

A PhD programme at UCL

UCL - a top university right at the heart of Europe

www.uclouvain.be/en-doctorat





The university

Multicultural, open and forward-looking

UCL is one of Belgium's and Europe's leading universities. For almost 600 years it has welcomed students from across the world, without regard to their political or religious beliefs. The University strives to be highly multicultural, multilingual, open and tolerant.

- 30,000 students, of whom 20% come from abroad
- 2,000 PhD students, of whom 45% come from abroad
- 1,900 teachers, 3,000 researchers
- 185 Master's programmes in all fields of study
- 22 doctoral schools
- 22 research centres, 25 technology platforms
- 3 science parks, 61 spin-offs
- 150,000 alumni worldwide

Research is in our blood

As a comprehensive university offering a full range of programmes in all disciplines, UCL has research built into its DNA. In its three sectors (Humanities, Science & Technology and Medical), both fundamental and applied research is conducted with the same passion and enthusiasm. An interdisciplinary mindset is cultivated by exchanges between research teams and through a series of collaborative ventures with universities at home and abroad. This tireless pursuit of quality and innovation yields excellent results in terms of project funding, with UCL receiving €200 million in research grants each year.

Belgium

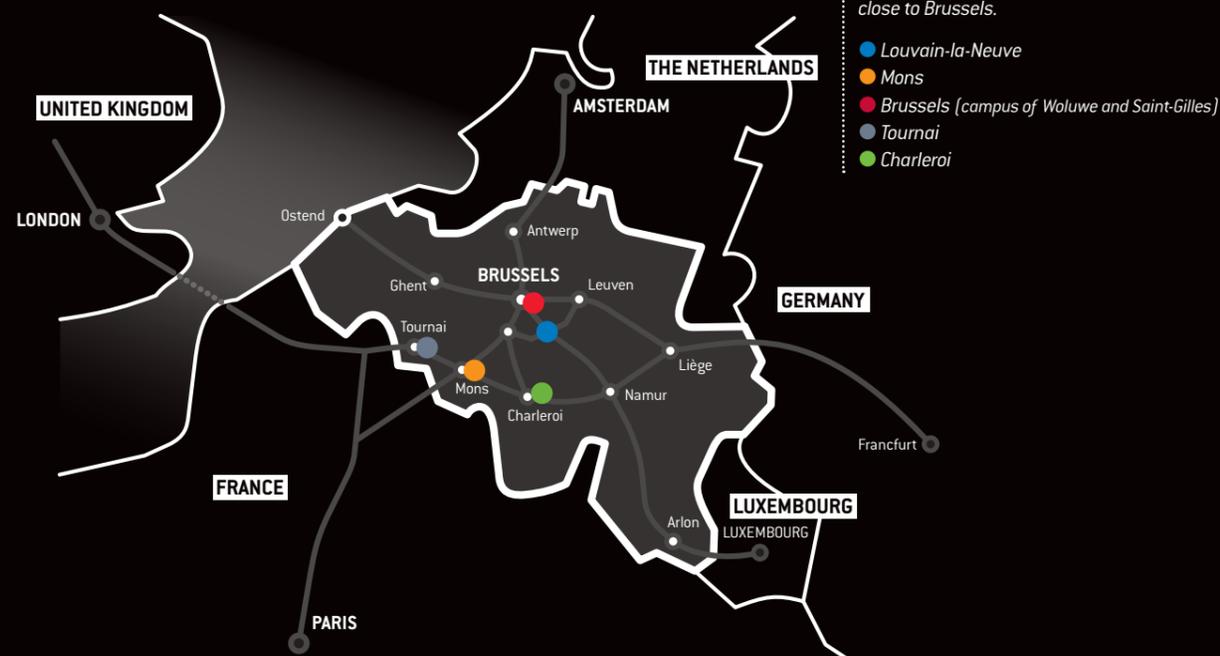
Welcoming with a rich and diverse heritage

Belgium, a small country nestled between France, Germany and the Netherlands, has so much to offer. For one thing, Belgians are welcoming and open to diversity. Visitors soon feel at home here. And then there are its cities of art, its villages, its natural beauty, its museums, its cuisine... and the incredible wealth of culture embodied in a new generation of highly gifted artists, among them filmmakers, choreographers, fashion and other designers, cartoonists, and more.

