation of UCL staff and students.

Based on extensive consultation with colleagues, staff and students, across UCL, as well as our wider networks, we have put together a proposal for the development of four elements:

- Establishment of a '**Migration Support Unit**' and '**Forced Migrant Champions**' to coordinate, oversee and embed activities
- **Recruitment and funding for students who are forced migrants** to access UCL Undergraduate Preparatory Certificate pre-undergraduate foundation courses
- Review and **enhancement of current scholarship provision** with specific focus on the needs of forced migrants
- Familiarisation with **HE volunteer taught programme**

Further details of these proposals are given in the attached paper. The **total resource required to support these proposals is 0.5 staff FTE and funding to support two students as a pilot scholarship scheme for the foundation course and subsequent UG study.**

A commitment now to support and embed this range of activities will ensure that the significant expertise and evident energy within UCL is deployed effectively, and that UCL leads the way in higher education provision for forced migrants and refugees. This overall agenda has significant support from staff and students across the university, including a number of Faculty and Centre Directors and Deans, Heads of Centres for Language and Academic Support, and a number of student organisations.

We very much hope that you will take this forward, and are delighted to continue to support such initiatives in any way that we can. We would also be very pleased to discuss any other measures that you think UCL can take forward to show our leadership and commitment on this important agenda. We would be delighted to meet to discuss these proposals further as well as to provide you with background materials and more detailed descriptions and costings for the four proposed elements. We very much look forward to hearing from you.

Yours,

The Coordinating Group for UCL Support for Forced Migrants and Refugees:

- Raphaela Armbruster, Centre for Languages and International Education
- Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Migration Research Unit, Department of Geography
- Claudia Lapping, Institute of Education
- Andrea Rigon, Bartlett School
- Rachel Rosen, Institute of Education

Proposals for UCL to respond to the global migration crisis

Background

In the year or more since the initial responses from HEIs to the ongoing situation began to emerge, a lot has been learnt about what works and what is needed. In UCL, a successful open meeting with over 70 staff and students in February 2016 led to the creation of a working group with the aim of co-ordinating support from staff and students across UCL. The group includes members from the Department of Geography, the Bartlett School, the Institute of Education and the Centre for Languages and International Education (CLIE). Beyond the working group, ongoing and further interest has been expressed by colleagues and students across the university. In addition, we have now extended our network to other organisations and HEIs, to draw on experience and expertise built up in the sector, and are continuing to build on these links (e.g. with Birkbeck, Kings, UEL and Exeter universities, and third sector organisations including Refugee Support Network, Article 26, and STAR).

Rationale

Up to now UCL has very appropriately sought to develop a coherent and well-informed strategy, to avoid rushed and potentially ill-informed initiatives that risk failing to achieve their aims. Indeed, our research into experience developed so far across the sector has highlighted key issues that need to be taken into account in future developments. These include: eligibility criteria; recognition of previous qualifications; admissions processes; English Language testing; the need for targeted advice and information, and more... The good news is that this knowledge is now being shared, and briefings are being developed to help HEIs in future initiatives. Based on our increased understanding, we feel we are now in a position to contribute to the development of an approach for UCL to deliver world class support for students and prospective students who are also forced migrants.

Our proposed approach would allow UCL to put itself on the map globally as a leader in equitable access and provision of higher education for forced migrants. It is in line with the University's core strategies for Global Engagement, Education and London:

- UCL's *2034 Vision* and *Global Engagement Strategy 2015-2020* to address global challenges, be an accessible and publicly engaged organisation, and deliver global impact through innovative international collaborations and partnerships.
- The Collegiate Council response led by the University of London School of Advanced Studies.
- Aligning with *UCL Education Strategy 2016-2021* to develop personalised student support, create cultures of student engagement and leadership and extend global reach, education and impact.
- Aligning with UCL's objectives as *London's Global University* to use our global standing to help attract investment in London; to develop our engagement with UK and other governments through international partnerships; to develop and maintain high-profile, successful partnerships with other UK HEIs (in London and South-East England).
- The new *Back The Future* campaign for UCL launched this September for funding and raising funds.

It would also:

- Give UCL credibility and leverage when discussing issues with partners.
- Give UCL content for PR/media engagement.
- Give content and example of best practice for the UCL 2034 fundraising campaign.

Proposed measures

- A. Establishment of a 'Migration Support Unit' and 'Forced Migrant Champions' to coordinate, oversee and embed activities

In order to ensure that UCL establishes and maintains a visible, leading position as a university committed to providing appropriate and excellent support for academic progress in higher education for young people and students caught up in the current forced migration crisis, **it will be essential to set up a 'Migration Support Unit' to co-ordinate both fundraising and educational support activities.**

In addition, **identifying and training 'Forced Migrant Champions'** in the admissions teams would ensure that knowledge about key issues is integrated into admissions processes.

Resources required: 0.4 x staff FTE (provided by one or two members of staff) to ensure the successful development and implementation of the programme of activities to support forced migrants' access to higher education (including the initial three projects outlined below). This staff resource could sit within the existing Global Engagement Office.

- B. Recruitment and funding for students who are forced migrants to access UCL Undergraduate Preparatory Certificate pre-undergraduate courses

Our second suggestion builds on the existing, successful Undergraduate Preparatory Certificate (UPC) foundation courses offered by UCL CLIE. These have established academic credibility and a proven track record in opening a pathway for higher education access at UCL and other Russell Group universities. Building on the programmes' existing expertise in international student admissions, UCL is in a strong position to help students without recognised academic and linguistic qualifications enrol in and access the most academically challenging certified higher education programmes.

