How UCL is meeting the challenges of teaching and learning in the time of COVID-19 – and the long-term implications of the changes being made

Prof Sam Smidt, Director UCL Arena Centre July 2020

Back in March, when many of you had been teaching online for 2 months already

Brought together Arena, Digital education and Faculty Learning Technologists

UCL went online around 18th March – the ‘emergency pivot’

Principles

Simplicity and consistency

- Need clear steer on this to avoid confusion and unmanageable support demands

Use institutional services

- Moodle
- Blackboard Collaborate
- Lecturecast Teams

Replacing live teaching

- Pre-recorded didactic content
- Digital alternatives for interactive sessions

Create alternatives to Exams

Recommended services

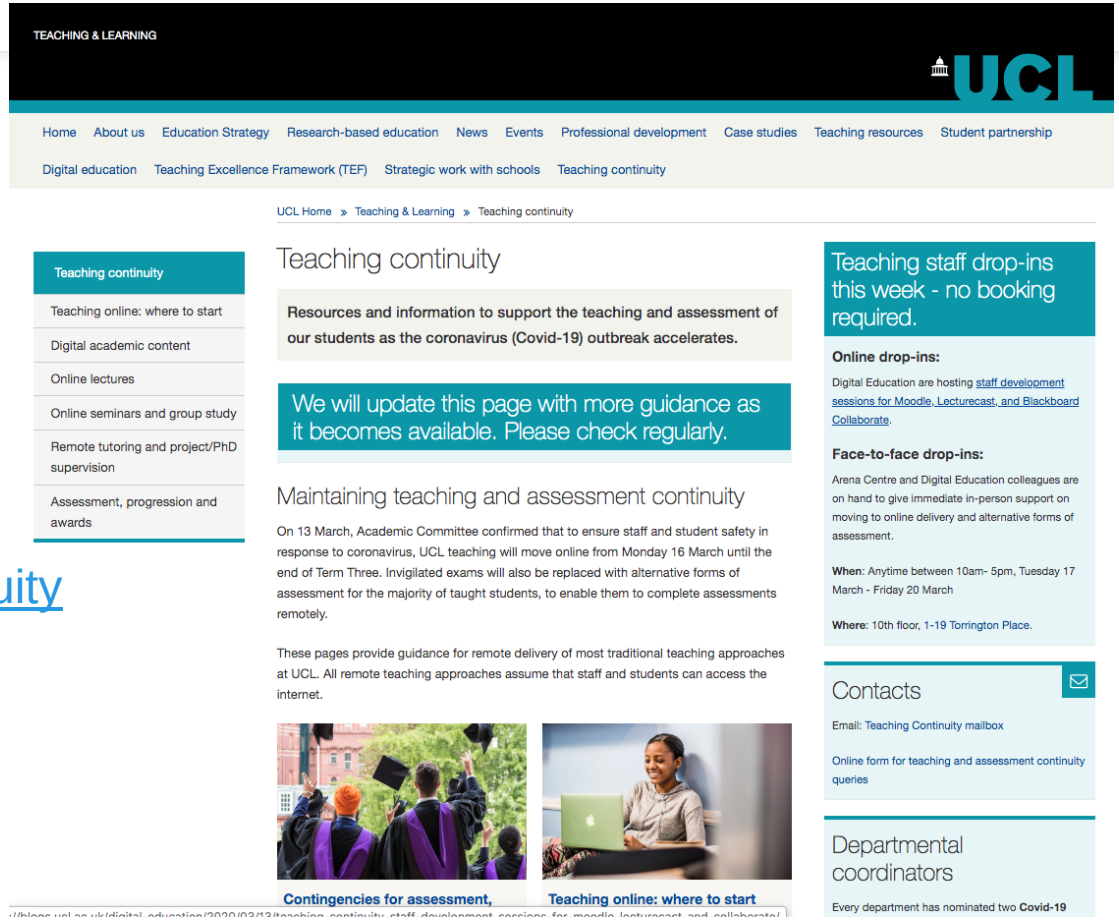
Moodle for sharing resources, communication, learning activities.

Blackboard Collaborate (accessed through Moodle) for live ‘webinar style’ teaching sessions.

Lecturecast Personal Capture to pre-record teaching sessions (less stressful for some staff than live-teaching using Blackboard Collaborate).

