

South Quad Temporary Teaching Facility

Additional Justification Statement for - "Retention of temporary teaching structure for a period of 5 years."

The approach underpinning the UCL Estates 2050 Vision (formerly Estates Masterplan), particularly in Bloomsbury, focuses on three core objectives: unlock, transform, and consolidate. As outlined in the planning application and justification statement submitted in September 2024, UCL's Bloomsbury estate faces significant pressures. Addressing these issues is central to achieving a balanced and efficient use of the estate. Through our utilisation analysis, we are identifying underutilisation and inefficiencies which will enable the repurposing of spaces to meet current and future needs effectively. This work is closely linked with the review of the institution's space standards and design policies which is expected to develop across 2025 and beyond.

Recent collaboration with a higher education specialist consultancy has highlighted that UCL has one of the lowest proportions of teaching space within its estate compared to peer institutions. This has resulted in a high-level identified deficit of approximately 10,000 to 15,000 sqm (net) of suitable teaching space. Addressing this shortfall is a priority of the 2050 Vision as UCL seeks to optimise and expand its facilities to support teaching and learning as well as student growth. Unlocking and transforming key areas within the Bloomsbury campus is an essential first step in addressing this challenge.

Proposed Developments to Deliver Additional Teaching Space

1) Dr Williams Library

Following UCL's acquisition of the Dr Williams Library in early 2024, feasibility studies are underway to determine its optimal use (currently RIBA stage 2). This 3,000 sqm site presents a potential opportunity for some additional teaching space. *Subject to planning consents, governance and funding*, a full refurbishment and reopening of the site is anticipated ahead of 2030.

2) Grays Inn Road Development

UCL is in the early feasibility stages (RIBA 0-2) of developing Plots 2 and 3 at Grays Inn Road (the basement has already been built). The completion date of the project is yet to be determined but could be ahead of 2030 (*subject to governance and funding*). This project could deliver approximately 12,000 sqm of new facilities, including in the region of 3,000 sqm of large, flexible teaching space. Additionally, this development will enable the colocation of select departments from Bloomsbury, freeing up non-specialist teaching space within the core campus.

3) University-Wide Shared Teaching Block

A long-term aspiration resulting from the extensive consultation during the 2050 Vision engagement period is the creation of a university-wide shared teaching block in Bloomsbury. Teaching activities are currently dispersed across approximately 140 locations, leading to inefficiencies. A centralised, flexible teaching facility would address this fragmentation through consolidation. Transformational projects are key to rebalancing the estate, for which further development and phasing play a key role and UCL has commenced the process of assessing the development opportunity of key sites, and how UCL East would enable us to speed up decant.

Over the next five years, UCL will set out to implement incremental yet impactful changes to enhance the campus experience. Key initiatives include enhancing the public realm by reactivating underused external areas, and improving wayfinding to better support navigation, people flow and campus permeability.

Achieving these aspirations requires removing the South Quad pop up at the earliest possible opportunity and within the temporary planning consent period of 5 years.