

University of London
DEGREES WORLDWIDE

Ensuring
**QUALITY AND
STANDARDS**



**UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON**

INTRODUCTION

The University of London was the first university in the UK to open higher education to all, regardless of religion; and the first to admit women.

Nearly 200 years later, we remain committed to promoting education opportunities globally and making the transformative power of education accessible to hundreds of thousands of individuals in more than 180 countries.

Our mission is to:

- widen access to University of London qualifications
- ensure an appropriate student experience
- deliver programmes that equip students for employment.

Graduates have gone on to win Nobel Prizes; and many thousands occupy roles in the fields of management, economics, business, technology, law, education and diplomacy.

We have produced this booklet for government and professional bodies, regulators and other stakeholders.

From the perspective of University of London Worldwide (the central academic body overseeing the University's provision by blended, flexible and online learning), it describes how the University works with its member institutions, our engagement with independent teaching centres around the world, and the frameworks and mechanisms that assure quality and standards for our programmes.



FACTS

- The University of London is a federation of 17 member institutions, with some world-renowned universities among their number.
- The University is one of the world's oldest providers of transnational education, and has been educating students at a distance since the mid nineteenth century.
- It partners with its member institutions to offer at-scale, affordable, accessible, high quality education to learners all over the globe.
- The University has approximately 120,000 students on campus in London, and a further 50,000 undertaking their studies through distance learning.
- Staffing, systems and processes are all established expressly for supporting students at a distance.
- Supplementary local tuition is available for many programmes through a global network of some 120 independent Teaching Centres – a unique model for enhanced learner support and access that has been refined over decades.

HOW THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON WORKS

The University of London is one of the world's leading universities, internationally recognised for its high academic standards.

This reputation is based on the outstanding teaching and research of our 17 member institutions. The majority of programmes offered through the University of London are developed by our member institutions, which are also responsible for preparing study materials and assessing all of our programmes (the academic direction).



UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

A federation of

17 independent member institutions and

3 central academic bodies



UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
WORLDWIDE

A central academic body in collaboration with

11 of the member institutions



Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

KING'S
College
LONDON



Queen Mary
University of London

SOAS
University of London

LSE THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

RVC **Royal Veterinary College**
University of London

UCL

STUDYING FOR UNIVERSITY OF LONDON QUALIFICATIONS

There are three ways to study towards a degree with the University of London:

- on campus, at one of the member institutions of the University
- studying independently via online, flexible and blended learning
- studying at one of our network of teaching centres worldwide.

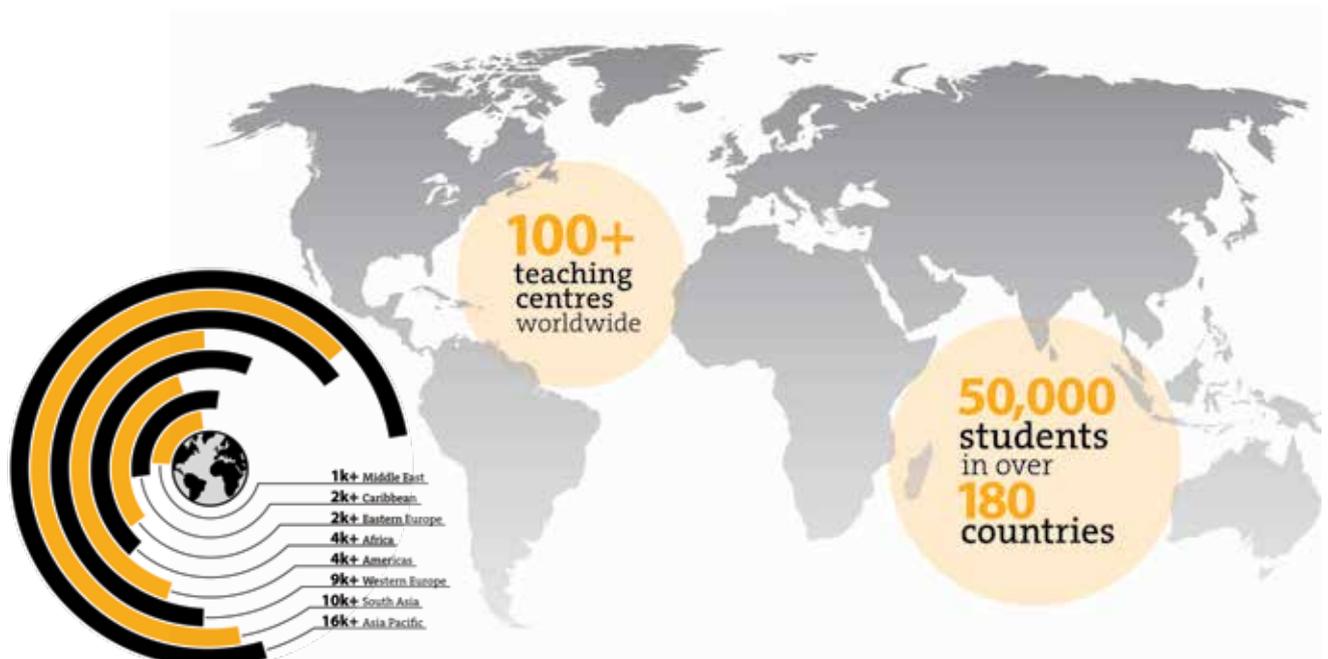
Whatever study experience our students choose, the University of London makes no distinction in the ultimate standard of the award, which is the same, irrespective of how students study.