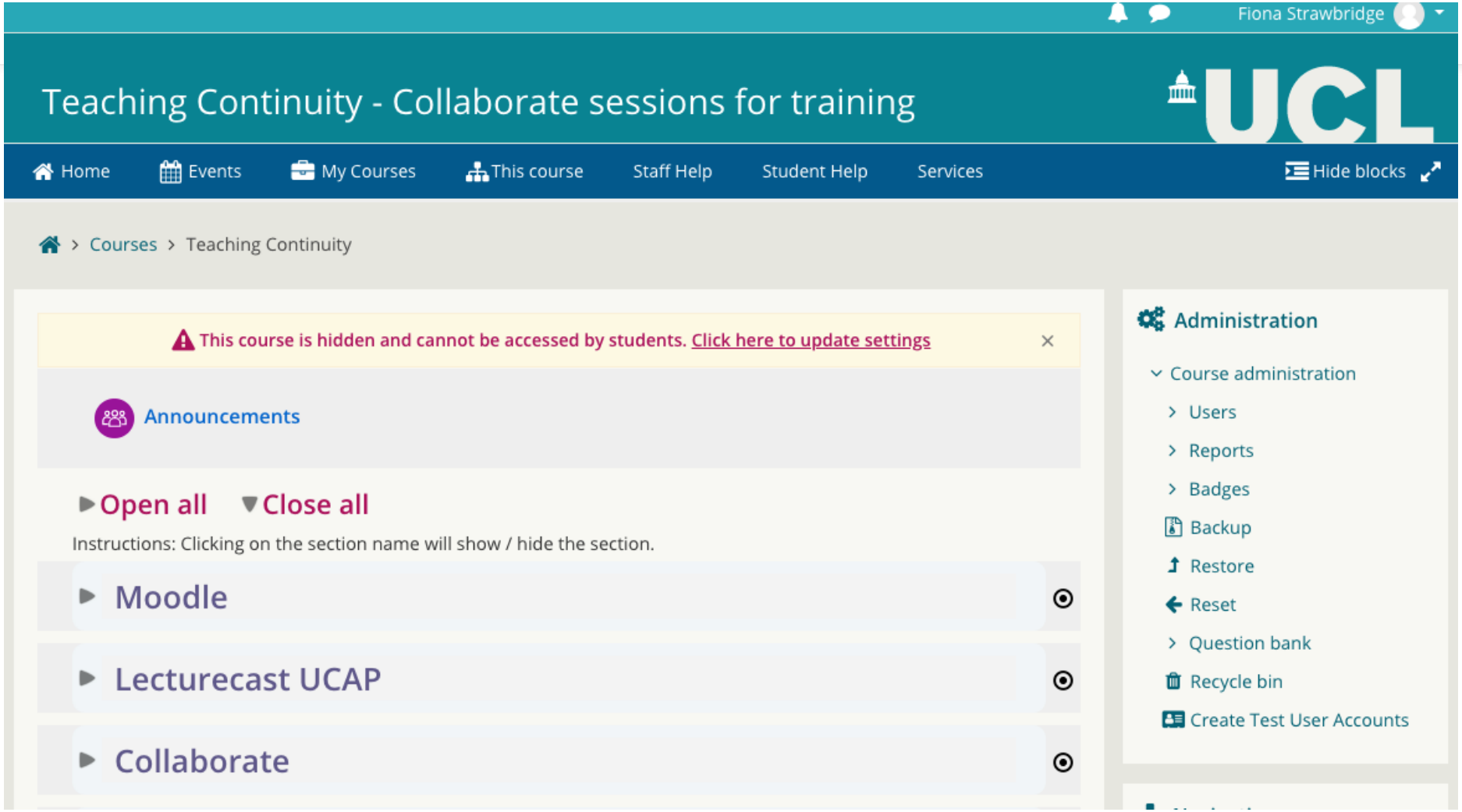
Lecturecast archive – recordings of live classes from the last two years are available. (Last resort)

We set up Teaching Continuity pages



www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/teaching-continuity

Synchronous online training



Immediate support

- Physical drop-ins (for 2 days!)
- Virtual drop-ins
- Ticketing system for query management (not needed)
- Mailbox for immediate support
- Community of practice – Teaching and Learning continuity team and Moving online moodle users group
- All work meetings moved onto MS Teams (very fast)

Two weeks in! April

“ The challenges of the Covid-19 outbreak are enormous and I am hugely grateful for the immediate, thoughtful and creative response of all colleagues. As we transition to the new reality of remote teaching and assessment, it’s important to remember that we may not get everything absolutely right from the start. So while we must be nimble, improving and augmenting our teaching and assessment as we go, we must also give ourselves and our colleagues some leeway, trusting that we are all doing our best – as I know we are. - **Professor Anthony Smith, Vice Provost (Education and Student Affairs)**

Getting organised

2 task forces – one on online assessment and one on remote teaching for term 3 (April – June)

Departments nominated Covid Mitigation Coordinators – we send out weekly bulletins, run ‘town hall’ meetings etc

The web pages are improving with training materials and case studies

Exams are very imminent and this is the main focus…

Alternative assessments

UCL previously used Excel centre for exams

3333 assessment components were changed

Of nearly 2000 exams, approximately half were turned into coursework, about 250 were excluded, about 500 became open book exams (and the rest we aren’t sure about!)

