



# UCL

## Collaboration and compassion in a cross-institutional approach to PGR and research staff wellbeing

Dr Rebecca Lindner

## The UCL context

- Over 6,000 postgraduate researchers
- 11 Faculties
- Doctoral School

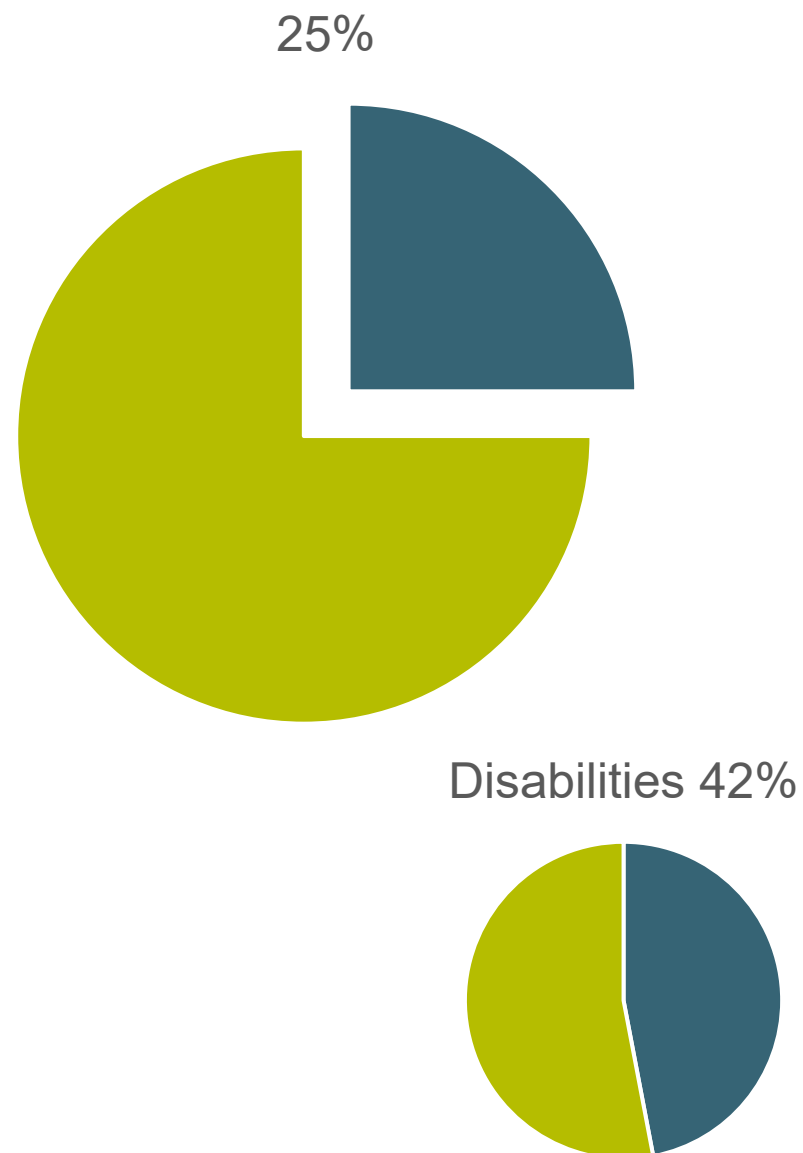
“In the case of wellbeing interventions in higher education, lesson-learning, sharing good practice and building networks around ideas and interventions are all important, but it is also critical to understand factors that shape HE organisations’ abilities to successfully take this knowledge forward and address wellbeing problems.”

Watson & Turnpenny (2022), Interventions, practices and institutional arrangements for supporting PGR mental health and wellbeing: reviewing effectiveness and addressing barriers, [\*Studies in Higher Education\*](#).

# PRES 2021: retention

Have you considered leaving your PGR studies?