We have over 50,000 students in 180 countries* preparing for examination towards more than 200 University of London qualifications.

The programmes of study have many common characteristics:

- international curriculum, providing expertise in a wide range of subjects
- learning materials specially produced for distance and flexible learning, that encourage independent, critical and creative
- flexibility – students may study on a full or part-time basis, and sit examinations in almost all countries worldwide
- assessment standards that have earned the trust and confidence of employers and regulators
- students can choose to study at one of our Recognised Teaching Centres in over 50 countries; or study independently
- employment prospects in law, business, politics, education, IT and other businesses.

*all figures accurate as of March 2019



THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON AWARD

The University and its member institutions are legally distinct entities that collaborate federally under the statutes, ordinances and regulations of the University of London.

The business, administrative and development support for online, flexible and blended provision is provided by University of London Worldwide (a central academic body of the University).

Throughout our long history, the final University of London award has been underpinned by consistent and robustly applied quality and standards.

The University of London degree is valued for its standards and reputation, its graduates benefitting from:

- the consistent reputation of University of London for assessment and quality
- comprehensive learning materials using the latest developments in learning and teaching and distance learning pedagogy

- the collaboration with our elite member institutions, providing excellence in learning and teaching
- the focus on employability outcomes driving continuous enhancement in our student experience
- extensive external scrutiny that ensure standards are consistent with best practice across the UK HE sector as well as in specialist areas of programme accreditation.

FACT

- A number of major universities originated as university colleges teaching 'external' degrees of the University of London (including the Universities of Liverpool, Birmingham, Bristol, Sheffield, Nottingham, Exeter, Leicester).

SCHEMES OF SPECIAL RELATION

Between 1946 and 1970, the University also entered into 'schemes of special relation' with university colleges across the Commonwealth of Nations, encouraging the development of independent universities through a relationship with the University of London. These include the Universities of the West Indies, Ibadan, Zimbabwe, Nairobi and East Africa.

These schemes were phased out in 1970, but many of these, and other, institutions continue to engage with the University, to benchmark their own provision, develop their staff, and offer their students access to the world class awards of the University of London.



SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

The member institutions of the University, including LSE, UCL, King’s College London and others, provide the academic direction for most of the degrees we offer. This includes setting the curriculum and assessment and assuring the quality of the learning and teaching materials.

The University of London provides all learning and teaching materials; and all assessment is set and marked by academics selected by member institutions and appointed by the University.

Some programmes draw solely on academic input from the University of London, and are delivered without an academic lead by a member institution. However the majority of University of London qualifications studied via online, blended and flexible learning are the product of a collaboration between University of London and member institutions of the University.

The table below outlines the respective roles of the member institutions and the University of London for new programme development and delivery.

RESPONSIBILITY	TASKS
Member Institutions (eg. LSE, UCL)	Academic leadership including appointing a programme director; designing the curriculum; develop and maintain the academic content including specify reading lists, and other academic learning materials to support student learning; ensure appropriate online support
	Designing assessment
	Examiner nomination and Examination Board attendance
	Participate in programme governance and quality assurance processes
	Support the recruitment of independent teaching centres, if relevant; and inducting their tutors
	Support marketing activity
University of London	Student lifecycle management (student acquisition, enquiry handling, application and registration, payment processing)
	Independent teaching centre recruitment and relationship management
	Learning materials production, editing publication and online publishing
	Learning technology software hosting
	Student services and student experience support
	Managing student data
	Examination administration, certificate issuing
	Quality assurance oversight
	Examiner appointment and payment
	Graduation
Alumni relations	

EMPLOYABILITY

University of London qualifications are valued by employers.