All first year assesments were cancelled and replaced with a ‘capstone’ assessment

Where are our students?

(According to Moodle)

1.	United Kingdom	
	Mar 26, 2020 - Mar 26, 2020	**18,711** (72.35%)
	Mar 19, 2020 - Mar 19, 2020	**21,053** (80.06%)
	% Change	**-11.12%**
2.	China	
	Mar 26, 2020 - Mar 26, 2020	**1,358** (5.25%)
	Mar 19, 2020 - Mar 19, 2020	**692** (2.63%)
	% Change	**96.24%**
3.	Hong Kong	
	Mar 26, 2020 - Mar 26, 2020	**525** (2.03%)
	Mar 19, 2020 - Mar 19, 2020	**239** (0.91%)
	% Change	**119.67%**
4.	United States	
	Mar 26, 2020 - Mar 26, 2020	**482** (1.86%)
	Mar 19, 2020 - Mar 19, 2020	**370** (1.41%)
	% Change	**30.27%**

Another month – end of April

Gold – overall control

Guidance, direction, decision making

Silver sapphire – high level planning

Operations
Education
Research
External engagement

Bronze – detailed planning
Various leads including

Detailed plans in key Silver areas

Faculty delivery teams - implementation

Once plans have been formulated (Bronze), reviewed (Silver), stress-tested & approved (Gold)

Education Delivery Group work - May

Preparing for the possibility of fully online teaching in Term 1

What do we call it?

- Remote?
- Online?
- Flexible?
- or 'Connected'...?

This means

- Connected Learning for UCL (paper)
- Staff Development
- Template(s)
- Exemplar course(s)
- A boosted Baseline

Digital infrastructure (related to education)

MOODLE CAPACITY

E-EXAMS PLATFORM

LECTURECAST TRANSCRIPTS

ACTIVE CLASSROOM (MENTIMETER)

STUDENT VOICE (UNITU)

VIRTUAL STUDENT COMMON ROOMS

VIRTUAL CLUSTER ROOM

REMOTE LABS/PRACTICALS/STUDIOS/CLINICS

What we did in the spring won’t be enough

Student and staff experience of the pivot

Challenges with live seminars

- Waiting for someone to speak and speaking over others
- No visual cues
- Discussion is difficult

Students appreciate resources

- Handouts
- Recordings
- PowerPoints

Time zones & connectivity are problematic

Discussion forums need to be well-managed

This has led to some updated recommendations

Simplicity and consistency remain

Plan for more asynchronous activities

Low bandwidth approaches wherever possible

Focus on students doing stuff

Don't do dual mode

We added three more education platforms…

Reflect – Wordpress-based educational blogs

MyPortfolio – Mahara-based e-portfolio

Mentimeter – for in class (or online) interaction

And more support for the student experience…

Unitu – the student voice

Student Common Rooms

Other developments

- Massively expanded Moodle capacity
- Support for practical teaching
- Remote access to Cluster Room software

Connected Learning Baseline

Providing a consistent and supportive online environment for students.

- **Connected Learning Baseline**
- **Templates and Exemplars**
- **Support material**

Getting staff ready

C L Essentials – outline content

- Introduction to Connected Learning
- Student engagement
- Consistent online experience
- Assessment
- Active learning
- Curating and making resources
- Evaluation and improvement

C L Essentials - structure

2 parts – 1st for those delivering elements of teaching, 2nd for those designing modules, assessments etc