- Balancing commitments
- Financial difficulties
- Family/personal
- Physical/health
- Mental/emotional health
- Lack of support
- Lack of connection







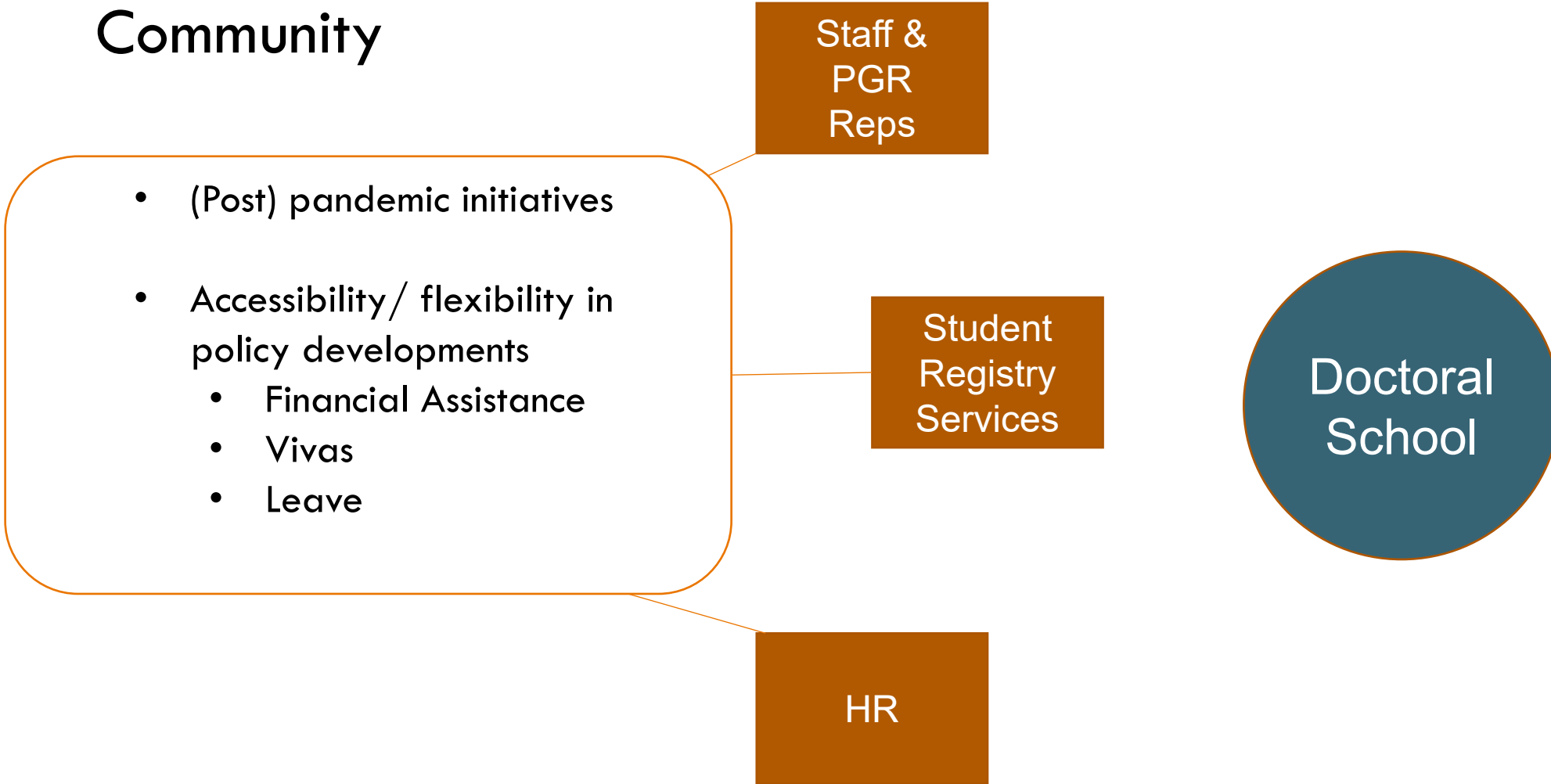
- (Post) pandemic initiatives
- Accessibility/ flexibility
- Policy developments
  - Financial Assistance
  - Leave

- Supervisor training
  - Inclusive Supervisory Practice
  - PGR & Staff MH & Wellbeing
- Thesis Committees
- Code of Conduct

