



UCL

Participant Information Sheet for all UCL students

UCL Research Ethics Committee Approval ID Number: 8227/002

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Title of Study: Student mENtal health SurvEy (SENSE): Understanding the wellbeing and mental health of students

Department: Division of Psychiatry; Division of Psychology and Language Sciences

Name and Contact Details of the Researchers:

Tayla McCloud (t.mccloud@ucl.ac.uk); Dr Laura Gibbon (l.gibbon@ucl.ac.uk); Phoebe Barnett (phoebe.barnett@ucl.ac.uk); General study email (SENSEstudy@ucl.ac.uk)

Name and contact details of the Principal Researchers:

Professor Glyn Lewis, Professor of Epidemiological Psychiatry, Head of the Division of Psychiatry (glyn.lewis@ucl.ac.uk/ 0207 679 9253)

Professor Peter Fonagy, Head of the Division of Psychology and Language Sciences (p.fonagy@ucl.ac.uk/ 0207 679 1474)

Professor Steve Pilling, Head of the Research Department of Clinical, Educational and Health Psychology (s.pilling@ucl.ac.uk/ 020 7679 1784)

1. What is the project's purpose?

Over the last decade, the number of students reporting a mental health problem has increased dramatically. Whilst the main risk factors for the most common mental health problems are well known in the general population, it is also important to investigate these in the student population. In addition, the life of a university student presents its own unique challenges which may affect mental health and wellbeing.

To understand how best to provide support for students, we need to investigate factors that might affect students' wellbeing and mental health, and estimate how many students experience mental health problems. In particular, we want to understand:

- How common mental health problems are in UCL students
- What factors might increase risk of mental health problems in students
- How students seek help for their mental health
- How wellbeing and mental health change throughout the academic year and over time.

The study team are students and researchers at UCL. The core study team are independent of UCL senior management, which means we will not share your individual data with the University Registry, your department, or anyone else at UCL outside the study team. The main findings and conclusions from this research will be published and communicated to organisations such as the UCL Union and NUS, and relevant UCL departments. In this way, we hope this research will influence UCL senior management to make changes to improve students' wellbeing and mental health, including improvements in the UCL Student Support and Wellbeing services.

2. Why have I been chosen?

Every UCL student has been invited via email to take part in this study. Any UCL student over the age of 18 years who decides to complete the survey can take part. No particular students are being directly approached or targeted.

You can participate in the study if:

- You are a student enrolled on any type of course at UCL – including undergraduate, masters taught, masters research, PhD, professional doctorate, pre-sessional and affiliate students.
- You are at least 18 years old.

You do not need to have experienced mental health difficulties to take part. We would like to hear from as many students as possible, with a range of experiences.

3. What will happen to me if I take part?

Online survey – term 1

If you consent to take part in this study, you will go through to the online student wellbeing and mental health survey. This should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The survey includes questions about your mental health and other related factors such as finances, workload and accommodation, among others. There will be some questions on whether you have recently harmed yourself or thought about harming yourself.

The only mandatory data you will be asked for is your email address. No other questions are compulsory, so you can leave out any questions you do not wish to answer. We will not ask for your name.

Follow-up surveys – one per term

Our study will last for one calendar year, and we will be asking the same students to take part in the survey several times throughout the year to see how wellbeing and mental health changes over time. By taking part in this survey once you are under no obligation to complete it again in the future.

Linking the survey data with UCL Registry data

To address our research questions (see section 2), we need to collect demographic information and details about your course. To keep the survey as short as possible, we want to access the demographic information you have already provided to UCL. So that we can do this, you will be asked whether you consent to us accessing your data held by the UCL Registry. We will then need your Student ID number.

If you *do* consent to us accessing your Registry data, **none of your individual data or survey responses will be shared with UCL**. You can withdraw your consent at a later date if you change your mind, up until the end of the study (February 2021).

If you *do not* consent to us collecting this information from the UCL Registry, you will be asked to complete some questions about your demographics and course at the end of the main survey. As with the rest of the survey, these questions will not be mandatory.