- 11 million inhabitants
- Three national languages (French, Dutch and German) and widespread use of English
- 70 km of beaches, 700,000 hectares of forest
- 11 historic sites on UNESCO's World Heritage List
- Leading-edge industries in such fields as aeronautics, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, green chemicals and sustainable materials
- One of the most advanced healthcare systems in the world
- Birthplace of Pierre-Paul Rubens, René Magritte, Hergé, Jacques Brel, the Dardenne brothers, Stromae, and many more famous names



UCL has a presence in five Belgian cities. Its main campus is in Louvain-la-Neuve, close to Brussels.



The beating heart of Europe

Europe's home base is in Belgium. Known as the de facto capital of the European Union, Brussels now plays host to most of the European institutions. Situated at the crossroads of the continent's major capitals, the city offers an efficient public transport network to ensure easy access. Paris is 1½ hours away by train, London 2 hours and Frankfurt 3 hours. Belgium is in tune with the EU and its citizens.



Choose UCL for...

Its reputation and international outlook

TRADITION

Founded in 1425, UCL is one of the oldest universities in Europe. Erasmus, Mercator and Vesalius are just some of the famous names who have studied here. UCL has also encouraged many great minds on their way to making breakthrough discoveries: it was here that Georges Lemaître formulated his Big Bang theory and Christian de Duve obtained the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1974. With a rich history spanning almost 600 years, UCL now plays a leading role in the world of learning in Europe.

PARTNERSHIPS

UCL has always embraced a policy of being open to the outside world. This openness is reflected in a large number of partnerships with university institutions around the globe, active participation in European and international networks (such as Erasmus Mundus, the European Joint Doctorate, EUA, Coimbra and the association of French-language universities [AUF]) and a long tradition of cooperation with developing countries. UCL focuses on developing joint degree programmes and joint doctoral programmes. Almost 400 students have opted for a joint doctoral programme over the past 15 years, with more than 100 working on their thesis under joint supervision as of June 2015.

RECOGNITION

UCL is placed high in international rankings. It is the top French-speaking Belgian university in terms of numbers of graduates each year and is ranked:

- 158th in the "world-class universities" group*
- 5th comprehensive French-speaking university in the world**
- Included amongst the world's elite institutions in 25 of the 36 subjects ranked in QS Rankings 2015***
- Three subjects ranked in World's Top 50 (*Statistics & operational Research, Philosophy, Economics & Econometrics*).***
- Twelve subjects ranked in World's Top 100.***
History, Modern Language, Pharmacy & Pharmacology, Psychology, Geography, Mathematics, Development Studies, Law & management, Politics & International Studies (Social Sciences & management)

* Shanghai ranking 2015
** QS and THE rankings 2014
*** QS ranking by subject 2015



Its stimulating working environment

HELP & SUPPORT

UCL attaches particular importance to giving researchers the best possible welcome and support. The University is very much involved in the EURAXESS initiative, which was launched by the European Commission to increase the mobility of researchers and improve their career prospects (www.uclouvain.be/en-euraxess). In 2014 UCL revitalized its full range of services for PhD students under the header "Valo Doc Louvain". These services cover every step of a student's doctoral journey, from looking for a thesis supervisor right through to the degree ceremony. And the University goes even further by offering job-hunting assistance. UCL is one of the first European universities to receive the "HR Excellence in Research" Award

EXPERTISE

For researchers who are just starting out, the first question is often how they will fund their research. Over the past few years, there has been a proliferation in sources of funding and application procedures have become more and more complex. Mindful of this trend, UCL has put together a team of experts within its Research Department, tasked with helping researchers (including PhD students) to identify existing sources and to set up their research projects. Experts are also on hand to advise on research agreements, intellectual property, protection and promotion of research results, etc.

RESOURCES

UCL seeks to create the ideal environment for research. To achieve this objective, each year it adds to the resources available to its researchers. These currently include:

- Technology platforms. These provide a forum for administrative and technical staff to work with state-of-the-art technical and scientific equipment, and are invaluable tools for researchers. There are technology platforms across the University's three sectors. (www.uclouvain.be/en-373687)
- An online research inventory, known as REAL (Research Application Louvain), which contains all research projects conducted at UCL, areas of expertise, publications (including theses) and contact details of researchers. (www.uclouvain.be/real)
- Ten libraries (containing a total of 2.8 million books and 26,000 periodicals) and a digital library. (www.uclouvain.be/bibliotheques)
- Three science parks. The dynamism of its research culture makes UCL a magnet for the business community. More than 220 companies maintain close ties with the University in this way. (www.uclouvain.be/parc)

Its unique living environment

NEW EXPERIENCES

On each of its six campuses, the University offers an environment that is conducive to acquiring new experiences. Studying for a PhD at UCL means meeting new people, discovering new horizons and growing as an individual. It is also an opportunity to take advantage of the wide range of intellectual pursuits available on each campus. Conferences, seminars, lectures and workshops abound by day, while in the evenings the auditoria are a meeting place and a forum for lively debate. UCL never sleeps!