- Graduates benefit from the rigour and relevance of our degrees, ensuring that nearly 85 per cent are in employment or further study six months after graduating.
- New programme development is informed by analysis of labour market needs and demand.
- Accreditation and professional certification is available for certain qualifications, enabling students to gain membership of leading professional bodies, on top of their University of London awards.
- Supported with online resources and study materials, students have the opportunity to balance their studies with work, and maintain career momentum.
- The emphasis is on high quality academic learning but always with a practical, job-relevant focus. The study experience ensures graduates are equipped with skills and qualities valued by employers – resilience, motivation, organisation, discipline and commitment to personal development.



[The] programme was perfect for me because it allowed me to work on my studies at my own pace. The platform and the format of the course enabled me to schedule studying anywhere and anytime. In a rapidly changing economy, I found the arsenal of skills and techniques that I gained through my masters, immensely useful. It helped me adapt and keep pace in an ever-changing landscape. It essentially helped me to learn about learning.

**MSc Professional Accountancy student,
Rashika Fernando, Canada**

SURVEYING RECENT GRADUATES:

85 per cent of graduates were in work or study six months after finishing their degree. Moreover, 84 per cent of those working were in professional level employment.

University of London graduates are found in range of sectors: professional, scientific and technical careers attract over a quarter, with 14 per cent in financial services, 10 per cent in healthcare, 10 per cent in education and 10 per cent ICT. A further 15 per cent of graduates enter careers in public administration and manufacturing roles.

90 per cent of our postgraduates consider their career progression has been helped by a University of London qualification, and 88 per cent report improved credibility and standing in the workplace.

The University of London's online careers and employability resources, and commitment to enhancing student employability were recognised at UK National Undergraduate Employability (NUE) Awards 2019.

Growing numbers of students are being supported into business placement opportunities in high-value organisations across the South Asia and ASEAN regions, with additional placement opportunities being developed in other regions.

Alumni mentoring enhances the student experience, fosters career connections, and aids in the development of professional skills and expectations.







ASSURING EQUIVALENCE

The University of London and its member institutions are committed to the maintenance of the quality and standards of the University of London's transnational provision, and to the widening of educational opportunity worldwide.

Our awards carry the same standards as those awarded by University of London to graduates who have studied on campus in London.

With the reputations of the University and its constituent institutions at stake, quality assurance mechanisms are long established, and continuously developed and enhanced.

To reinforce equivalence with on-campus delivery:

- all learning materials are written, and all assessments are set and marked, by academic staff appointed by the University and required to apply the University's academic standards
- all University of London qualifications align with the UK's National Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies
- the University is registered with the Office for Students (OfS), on whose behalf the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is responsible for assessing the University's quality and standards; in QAA's latest published report University of London was awarded the highest judgement of 'Confidence'.

Quality and standards at the University of London are underpinned by the rigour of assessment; embodied in the quality of student experience and associated learning outcomes; and underpinned by appropriate monitoring and approval procedures, including extensive external scrutiny and student engagement.

Mechanisms in place to assure the standards of all University of London qualifications and the quality of its student experience include:

- annual programme reports
- independent External Examiners, external critique and student input
- annual student information statistics
- periodic Programme Reviews.

Processes for programme approval, assurance, thematic review and risk management are maintained and shaped by robust structures of governance and accountability. These include the Board of Trustees, Collegiate Council, Board of University of London Worldwide and subordinate committees, such as the Teaching Centres Committee, which oversees the award, monitoring and review of University of London Recognised Teaching Centre status (see page 19).

The policies, partnerships (where applicable) and quality assurance mechanisms applicable for our programmes are defined in the following key documents:

- the Quality Assurance Schedules
bit.ly/quality-schedules
- Guidelines for Examinations
bit.ly/support-examiners
- General Regulations
bit.ly/general-regs
- and, for each programme, programme specification and regulations
london.ac.uk/courses



GOVERNANCE

The Board of the University of London Worldwide is the principal decision-making committee. It is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and reports to the University's Collegiate Council.