This Registry data we will receive does not include your name. It covers routine data collected by the registry office from students on enrolment and includes (if completed):

- For everyone: Date of birth; Sex; Gender identity; Ethnicity; Sexuality; Religion; Domicile country/region; Nationality; Fee status (UK/EU/Overseas); Year of study or start date; Campus/distance learning; Mode of study; Academic programme; Academic level (e.g. undergraduate); Duration of programme; Faculty; Department; Accommodation type; Disability status.
- For UK students only: Parental occupation; Parental higher education; POLAR classification group (the proportion of 18 year olds from your home area who enter higher education); State/Independent schooling; Domicile UK region.

If you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to contact us via email to SENSEstudy@ucl.ac.uk.

4. Do I have to take part?

It is completely up to you whether you take part in this study. If you do decide to take part, we will ask you to indicate your consent to take part in this study in the online consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, without this impacting your studies or any care or support you receive.

You can stop completing the survey at any time. When discontinuing the online survey, your answers will be saved automatically up until the point you stop the survey, so that you can return to finish the survey later if you would like to. If you wish for your responses to be deleted, then you can request this by email to the study email address (SENSEstudy@ucl.ac.uk) at any time up until the end of the study (February 2021).

If you complete the survey in term 1, you will be invited to complete additional surveys once per term over the next year. This is so we can track how student wellbeing and mental health changes over the academic year. If you would like to withdraw from the follow-up time points, you can request this by email to the study email address (SENSEstudy@ucl.ac.uk) at any time without giving a reason.

5. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Whilst we have consulted with students throughout the process of designing this survey, it is possible that you may feel discomfort or distress as a result of being asked questions about your mental health and related factors. You can exit the survey at any time. There is also a range of support available if you want help with your wellbeing and mental health:

- *UCL Student Support and Wellbeing*: a team of expert wellbeing, disability and mental health advisers within UCL (visit <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/student-support-and-wellbeing>).
- *UCL Student Psychological and Counselling Services*: a free service providing short-term counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy, psychiatric support and psycho-educational

groups (visit <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/student-psychological-and-counselling-services>).

- *UCL Student Funding Advisors*: confidential financial support, advice and guidance for UCL students struggling with money management or complex funding issues. (email studentfundingwelfare@ucl.ac.uk or visit <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/funding/financial-support/welfare-adviser>).
- *Care First*: counselling support available by telephone or online (instant messaging) out of hours - during UCL closure, weekends, bank holidays and overnight (call 0800 197 4510 or visit <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/evening-and-weekend-support>).
- *Samaritans*: a free, 24-hour confidential listening and support service for people experiencing feelings of distress (call 116 123).
- *Nightline*: a confidential listening, support and practical information service for students by students, open 6pm to 8am every night of term (call 0207 631 0101, text 07717 989 900, or email listening@nightline.org.uk).
- *Papyrus Hopeline*: Provides information and support for anyone under 35 who is struggling with suicidal feelings, or anyone concerned about a young person who might be struggling, open weekdays 10am-10pm and weekends 2pm-10pm (call 0800 068 4141 or text 07786 209 697).
- *iCope*: A confidential NHS psychological therapy service for those over 18 registered with a Camden, Islington or Kingston GP. Find more information and request an appointment here: <https://www.icope.nhs.uk/camden-islington/>.

If you feel like you need further support with your mental health you can discuss this with your GP. If you feel at risk of harming yourself, please discuss this with your GP, or go to a hospital A&E department.

6. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

This work will contribute to knowledge in this important area, adding to our understanding of what affects the wellbeing and mental health of students, and potentially improving the support provided to students at UCL and other universities. However, there is no direct compensation for taking part.