CULTURE

Theatre, cinema, concerts, shows, exhibitions, conferences – cultural activities abound at UCL. This is hardly surprising, as the University invests heavily in culture, each year inviting an artist in residence and organizing a cultural season. And because UCL wants to get its members actively involved in culture, it subsidizes their projects and offers a culture card with a whole range of student benefits.

SPORT

Anyone who loves sport will not be disappointed with what UCL has to offer, as each of its campuses is equipped with high-quality, modern infrastructure. Louvain-la-Neuve has the largest sports centre in French-speaking Belgium, featuring two swimming pools, 3 hectares of outdoor facilities and a vertical climbing wall with a surface area of more than 1,500 m². And with the sports card, everyone who works or studies at UCL has free access to nearly 80 sporting activities organized each week.



UCL is one of the first European universities to receive the "HR Excellence in Research" Award which guarantees researchers high-quality facilities, services and training and working conditions.



Cutting-edge training tailored to the individual

While providing invaluable professional research experience, a PhD is also an opportunity to continue learning. Doctoral students can acquire advanced knowledge of specific subjects by signing up for courses, seminars, workshops, *summer schools*, etc., which are mainly organized by the doctoral schools. They can also learn useful transferable skills in areas such as project management, teaching, technology transfer and spin-offs creation and improve their ability to make science accessible to non-specialists. Gaining a PhD also involves developing qualities and professional skills that will be essential in the employment market.

PHD PROGRAMMES AVAILABLE AT UCL

UCL offers the opportunity to complete a PhD in a wide range of research fields (see below). With very few exceptions, students may choose to undertake their doctoral studies in either French or English.

- **Humanities and Social Sciences.** Philosophy; Theology; Religion Sciences; Languages, Literatures and translation studies; History, Art History and Archeology; Information and Communication; Political and Social Sciences; Law; Criminology; Economics and Business Management; Psychology and Education (including Logopedics et Sexology); Art and Art sciences.
- **Science and Technology.** Sciences (including mathematics, statistics, geography); Agronomy and Bioengineering; Engineering Sciences and Technology, Architecture and Urban Planning, Veterinary Sciences.
- **Health Sciences.** Medical Sciences, Public Health, Dental Sciences, Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences and Motor Skills.

Further information : www.uclouvain.be/en-programme-etudes, "PhD's".

PERSONAL RESEARCH, BUT HELP IS AT HAND

Throughout their studies, PhD students are supported by a team that will help them successfully complete their research project. Heading the team is **the thesis supervisor**, who works closely with the student every step of the way, from admission through to conferral of a degree. If the thesis topic warrants it, there may be more than one supervisor. Alongside the supervisor, **the members of the supervisory panel** will guide and advise PhD students on the direction of their research and help open up networking opportunities for them. Within the **subject-specific doctoral committee (CDD)**, the **PhD Programme Manager** ensures compliance with all legal requirements. Lastly, during the final thesis stages, the **PhD examination board** is responsible for assessing the student's work and conferring a doctoral degree.

Research for the good of all

At UCL, we believe that research is only meaningful when it is in tune with the needs of society and the results can be used. Conducted in a spirit of critical enquiry and reflection, research must drive change and stimulate innovation.

Although researchers prefer to disseminate their work by publishing papers, there are other ways of protecting intellectual property that promote research findings more effectively. With this in mind, UCL set up the *Louvain Technology Transfer Office (LTTO)* in 2011 to foster links between university research and society and to support researchers throughout the knowledge transfer process. (www.uclouvain.be/en-ltto)

But good research also contributes to researchers' own professional development, by promoting their skills to a wider audience. To this end,

the University endeavours to help PhD students develop their career plan. For instance, UCL's Student Advisory Service (CIC) offers an array of career development services at every stage of a PhD, including collective workshops, personal interviews, a document centre, tips and advice sheets, online resources and events. (www.uclouvain.be/cio)

In today's world, having a PhD means using one's expertise and all of one's skills – both subject-specific and transferable – to serve society by addressing the challenges facing us all.