- Welcome & induction
- Coaching & mentoring
- Counselling (EAP)
- Wellbeing Champions
- Mental Health 1st Aiders
- Resource information

- Doctoral Skills Development Programme

# Community



- (Post) pandemic initiatives
- Accessibility/ flexibility in policy developments
  - Financial Assistance
  - Vivas
  - Leave

Staff &  
PGR  
Reps

Student  
Registry  
Services

HR

Doctoral  
School

## Annual leave

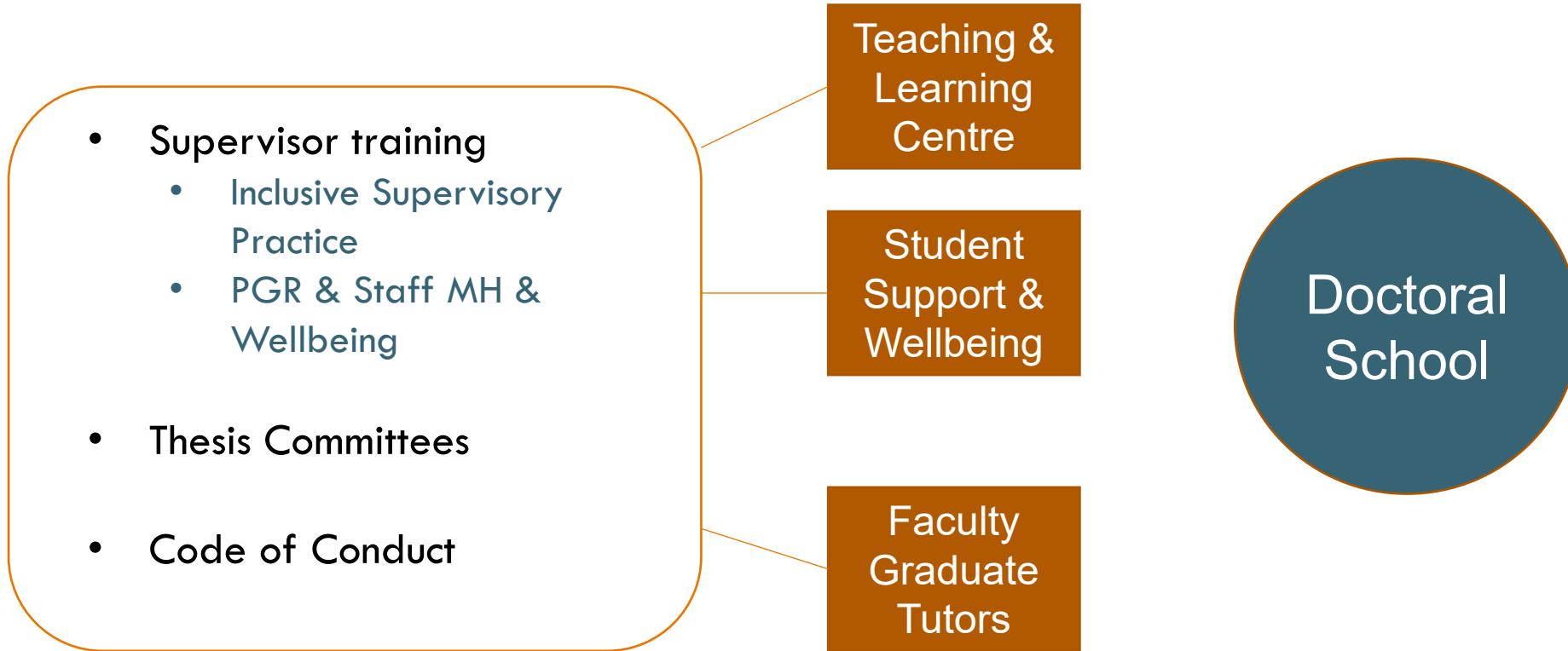
It is important for research students to maintain a healthy work-life balance. As such, we recommend that research students take annual leave in-line with staff entitlements. For a full-time student, this equates to 41 days over the year including 27 days of Annual Leave, 8 Public and Statutory Holidays, and 6 Closure Days. For part-time students these entitlements should be pro-rata. If a student has external funding, they should also ensure they meet the Terms & Conditions of their funder in this regard.