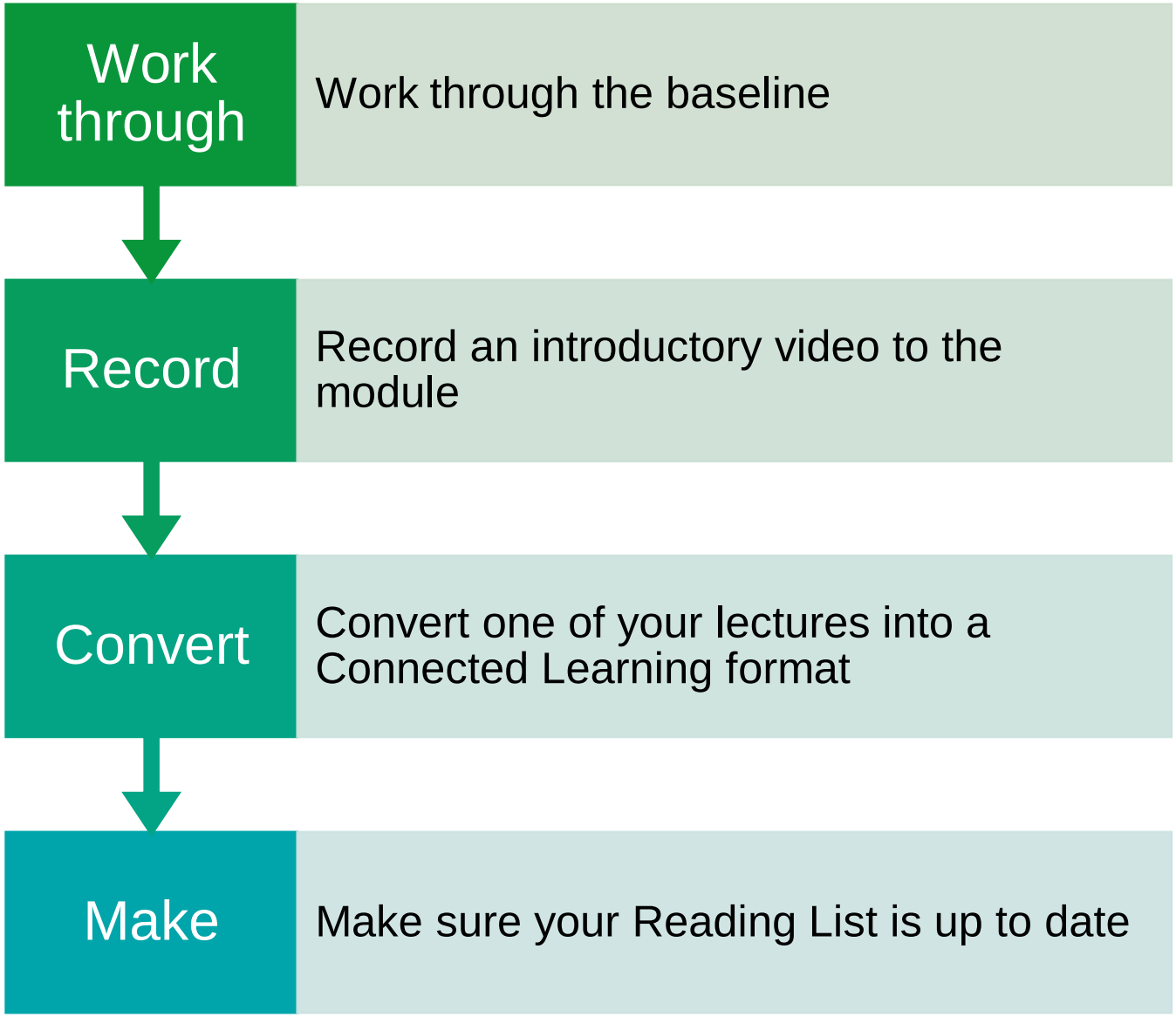
Approx 6 hours core content with lots of additional resources, development opportunities

Faculty-specific instances for discipline-focussed discussions

Always available, but ‘cohorts’ encouraged

UCL eXtend (Moodle)