The Collegiate Council has overall responsibility for the academic affairs of the University and sets the University's regulations.

Academic matters, including the determination of academic policy, are dealt with by the Academic Committee, chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (International) and reporting to the Board of University of London Worldwide.

Academic Committee has seven subsidiary committees which each have membership from the member institutions and make recommendations to their parent committee. Chairs of the committees are members of the Academic Committee.

The principal committees are:

- the Quality, Learning and Teaching Committee, which ensures alignment of policies and procedures relating to learning, teaching and assessment with the relevant University and regulatory frameworks. It monitors learning opportunities for students, including considering new programme proposals, the outcomes and actions of annual monitoring, periodic review and external examining
- the Teaching Centres Committee, which develops and maintains policy in relation to Recognised Teaching Centres, and monitors application of quality mechanisms to assure the student experience and student outcomes at such centres
- a Subject Committee which oversees academic direction of Undergraduate Laws and a Programmes Board, which maintains appropriate academic standards for smaller programmes such as the International Foundation Programme (IFP), programmes in Divinity and Theology, and the PG Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education.



ACCESS TO AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED QUALIFICATION

An important part of the University of London's mission is 'to provide worldwide access to the programmes and awards of the University of London and its Colleges'.

The University's student body includes students in poorer and developing countries, mature learners, those with special needs due to disability, geographic, economic, environmental, professional and social factors, and those with limited educational opportunities.

The University enables access through:

- flexibility in terms of periods of registration and intensity of study
- admissions criteria based on minimum academic prerequisites rather than any quota-based system
- ability to deliver resources and provide examinations whatever the student's location
- student choice over whether to access supplementary learning support from a Recognised Teaching Centre.

PATHWAYS TO HIGHER LEARNING

The University's International Foundation Programme (IFP), and Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) qualifications provide entry to undergraduate degrees for students who do not satisfy General Entrance Requirements. In view of the entry qualifications of students, the IFP and CertHE may only be studied through full time attendance at designated Recognised Teaching Centre.

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION PROGRAMME (IFP)

The University of London also has a history of involvement in secondary education. The IFP was established in 2012 to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed at university-level study. In the relatively few years it has been operating, the IFP has provided a foundation for students around the world to pursue offers with universities both in the UK and internationally.

The IFP is taught full time at selected University of London Recognised Teaching Centres around the world. All final examinations are marked and verified in London.

STUDENT AFFAIRS

Established in 2012, in response to publication of the QAA UK Quality Code's chapter on Student Engagement, the Student Affairs team is responsible for identifying mechanisms and enabling a culture where students participate in quality enhancement and quality assurance processes, with the goal of improving the educational experience.

The Student Affairs Team manages policy and casework for appeals and complaints, academic misconduct, student disciplinary matters and the administrative rechecks of results.

The team is responsible for the following:

- recruitment of student members to University of London committees (including training and induction) and servicing the Student Voice Group
- recruitment of student members to review panels and focus groups, such as thematic reviews, programme approval events and Periodic Programme Review
- the Student Experience Survey
- annual review of the Student Charter
- assessment offences
- student appeals and complaints
- Code of Student Discipline
- administrative re-checks of examination papers
- casework for the office of the Independent Adjudicator, Freedom of Information, Subject Access Request.



THE STUDENT VOICE:

In addition to regular involvement in reviews (Period Reviews, Programme Approvals, Thematic Reviews and MOOC Reviews); and their feedback in focus groups or our Student Experience Survey, most of our committees include student members who enjoy full membership status and voting rights.



Participating, being heard and being taken seriously within the committees gave me a far greater feeling of a belonging to the University.

Tobias Tretter, Germany

THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE AND STUDENT SUPPORT

The University of London admissions policy maintains the tradition of widening participation while remaining rigorous in its assessment process.

Student support is therefore an issue we take seriously, and our focus is on improving the students' learning environment, rather than compromising assessment or restricting access.

The University has always been an innovator in the field and has deep expertise in effective pedagogies for distance learning, which is combined with the subject matter expertise of academics drawn from their member institutions.

A feature of most University of London programmes is that they deliver the teaching entirely through distributed learning materials, although in some cases there is the option for students to attend face-to-face classes or seminars offered by the University of London.