UCL DOCTORAL SCHOOL

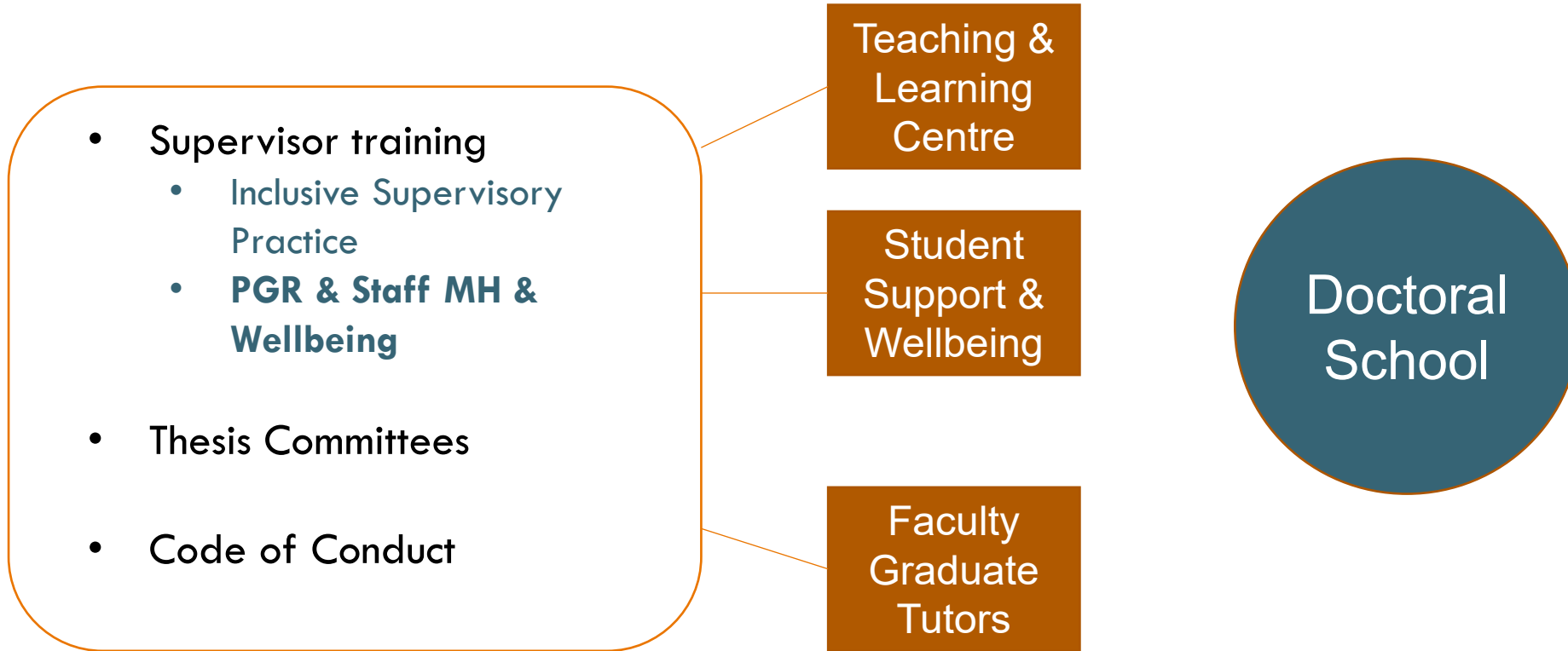


**GRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES**  
CODE OF PRACTICE 2022/23

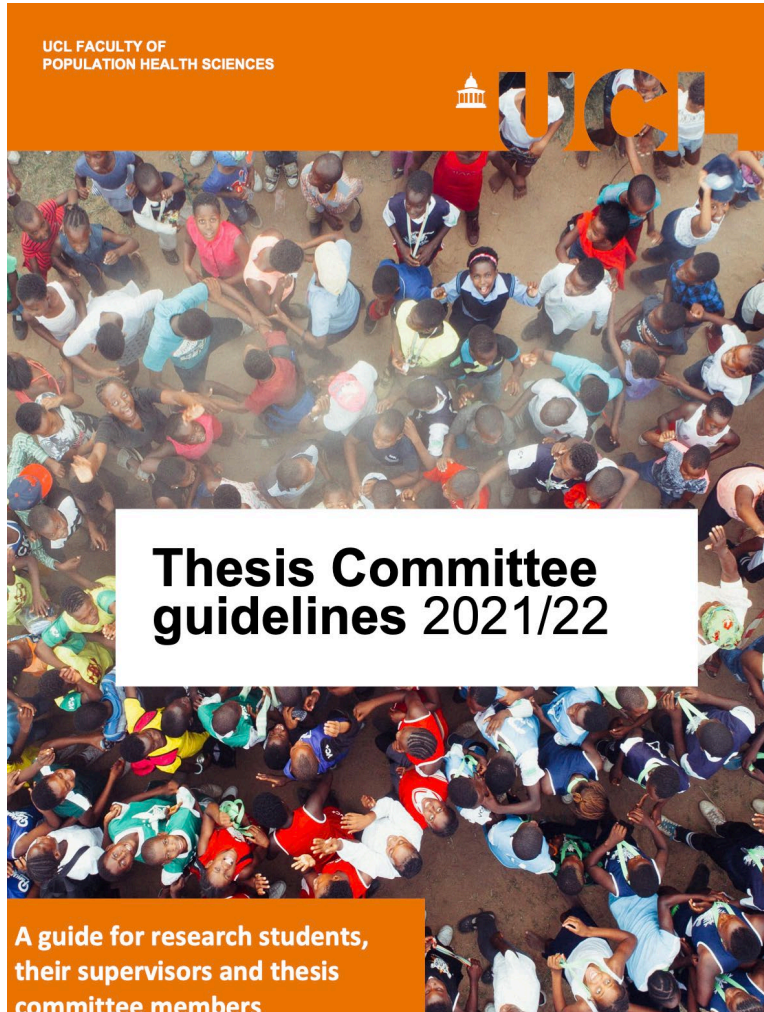
# Supervision



# Supervision



# Thesis committees



## Introduction: Rationale for the Thesis Committee

All newly-registered MPhil/PhD students in LMS are required to have a TC. TCs provide degree-spanning support and advice about academic and training progress for all PhD students. In a sense the TC complements the primary supervisor and DGT, with each sitting at one apex of a common triangle. TCs will provide students with additional academic input, improved institutional networking and more centralised management of their transferable skills training. TCs therefore should provide all PhD students with an enriched degree experience.

The primary role of TC members is to support the Student and Primary Supervisor throughout the Student's PhD programme. Specifically, they will hear reports from the Student periodically on their general academic progress and will feed back supportively on these to the Student and Supervisors. Importantly, they will also be responsible for monitoring a skills training plan (or personal development plan (PDP)) for the Student\*.