‘if you only do one thing’ - course ‘checkpoints’ after each section

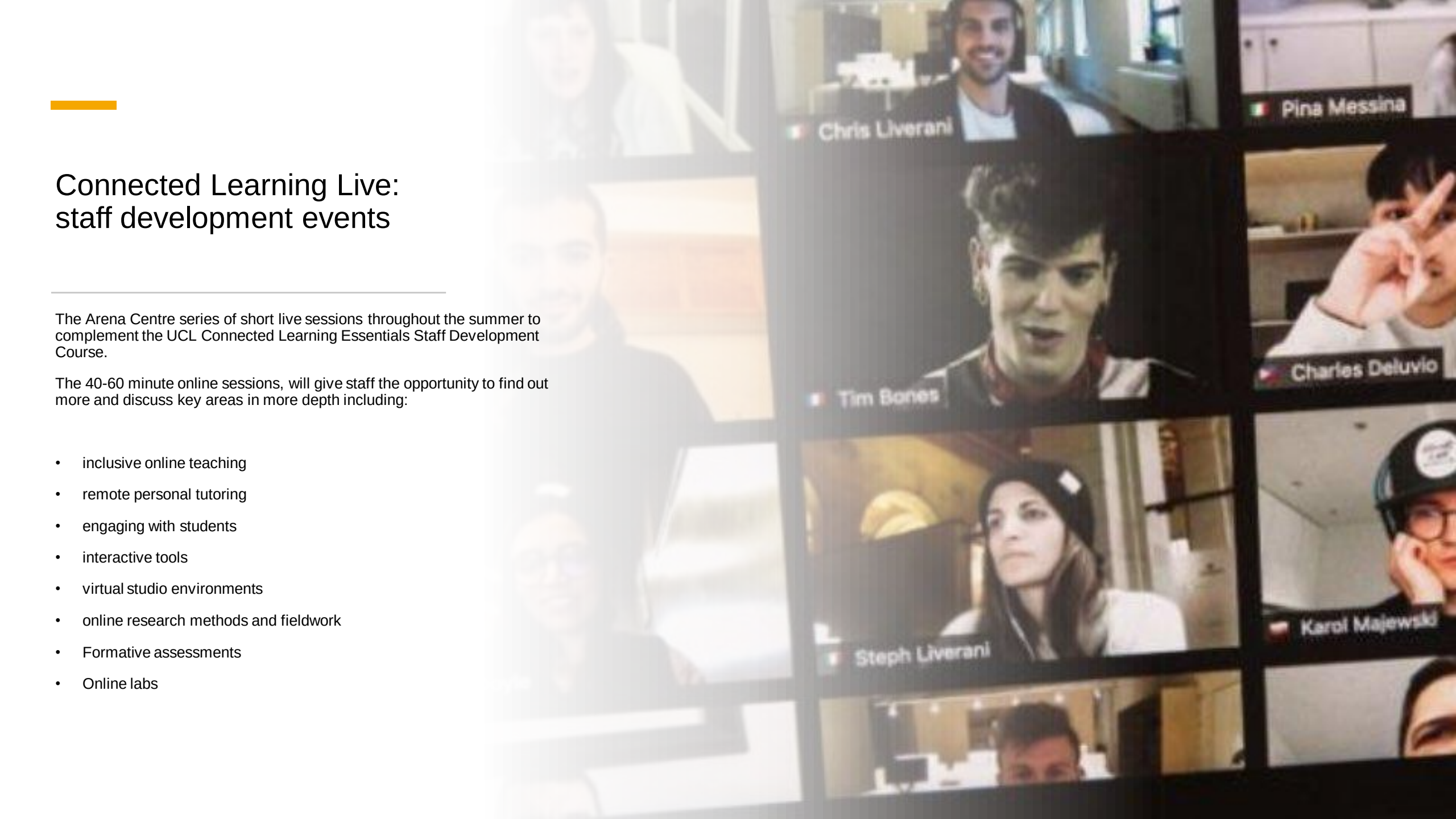


Connected Learning Live: staff development events

The Arena Centre series of short live sessions throughout the summer to complement the UCL Connected Learning Essentials Staff Development Course.

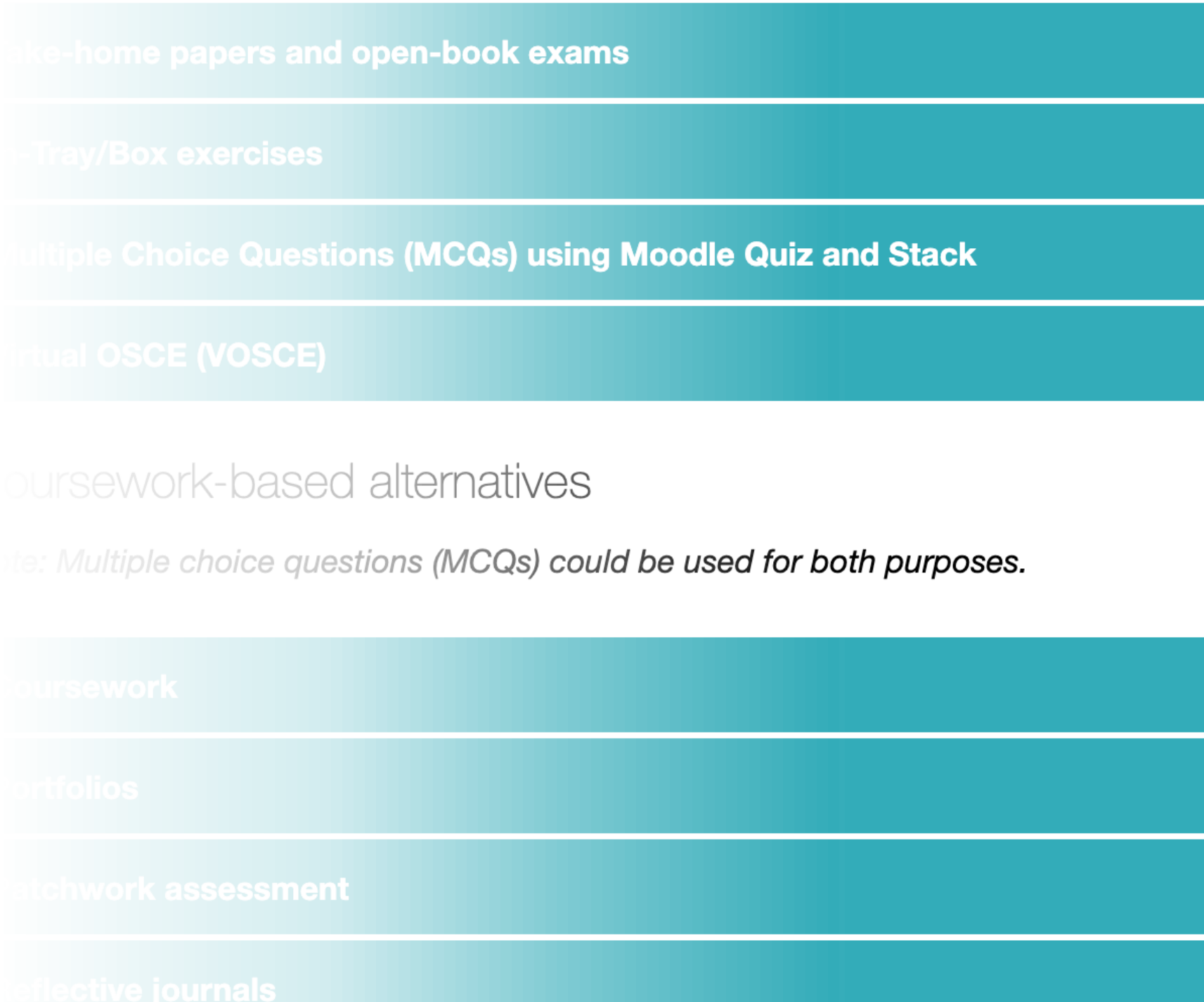
The 40-60 minute online sessions, will give staff the opportunity to find out more and discuss key areas in more depth including:

- inclusive online teaching
- remote personal tutoring
- engaging with students
- interactive tools
- virtual studio environments
- online research methods and fieldwork
- Formative assessments
- Online labs



Assessment changes

- E-exams project
- Comprehensive guidance for alternative assessments
- Assessment tariff



Lab and Practice-Based Education Overview

- Online and Offsite Activities
  1. Software Solutions to Support Practical Education
  2. Moodle
  3. Support recording of demos.
  4. Kits for remote activities

- Face-to-Face Activities

Labs and Practical's : Physical to Virtual

Provide virtual access to physical cluster rooms	• Access via UCL Anywhere to groups of physical computers • Solution for timetabling / reserving capacity • Able to wholly or partly close physical space
Adobe Creative Cloud and Acrobat	• Increase student licenses for specific departments to support alternative teaching delivery methods • Enable additional staff licenses to allow material to be developed • Manage centrally and explore funding options
Lab simulation software	• Support subset of Labster, LT, Learning Science, jove.com and Design Expert • Provide ad-hoc support for other specialist departmental simulation tools
Other software to support student learning	• Evaluate Miro as a standard tool for group work • Evaluate Overleaf, Hypothesis, Talis Elevate, Camtasia, Flashback Pro and Proximie.com
Moodle Plug-ins	• Review plug in requests with service owner • Agree plan for start of session and what goes onto backlog for later
Support media capture for practical teaching	• Prioritising start of session support • Additional hardware for loan or supported recording

Software already supported or coming soon

- Some platforms came up that are already available
  - MATLAB – Staff and Students can download to their own machines
  - NI Labview/Multisim – Staff and Students can download to their own machines
  - Mathematica - Staff and Students can download to their own machines
  - Camtasia – Currently on available to purchase at £132 per user

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  - Microsoft Education A3 suite – coming from September
    - Minecraft Education Edition with Code Builder
    - Azure Active Directory

Case Studies

Risk assessments for field work

Guidance on safely organising field work during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Remote workshops and masterclasses: Institute of Making case study

The Institute of Making team give an overview, and pros and cons of running practical consultations, workshops and masterclasses remotely during Covid-19.

Teaching practical and clinical skills remotely: UCL Clinical Skills team case study

The UCL Clinical Skills team posted

Moving lab teaching online with LabTutor: UCL Medical School case study

UCL Medical School students working

Enha ncing s
experience throu
community enga
learning

How Dr Froso Argyri, U
Education, worked with
schools in London on a
Bilingualism and Multili

30 June 2020

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/education-planning-2020-21/online-teaching-guidance-tips-and-platforms/alternative-labs-and-practice