Opportunities for face-to-face tuition are available on some programmes, and in many countries from third party institutions. Relationships with such teaching centres are discussed on page 19.

HOW IT WORKS:



Learning Resources

- Subject guides
- Readers
- Textbooks
- Past papers



Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

- Online support
- Interactive resources
- Discussion fora



Online Library

- 93 million items
- Databases
- Specialist e-journals
- eBooks



Teaching Centres

- Face-to-face teaching
- Full- or part-time
- Stringent quality

ENHANCING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The University's commitment to continuous improvement helps:

- provide a stimulating and distinctive student experience to our students, irrespective of where they live and study
- produce graduates with the intellectual capabilities, professional skills and leadership qualities to contribute to societal development at the local, regional, national and international levels.

Student experience forms part of our programme of quality enhancement, combining strands of work around communications to students, and continuous enhancement to the overall customer experience:

- **communication** – creating and improving a sense of community through our digital platforms, live events and a number of pilot initiatives
- **induction and pastoral enhancements** – going beyond university and course orientation and addressing first impressions, participation and student life – opportunities around employability, mentoring, aiding retention, and improving the student administrative journey and their well-being
- **supportive engagement and encouragement throughout the student journey** – a peer-led student voice helps with study planning while fostering a sense of connectedness and belonging to the wider student community
- **employability** – interactive online support, webinars and resources available to all students alongside mentoring and business placement opportunities.



Part of studying with the University of London is that you're part of a student community. The online forum is a way to get different perspectives of the course content.

Daniel El-Gamry, UK

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Customer Service Excellence – aims to improve customer service throughout the University of London, driving change and improvements benchmarked against a national award. The University has been successfully audited for year 3 CSE standard and achieved 100 per cent compliance for our Inclusive Practice Agenda and Student Journey Mapping.

STANDARDS AND INTEGRITY OF ASSESSMENT

The assessment model provides the cornerstone to quality and standards at the University of London.

Assessment at the University of London employs both summative and formative processes to test knowledge, understanding, analysis, synthesis and written communication skills.

On a practical level it involves the Examinations Office registering students for examinations, entering marks and producing the mark sheets for the various Boards of Examiners; while the Exams Distribution Office sends out examination papers around the globe, receives completed scripts and distributes these to individual examiners who deliver completed mark sheets to the Student Assessment Office.

- Assessment set and marked by academics appointed by University of London.
- Examinations hosted and invigilated by appropriate external organisations; subject to independent audit.
- Double marking systems are in place for all assessment.
- External Examiners from other UK universities confirm high academic standards.
- Preventative measures to reduce academic misconduct.
- Assessment offences dealt with through formal procedures.
- Undergraduate degrees: assessment mainly via unseen written examinations.



Typical examination figures

- **38,000** candidates in May and June; another **8,000** throughout the year
- **145,000** scripts and pieces of coursework
- **650** exam centres in 180 countries
- **9,000** graduates

FACTS

- All results released online via the website.
- Timetables and release of result dates published in advance.
- Teaching Centres (where applicable) informed simultaneously.



Examination entry verified manually



Structures – over 900 routes for 240 separate awards



2,000 candidates at our own London examination centre



Question papers – over 1,400 papers to 480 destinations



Scripts – distributed to 2,500 Examiners



Marks and results – 145,000 to take to 50+ Board of Examiners' meetings



Marking schemes and rules of awards – approx. 40 different schemes



Results and Pass Lists, signed by the Vice-Chancellor



Diplomas, Supplements and Transcripts for all graduates



Confirmation of Awards direct to responsible third parties

RECOGNISED TEACHING CENTRES

With the exception of the access pathways described on page 13, our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are designed for independent study.

Around 80 per cent of our undergraduate students choose to receive support from local teaching centres in order to supplement their studies. These centres are independent of the University of London.

The University maintains a quality framework that allows teaching centres that meet the standards to describe themselves as University of London Recognised Teaching Centres.

The University has implemented the Teaching Centres Recognition Framework (TCRF) to guide students in their choice of study support.

For information on TCRF monitoring, approval of Teaching Centre relationships, QA principles and mechanisms, please see our website: bit.ly/teaching-centre-rf

- No aspect of the University's responsibilities are delegated for any reason.
- The University retains all responsibility for all matters relating to admission, registration, assessment of students, and for the final award.
- Students pay fees directly to the University of London, and pay fees separately to teaching centres if they choose to seek additional support.
- The University does not engage in franchising, validation, accreditation or affiliation with third parties and its Regulations do not currently permit establishment of branch campuses.