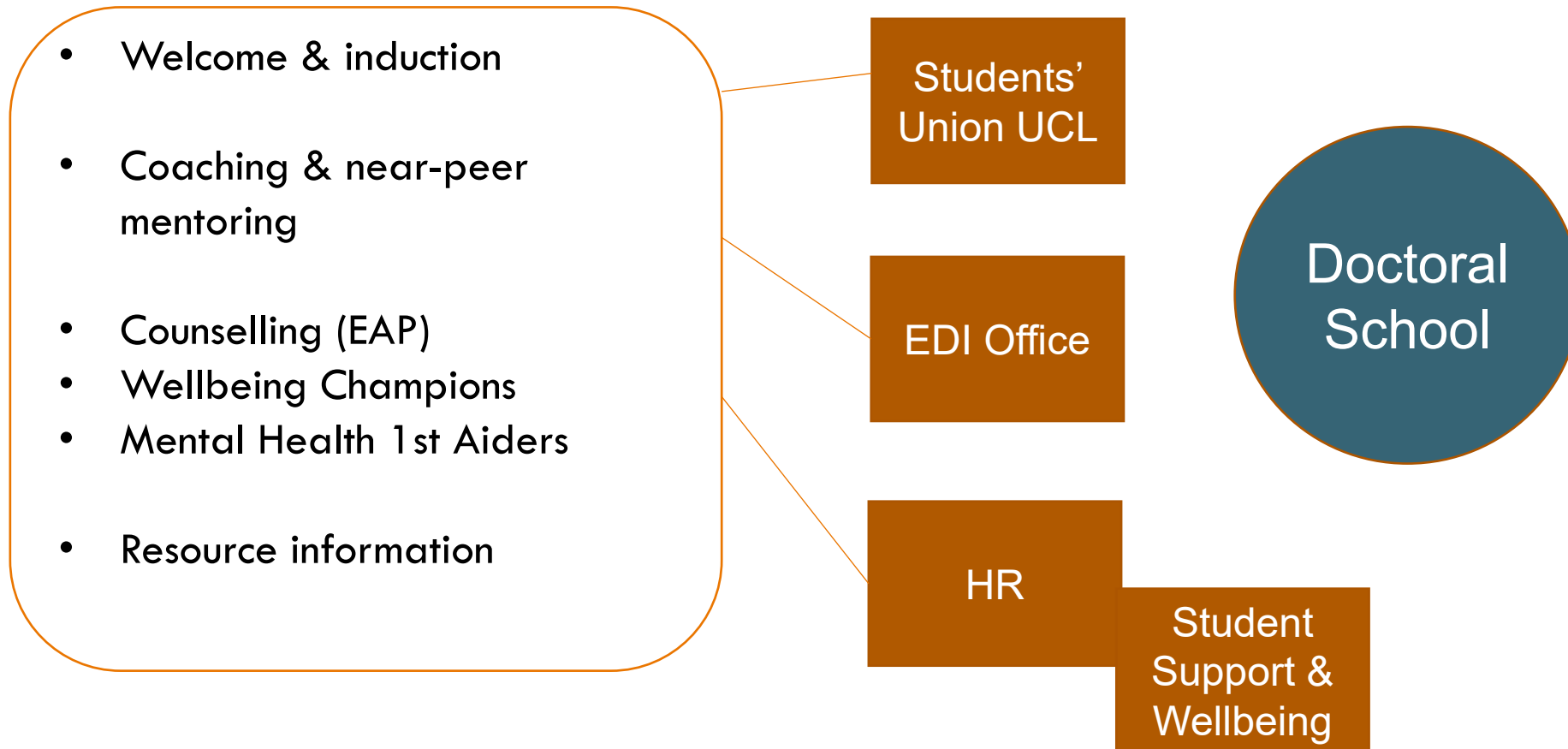
**Importantly, the Primary Supervisor continues as normal to supervise the Student's research project on a day-to-day basis.** The TC aims to support **both** the Student and Primary Supervisor throughout the PhD programme.

*\* The PDP planning and management process for students is currently still under development in 2021 and the TC role here may change in future.*

## Thesis Committee membership

- the TC will be chaired by a senior member of UCL academic staff who must be completely independent of the research project.
- the TC must include the Subsidiary Supervisor
- all other TC members, except the Subsidiary Supervisor, must be independent of the student's research
- the Chair must have either a full or honorary contract with UCL, and must have previous PhD supervisory experience as a Primary Supervisor
- the Chair must not be directly line-managed by either the Primary or Subsidiary Supervisor
- other TC members with relevant academic expertise should preferably be included and could include more junior researchers, such as Research Fellows, as well as Emeritus academics.