7. What if something goes wrong?

Any serious adverse events should be reported to the Principal Researcher, Professor Glyn Lewis (glyn.lewis@ucl.ac.uk/ 0207 679 9253). If participants wish to raise a complaint regarding their treatment by the study researchers, they can do so by contacting the Principal Researcher (Prof Glyn Lewis; glyn.lewis@ucl.ac.uk). If participants feel their complaint has not been handled to their satisfaction, they can contact the Chair of the UCL Research Ethics Committee by email (ethics@ucl.ac.uk).

8. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential, and all efforts will be made to ensure that you cannot be identified. Your responses will not be passed on to any third parties and this includes your academic department, UCL student support services and your GP. Individuals will not be able to be identified in any resulting reports or publications. There are no limits to this confidentiality.

If you take part in the study, you will be automatically assigned a study ID number. Your survey responses and data from the UCL Registry will be linked to this study ID number only. Your student ID number and email address will not be stored with your survey responses. A file with your Student ID number, email address and study ID number will be stored separately from the study data, encrypted, password-protected and on a secure UCL server.

All data will be collected and stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), 2018. Only the researchers involved in this study will have access to your pseudonymised survey answers. These will not be shared with any third parties, as above.

9. What will happen to the results of the research project?

The researchers will write up the results as part of their PhD theses, to be submitted in September 2021 (TM) and September 2023 (PB). These findings will also be disseminated more widely through published peer-reviewed journal articles and presentations at conferences before this time and afterwards. Participants will be able to obtain copies of any publications which are produced as part of this project by emailing the study email address (SENSEstudy@ucl.ac.uk), and will find dissemination updates on the study website (www.sensestudy.co.uk).

The results of this study will be disseminated to UCL senior management and student support services, and may also be disseminated to national policy organisations, such as NUS, Universities UK and the Office for Students. It will not be possible to identify any individuals from any of these reports or publications as only summary data will be presented.

The pseudonymised data collected during the course of the project might be used for additional or subsequent research (e.g. looking at whether the wellbeing and mental health of students at UCL changes over time, or as a comparator for future research in other universities) by the wider UCL SENSE study team and other affiliated individuals. All data gathered in this study will be stored securely and pseudonymously (identified by a study ID number only) throughout. Pseudonymised data will be stored on secure UCL servers until the end of the main study (September 2021) and potential additional follow-up period (September 2026), after which time it will be anonymised and archived.

10. Local Data Protection Privacy Notice

The controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Officer provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk. This 'local' privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this particular study. Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found in our 'general' privacy notice [here](#). The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the 'local' and 'general' privacy notices.

The categories of mandatory personal data used will be email address. The categories of non-mandatory personal data will be demographic characteristics from the linked registry data (optional) and survey questions, and self-reported mental health diagnoses, treatment and symptoms. The demographic characteristics requested include special category personal data such as ethnicity, sexual orientation and religious beliefs.

The lawful basis that would be used to process your *personal data* will be performance of a task in the public interest. The lawful basis used to process *special category personal data* will be for scientific and historical research or statistical purposes. Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project – up to September 2026. For the duration of the project, we will pseudonymise the personal data you provide using study IDs. We will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible. At the end of the project, data will be fully anonymised. Anonymised data will be retained for up to 20 years after the project is complete, as it may be used as a comparison for future studies (e.g. to determine whether student mental health at UCL changes).

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk.

11. Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is organised and funded by University College London (UCL).

12. Contact for further information

If you have any further questions, please contact one of the researchers:

- General study team:
 - Email: SENSEstudy@ucl.ac.uk
- Dr Laura Gibbon (Teaching Fellow and Clinical Psychologist):
 - Email: l.gibbon@ucl.ac.uk
 - Tel.: 020 7679 5997
- Miss Tayla McCloud (PhD student)
 - Email: t.mccloud@ucl.ac.uk
 - Tel.: 020 3108 7765

You can also visit the SENSE website (www.sensestudy.co.uk) for more information.

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering to take part in this research study. Please save a copy of this PDF for your records. You will also be able to access this Participant Information Sheet at any time on the SENSE website (www.sensestudy.co.uk) or by emailing the study email address (SENSEstudy@ucl.ac.uk).