ABOUT RECOGNISED TEACHING CENTRES

- Network of independent Recognised Teaching Centres worldwide formally recognised by the University of London to provide tuition support for our students.
- Identified as meeting a set of specific quality criteria.
- Quality assured through regular monitoring by the University of London.
- Include both state and private sector institutions.
- Provide students with tutorial support to supplement their University of London student experience.
- Structure, stimulate and direct students' learning and revision activity in a conventional learning environment.
- Can also benefit from teaching for internal benchmarking or for staff development purposes.
- Students can interact and work with their peers, receive pastoral support and access to extracurricular activities.

HOW WE SUPPORT RECOGNISED TEACHING CENTRES

- Promoting appropriate teaching for students studying remotely.
- Academic and professional support visits.
- Student experience support.
- Professional development for teachers.
- Regular monitoring and review.

Some Recognised Teaching Centres offer their own degrees alongside a University of London degree. Such articulations allow for programme enrichment, curriculum internationalisation and enhanced employability. Parallel degree arrangements have been put in place with Universities in Russia, Serbia, Turkey, Germany, Kazakhstan, Japan and Peru.

CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

The Centre for Distance Education (CDE) at the University of London plays a strategic role in supporting high quality teaching and research in open, distance and digital education.

Comprising 25 Fellows, the CDE:

- organises workshops, symposia and two annual conferences on distance education
- supports and disseminates research and innovation in open and distance learning
- provides training and consultancy.

CASE STUDY: ENGAGEMENT WITH NIGERIA

Since 2016 the CDE has engaged with the Nigerian National Universities Commission to support dual-mode capacity building in the Nigerian University System. As part of this, we have established an annual Symposium on Policy and Practice in Open and Distance Learning, with the inaugural event in Abuja in November 2017. The 2018 conference under the theme of 'Delivering Open and Distance Learning degree programmes fit for purpose' attracted more than 100 delegates from across the sector, including 18 Vice-Chancellors.

A landmark MoU between the NUC and University of London signed in London in 2018 laid the foundation for our broader ongoing long-term engagement. To date we have run three capacity-building workshops in London and Abuja attended by some 130 participants from more than 50 Nigerian HEIs.

The most recent workshop, Ensuring High Quality Outcomes for Learners, addressed the strategic goal of delivering quality ODL in Nigeria

ensuring that academic standards, student experience and outcomes are equivalent to or exceed those of campus-based provision.

"I would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to the University of London for this collaboration. We in Nigeria are very much interested in this transition from a predominantly foundational mode of teaching to open and distance mode, particularly the University of London model. There are so many models in the world, but we have taken the decision that we want to model our future practice along the lines of University of London being the pioneer in the world, a model that has appealed to us and that we believe will address our major concerns here in Nigeria; that of widening access and deepening quality. To have both access and quality at the same time is very important. We hope that through this closer relationship, Nigeria will begin to build a credible profile of experts and specialists that will address the needs of our country in future in open and distance education."

**Professor Abubakar Rasheed, Executive Secretary,
National Universities Commission, Nigeria**



GRADUATION AND ALUMNI NETWORK

Graduates receive a diploma that indicates that they were registered with the University of London and awarded a University of London qualification. The University of London logo and signature of the Vice-Chancellor are on the parchment.

Students are also given a Diploma Supplement which:

- describes the nature, level and content of the programme completed
- gives a transcript of courses or modules taken, marks achieved, & classification
- gives the mode of study – either full or part-time
- names the member institution of the University of London or consortium that provided the academic direction.

Graduates are also invited to attend the University of London graduation ceremony in London.

Through a programme of events, bursaries, awards and communications we nurture an alumni network that:

- supports members' needs and interests
- increases awareness of the importance of establishing strong relations between the University and its alumni
- heightens the profile of alumni activities within the global community of students and teaching centres
- strengthens the network of alumni who are prepared to assist in the advancement of the University.

Our Alumni Ambassador programme and international Chapter Leader Network continue to attract excellent levels of participation; and one of our alumni has won a British Council Alumni Award for professional achievement.

Alumni mentoring is a new initiative whereby we pair final-year students with alumni to foster career connections, and aid in the development of professional skills and expectations.





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