# Psychological/ emotional resources



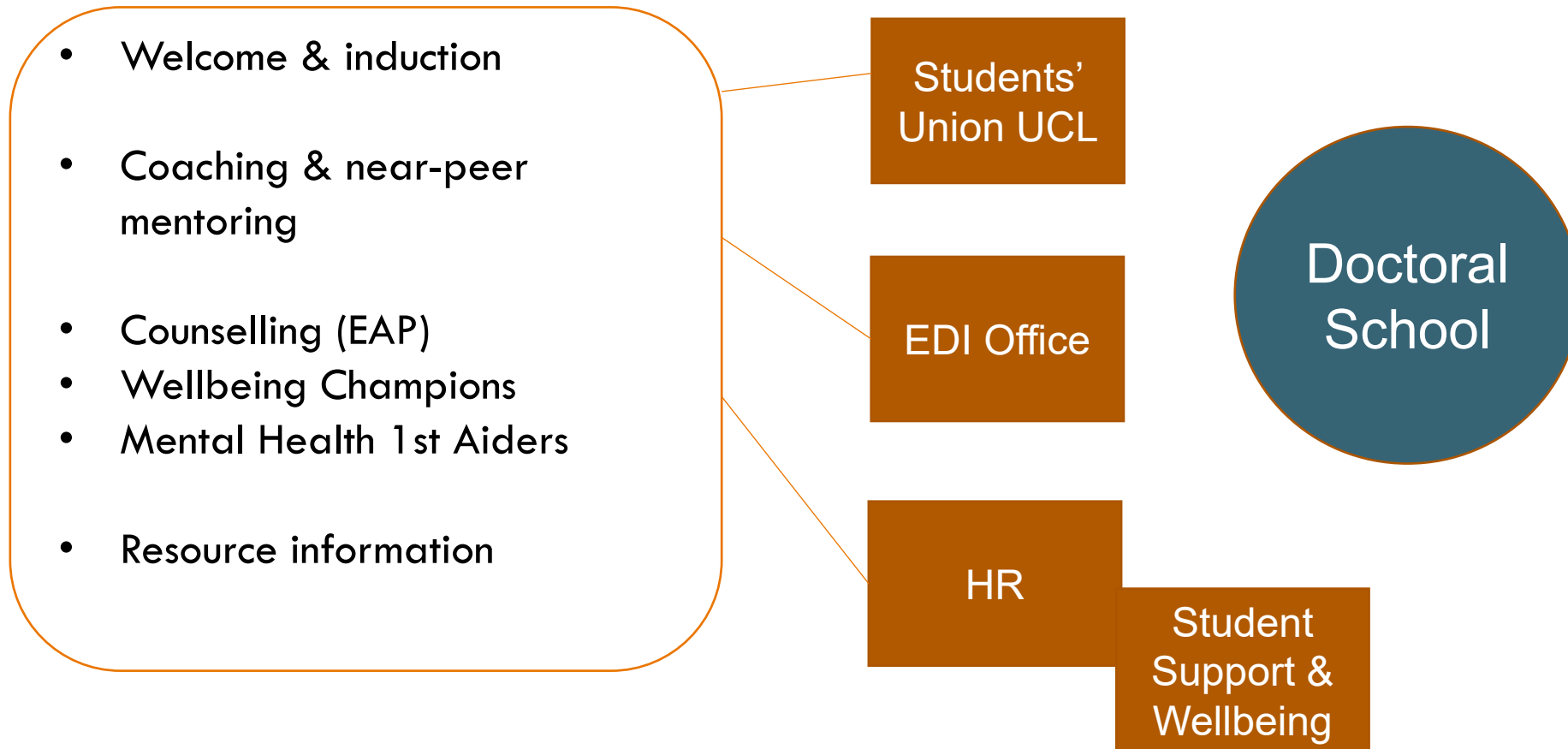
# 5 Principles for Doctoral Inductions



[University of Lincoln](#)

co-designed, evidence-based principles for the design of Doctoral inductions to support researchers' mental health and wellbeing

# Psychological/ emotional resources



# Information and support for specific student groups

There is a range of support at UCL for students from particular groups. Find out more about this here.

Information and support for specific student groups
LGBTQ+ students
Mature students
Students with children
Students who are pregnant or adopting
Care experienced students
Estranged students
Students of faith
Distance learners
Support for BME students

### BME students

We are committed to providing equal opportunities for all including our black, minority ethnic (BME) community.

### Care experienced students

We're committed to supporting young people who have left a care environment and a range of additional support is available.

### Disabled students

Dedicated support and reasonable adjustments for students who are disabled or have a long-term health condition.