Total immersion in research

Undertaking a PhD is a way to gain unique professional research experience. It is a real adventure, a chance to immerse oneself in a subject and explore it in great depth. It is also a human adventure, often as part of a team with links to the international scientific community. An adventure that may have its highs and lows, but opens up opportunities to interact with people from all sorts of different backgrounds.

HOW RESEARCH IS ORGANIZED AT UCL

At UCL, research is actively centred on the **research institutes**, which implement the research policy in their particular scientific discipline. The University has 22 such institutes (see below). Sometimes an institute may put its policy into action through **research hubs**. Both research institutes and hubs are supported by the **technology platforms** (see page 5). Finally, alongside these facilities, **research centres** bring together members of one or more institutes to work on a joint project.

THE 22 RESEARCH INSTITUTES AT UCL

- **Humanities and Social Sciences:** Institut des Civilisations, Arts et Lettres (INCAL), Institute of Analysis of Change in Contemporary and Historical Societies (IACCHOS), Institut de sciences politiques Louvain-Europe (ISPOLE), Institut Langage et Communication (IL&C), Psychological Sciences Research Institute (IPSy), Institut supérieur de philosophie (ISP), Louvain School of Management Research Institute (ILSM), Institut de recherche Religions, Spiritualités, Culture, Sociétés (RSCS), Institut pour la recherche interdisciplinaire en sciences juridiques (JUR-I).
- **Science and Technology :** Institute of Live Sciences (ISV), Institute of Mechanics, Materials and Civil Engineering (IMMC), Earth and Life Institute (ELI), Institute of Condensed Matter and Nanosciences (IMCN), Institut de recherche en mathématique et physique (IRMP), Information and Communication Technologies, Electronics and Applied Mathematics (ICTM), Faculté d'Architecture, d'Ingénierie architecturale, d'Urbanisme – Recherche (ILOCC).
- **Medical sciences :** Institute of Health and Society (IRSS), Institute of Neuroscience (IoNS), Louvain Drug Research Institute (LDRI), Institute of Experimental and Clinical Research (IREC), de Duve Institute (DDUV).
- **Cross-sector institute:** Institute for Multidisciplinary Research in Quantitative Modelling and Analysis (IMMAQ).

Further information about UCL institutes: www.uclouvain.be/en-208775

The Louvain4: a new approach to research

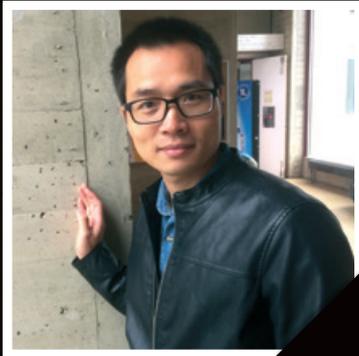
Recognizing that exploring some major social issues demands a more comprehensive, cross-disciplinary approach, UCL launched a new research initiative in 2014, known as "Louvain4". These consortia provide a forum for researchers from the University's three sectors to address topics that are relevant to society today. Six key topics have so far been identified: nutrition, ageing, cities and community life, education, energy and water. For further information, visit www.uclouvain.be/en-louvain4

What they say about UCL



“ During my PhD at UCL, I’ve rubbed shoulders with world-class specialists in my field. I’m going home safe in the knowledge that I’ve built a strong network that will be invaluable in the future. ”

**Kelly (Haïti),
PhD in Science and Technology**



“ Being at UCL is like having a second family. My colleagues really go out of their way to help me. There’s an incredible culture of supporting one another. ”

**Zimin (China),
PhD in Agronomy and Bioengineering**



“ I appreciate the open-mindedness that is such a feature of life at UCL. I have free rein to work on my research and can meet students from all over the world. It makes for a very interesting dynamic. ”

**Svetlana (Russia),
PhD in Philosophy**



“ UCL offers unbeatable value for money: you’re taught by top economists and the fees are more than reasonable! ”

**Guzman (Uruguay),
PhD in Economics and Business Management**



“ As well as doing the scientific training for my PhD, I’m making the most of my time here to learn French. Thanks to UCL’s language courses, I’ll have another string to my bow. ”

**Valérie (The Netherlands),
PhD in Psychology and Education**



The information contained in this booklet is subject to modification. Check online for the latest version.

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