With an institutional commitment from UCL to cover tuition and living costs for the preparatory certificate and follow on degree, we could target international recruitment activities in areas where forced migrants are currently living, identify and recruit excellent candidates to gain the necessary basis to go on to study at leading UK universities.

We propose a pilot to recruit 2 students for 2017-8 and to provide financial support to cover tuition and living costs for the UPC and follow on UG degree (1 + 3 years of funding). If successful, this pilot could be expanded in future years and further funding sought from other institutions and sponsors.

Resources required: Funding of 2 full UPC scholarships and 2 UG scholarships. Activity to develop access to these programmes is fully supported by Christine Hoffmann, Director of CLIE, and 0.2 staff FTE has already been dedicated to investigate extending participation to such courses.

C. Review and enhancement of current scholarship provision with specific focus on the needs of forced migrants

According to the *UCL 2034* strategy, UCL Scholarships and Bursaries Schemes are part of our outreach and widening participation efforts to bring deserving students from low-income backgrounds to UCL. Scholarships can also allow us to achieve our *2034* mission to be a “diverse intellectual community, engaged with the wider world and committed to changing it for the better.”

We recommend that the current review of all of UCL’s scholarship schemes and Student Funding plans to develop awards for people affected by conflict and displacement should include consideration of the needs of forced migrants and refugees, and in particular should:

- Review eligibility criteria and application processes for scholarship schemes not specifically designed for people affected by forced migration and conflict, and ensure that these do not unintentionally discriminate against these groups (in other words, mainstreaming a sensitivity to people affected by forced migration throughout UCL’s scholarship schemes).
- Design new schemes that target these specific groups in an inclusive way.
- Develop focussed new fundraising schemes foregrounding UCL’s response to the current forced migration crisis.

Resources required: No new resources required. The proposed Migration Support Unit and/or the Forced Migrant Champion(s) would be in a good position to contribute to this work. Members of our working group who are also experts in this field would also be in a good position to contribute.

D. Volunteer short course programme on understanding the UK HE system

In line with UCL’s *Global Engagement Strategy*, to make an impact on global challenges through staff and student public engagement, as well as UCL’s commitment to widening participation more broadly, we propose establishing a range of short courses/modules, delivered on a voluntary basis by existing UCL staff and students. The courses would be designed to familiarise migrants and refugees in London with different aspects of the UK higher education system, including:

- Admissions processes and criteria.
- The range of programmes and disciplinary fields in UK HEIs.
- Academic skills in language, writing, critical thinking, maths and ICT.
- Support with applications and interview preparation.

Representatives from the student union, STAR (Student Action for Refugees) and a large number of staff and students from across UCL have expressed interest in becoming involved in direct support for forced migrants and refugees in London whose education is being affected by the current crisis. A coordinator would support volunteer staff and students to develop and deliver the courses, supported by the Migration Support Unit.

Resources required: 0.1 x co-ordinator to oversee development and implementation of the programme (either with the Migration Support Unit role, or to be recruited separately). This co-ordinator could potentially be based within the CLIE, the IOE Academic Writing Centre, or within the Widening Participation office.

In summary, the **total resources** required to support these proposals are:

- 0.5 staff FTE comprised of:
 - 0.4 FTE Migration Support Unit staff
 - 0.1 FTE coordinator for the volunteer taught programme
 - NB. (An additional 0.2 FTE for point B above – access to UCL UPC – is already accounted for within CLIE.)
- Funding for 2 scholarships for the UPC courses and subsequent UG scholarships.

Existing UCL support

This overall agenda has significant support from staff and students across the university, including:

Faculty and Centre Directors and Deans:

- Clare Brooks, Co-Director of Initial Teacher Education and Vice-Dean International, Institute of Education
- Helen Chatterjee, Professor of Biology and Head of Research and Teaching in UCL's Department of Public and Cultural Engagement
- Sally Day, Head of Teaching in Electronic and Electrical Engineering
- Claire Dwyer, Co-Director of UCL's Migration Research Unit
- Becky Francis, Director of the Institute of Education
- Tamar Garb, Director of UCL's Institute of Advanced Studies
- Carl Gombrich, Director of Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- Caren Levy, Professor of Transformative Planning and Vice-Dean International, Bartlett
- Henrietta Moore, Director of UCL's Institute for Global Prosperity
- Ruth Mandel, Anthropology and Vice-Dean International, Faculty of Social and Historical Sciences
- Margaret O'Brien, Director of the Thomas Coram Research Unit and Co-Chair of the UCL Grand Challenge Justice and Equality
- Peter Sammonds, Director of UCL's Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction and UCL's Humanitarian Institute
- Rosanna Smith, Deputy Director of UCL Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction and UCL's Humanitarian Institute

Heads of Centres for Languages and Academic Support:

- Lesley Gourlay, Director of the Institute of Education Academic Writing Centre
- Christine Hoffmann, Director of UCL Centre for Languages and International Education (CLIE)

Students:

- Students from across the University, including representatives of the UCLU, have attended meetings, contributed to our working groups, and are developing related proposals for the UCL ChangeMakers awards.
- The local and national STAR (Student Action for Refugees) have expressed their support for the specific proposals outlined here.