### Distance learners

### Estranged students

### LGBTQ+ students

## Support for students affected by war, conflict and natural disaster

Some students may be impacted by events in their home countries, such as war, conflict and natural disaster. These events can be highly distressing for students.

UCL has a dedicated service, a collaboration between Student Support and Wellbeing (SSW), the [Department of Psychology and Language Sciences](#) (PALS), and the [University Clinic](#) aimed at supporting affected students emotionally and practically by offering sessions of Psychological First Aid (PFA).

You can access the team's support by arranging to speak to a [SSW Student Adviser](#).

### I want to...

- [speak to someone about my mental health](#)
- [get disability support](#)
- [access counselling](#)
- [report sexual misconduct, bullying or harassment](#)
- [see what help there is for different issues](#)
- [speak to someone about safety or crime](#)
- [read advice on how to look after myself](#)
- [ask a question](#)
- [get academic support but do not have a disability](#)
- [get urgent help for a mental health crisis](#)
- [access out-of-hours support](#)
- [let someone know that I'm worried about a student](#)
- [get my vaccinations](#)
- [register with a GP \(doctor\)](#)
- [get help for international student issues](#)
- [speak to an adviser from Students' Union UCL](#)
- [get financial support](#)

[Mental health and wellbeing](#)

[Disabled students](#)

[Crisis support](#)

# Being Well at UCL: Staff Mental Health & Wellbeing Plan



## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME:

Spectrum.Life provides

- emotional, in the moment support, 24/7, 365 days a year
- specific and qualified experts including, financial and tax advisers for Financial Wellbeing issues and Parenting Coaches
- extensive wellbeing app providing holistic wellbeing support from recipes, to sleep advice, daily guided meditation to live and on demand exercise classes

# Professional and personal skills



# Doctoral Skills Development Programme

Here you will be able to browse the upcoming courses available for Term 1 (22-23 academic year).

The Doctoral Skills Development Programme (DSDP) is divided into the following four categories.



Engagement influence and impact



Knowledge and intellectual abilities



Research governance and organisation



Personal effectiveness

## 1. Self development as a researcher

Personal development in your PhD journey, time management and wellbeing.

Date:	Course Title:
29 September 2022	<a href="#">The PhD journey: techniques to reduce stress</a>
03 October 2022	<a href="#">Balancing Research and Life</a>
05 October 2022	<a href="#">The PhD journey: maintaining motivation</a>
12 October 2022	<a href="#">Defeating Self-Sabotage</a>
25 October 2022	<a href="#">The PhD journey: start your PhD</a>
31 October 2022	<a href="#">The PhD Journey: 7 methods for common challenges</a>
01 November 2022	<a href="#">The PhD journey: start your PhD</a>
02 November 2022	<a href="#">Moving forward: how to overcome research career setbacks</a>
02 November 2022	<a href="#">The PhD journey: Managing as a researcher</a>
03 November 2022	<a href="#">Time for Research - Taking control of your time</a>
09 November 2022	<a href="#">The PhD journey: Managing as a researcher</a>
15 November 2022	<a href="#">The PhD journey: Managing as a researcher</a>
16 November 2022	<a href="#">Sweet Dreams: Cultivating Strategies for a Restful Sleep</a>
17 November 2022	<a href="#">Action Learning Course for Early Researchers</a>
29 November 2022	<a href="#">Overcoming Low Confidence</a>
29 November 2022	<a href="#">The PhD journey: Troubleshooting 1:1 Clinics</a>
30 November 2022	<a href="#">Balancing competing commitments for academics and researchers</a>
05 December 2022	<a href="#">The PhD journey: start your PhD</a>
07 December 2022	<a href="#">The PhD journey: Managing as a researcher</a>

## Researcher Development Framework

The framework describes the knowledge, behaviour and attributes of successful researchers. For more information, please visit the [Vitae website](#).



## Challenges, questions...

- Partnerships are productive: what would be the most effective way/s to bring these stakeholders together for a more joined-up approach?
- Where is the evidence for the effectiveness of specific approaches? How do we demonstrate impact on PGR and staff wellbeing?
- Are we considering the PGR journey? And how could we embed this work in the pre-doctoral experience (e.g. access and widening participation activities)?