Preparing students for Connected Learning

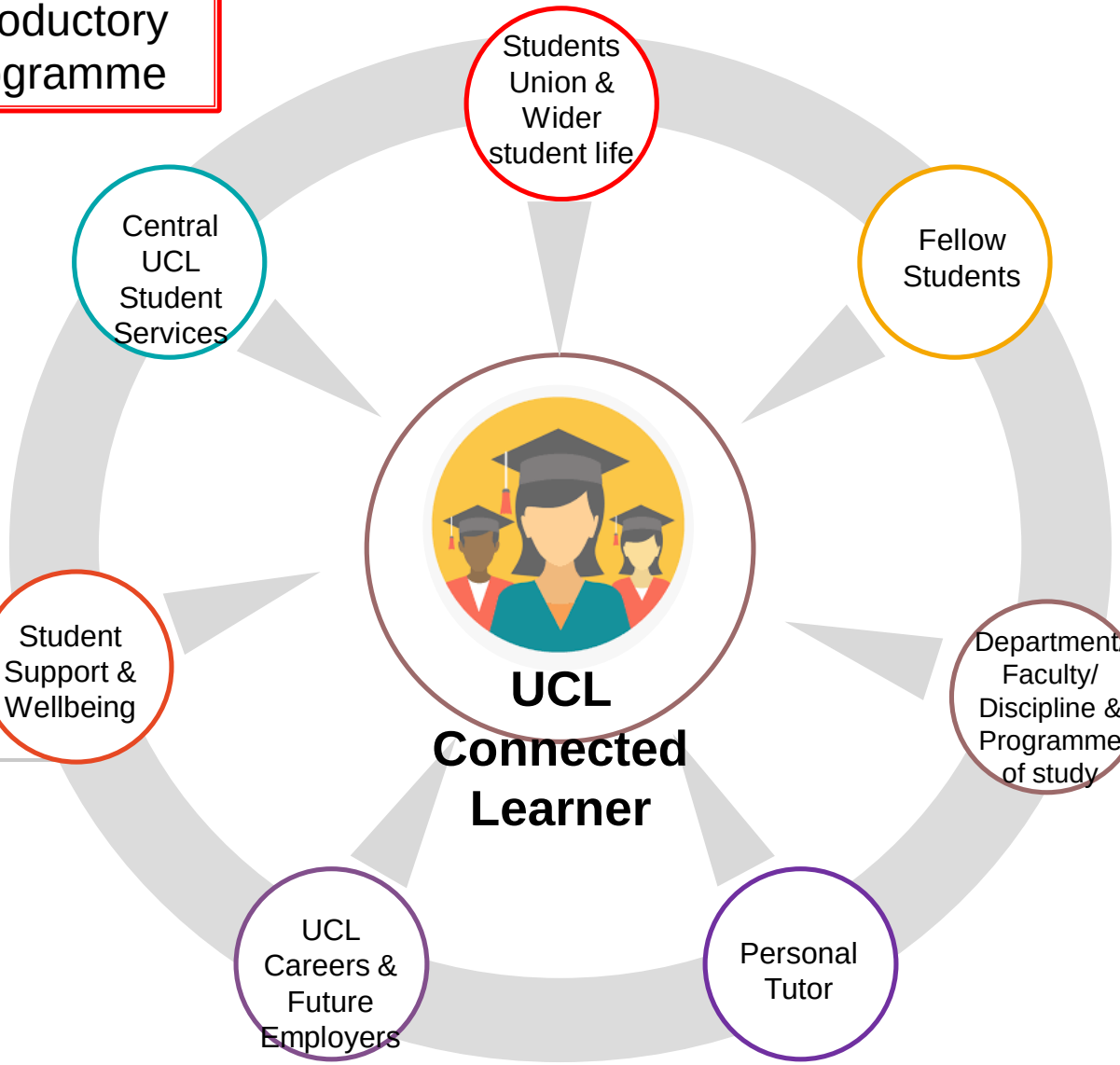
Ensuring an excellent UCL student experience 2020/21

Introductory Programme

First Six weeks Project

Student Readiness Project

Applicant and returning student information projects



Virtual Common Rooms

Unitu

Early Enrolment & Sandbox

Online SEQs

Student readiness, early enrolment and sandbox

- Informed by new and returning student research
- Resources to prepare practically & psychologically
- Series of activities and easy links and navigation to *'just the right amount'* of information without clutter
- New landing page/portal via ucl.ac.uk/students site @ 2020/21 that directs to
    - Existing resources related to 'connected learners' (curated and updated)
    - New preparing for learning activity: *The Connected Learning Course*
    - Sandbox to test out learning tools and platforms
    - Links to accurate, honest, student-centred information
    - Links to departmental or programme specific advice and resources

Aim to develop this resource throughout July and August ready to launch 6 weeks prior to start of term

First Six Weeks Programme

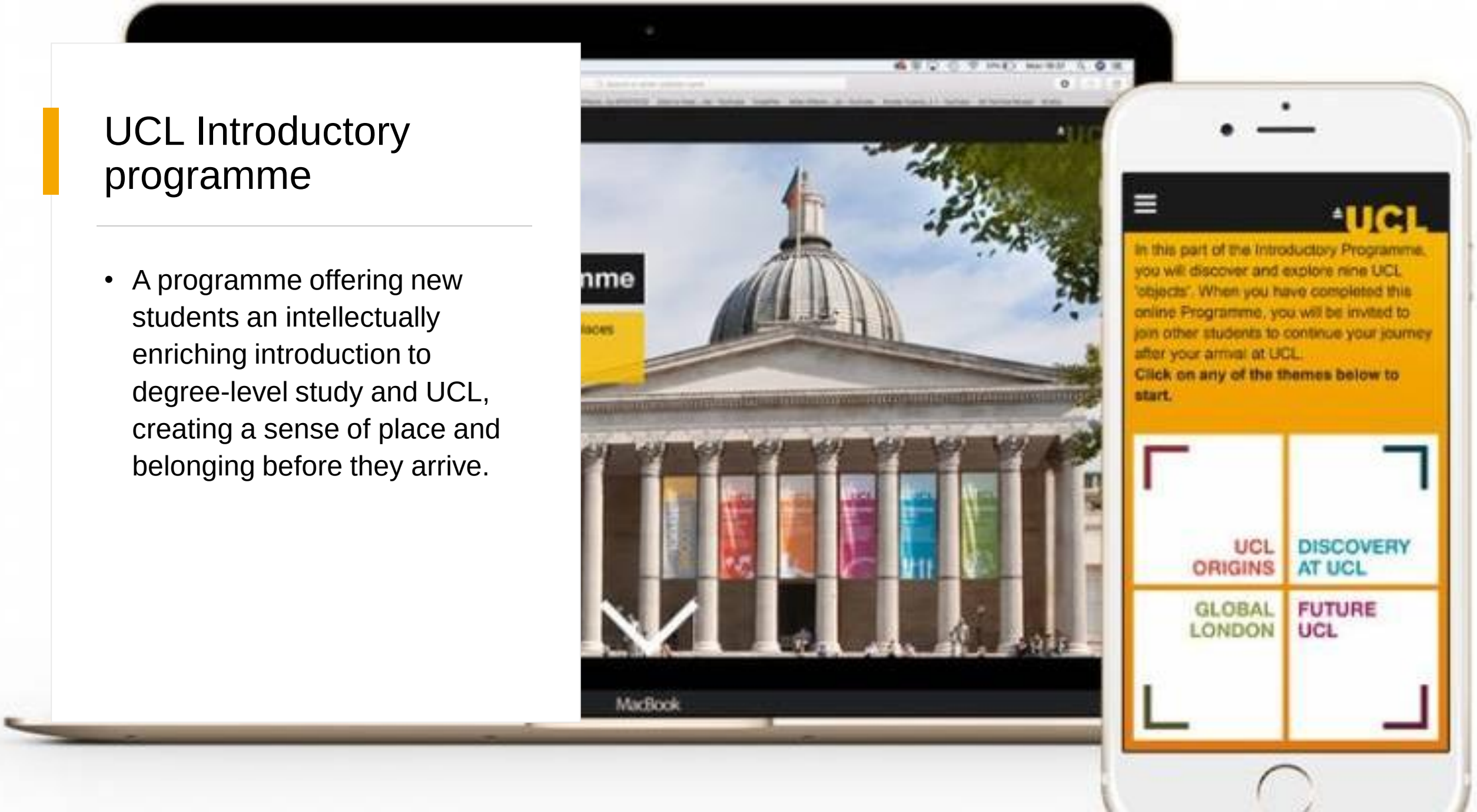
- Why: The first six weeks of the first term at university are a significant transition period that can have long term effects on a student's university experience.
- **How:** This programme will be hosted centrally in terms of providing weekly themes, student and staff communication, scheduled events and signposting. Departments can build on these central themes and/or incorporate into their own activities.
- **When:**
- **Themes**
- **Week 1: Connect with UCL Life – Welcome (28/9 week)**
- **Week 2: Connect with university resources and services**
- **Week 3: Connect with UCL: in London, of London and for London**
- **Week 4: Connect with UCL Culture**
- **Week 5: Connect with your future and career**
- **Week 6: Connect with your academic self**

Connected Learning Internships

- 47 departments proposed 76 Connected Learning projects, appointing a total of 147 student interns to support moving teaching activities online.

UCL Introductory programme

- A programme offering new students an intellectually enriching introduction to degree-level study and UCL, creating a sense of place and belonging before they arrive.



Implications for the future

- Elements of online here to stay
- Investment in electronic infrastructure
- Internships
- Ways we work with departments
- Ways we work across the institution
- Face to face exams?
- Varied assessment