Student engagement to assist service improvement, create confidence and support the complaints process

Derfel Owen

Director of Academic Services, UCL

- What is our relationship with students?

- Historical context

- UCL's approach to improving the student experience and student engagement

What is HE for?

	Accountability measures	Shorter term benefits	Medium term benefits	Longer run impacts
Market benefits		• Jobs • Starting salaries • Social mobility	• Lifetime earnings • Better savings management	• Income growth • Per capita economic growth
Private non-market benefits	• Degree completion rates	• Better health • Less smoking • Less obesity • Less depression • Child health • Lower infant mortality	• Greater longevity	• Slower population growth • More investment • Political stability • Sustainable environment
Social / public benefits (benefits to others, to society at large and to future generations)	• Learning (test scores)	• Civic participation • Racial tolerance • Less cynicism • Charitable giving	• Growth of civic institutions • Larger middle class • Less support for authority	• Rule of law • Democratization • Human rights
	• Time to graduation	• Parenting (books etc) • Child learning, college	• Intergenerational transmission	• Education increased
	• Access / affordability	• Lower unemployment • Education finance reform • Universal access • Lower crime	• Reduced inequality	• Less poverty • Social cohesion (social capital) • Lower prison costs
		• Dissemination of new technology and knowledge	• New R&D	• Dynamic growth process

News

Social im...
universiti...
over £1.3...
says new...

UK Universities add at least £1.31 billion a year in value to UK society in the form of health and well being, citizenship and political engagement, according to new research.

Universities UK

...doned, say

...ment of economic impact ...ered to the Higher

...cs and researchers have signed ...he petition

Less than one-in-five people recognise The wider impacts universities have on society
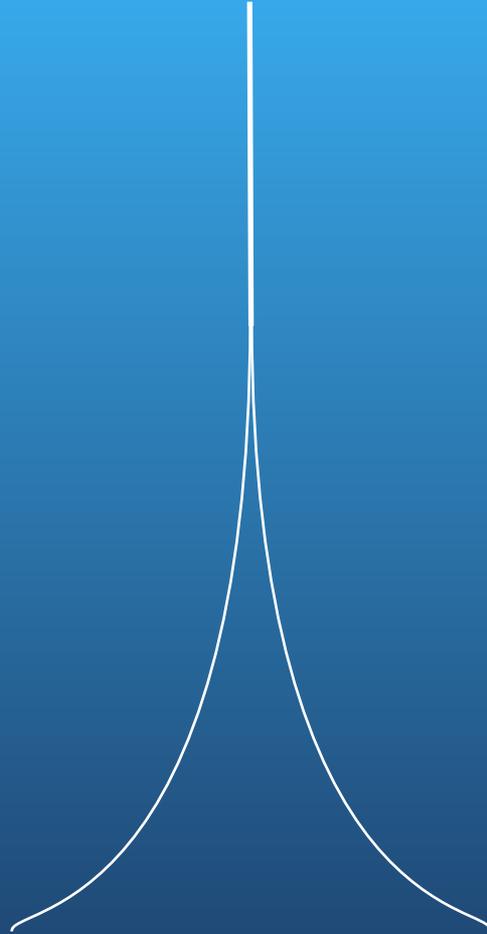
What is HE for?

- Public vs private benefit

- Market vs Social value

- Applied vs abstract knowledge

- Academic freedom vs regulation

What does that mean about our relationship with students?

- Consumer?

- Partner?

- Collaborator?

- Co-producer?

How is the sector responding?

Partners

Customers

Is the divide that clear cut?

	Consumer	Partner
Range of providers	X	X
Range of courses	X	X
Informed choices	X	X
Free to make choice	X	X
Pay fee	X	X
You can provide feedback	X	X
You can suggest improvements	X	X
Provider is the expert	X	
You are responsible for your education		X
If it breaks, you can take it back	X	

A new challenge? Odd one out . . .

Historical Context*

☐ Greece c. 40AD: Market behaviour, contracts and 'unions' (corps)

☐ Bologna 1215: Self organisation, students in charge

☐ Orleons 1389, St Andrews 1432: Constitutional co-ownership

☐ USA 1840s: Charters and Honour Codes

*(2013) Owen, Haven't we seen it all before? Historical Themes in Student Engagement in *Owen & Dunne, The Student Engagement Handbook,* Emerald Publishing

Historical Context*

- Consumerism:
  - 600 BC - Libanius' tales of rampant neo-liberalism!
  - A student contract and the public hearing for allegations of poor teaching (CMA reduct!?)
  - 1600s University of Oxford student records - the love of a good job!
  - 1800s Cardinal Newman's 'Idea of a University'

*(2013) Owen, Haven't we seen it all before? Historical Themes in Student Engagement in *Owen & Dunne, The Student Engagement Handbook,* Emerald Publishing

Historical Context*

- Constitutional Presence:
    - Lawless foreign students in a city state C13
    - Orleon 1389, St Andrews 1432 co-ownership
    - Medieval period: manipulation to undermine student strength and leadership
    - Honour codes (University of Virginia 1800s vs William and Mary 1770s/Thomas Jefferson)

*(2013) Owen, Haven't we seen it all before? Historical Themes in Student Engagement in *Owen & Dunne, The Student Engagement Handbook,* Emerald Publishing

Historical Context*

- Self Organisation
  - Greek 'corps'
  - lawless foreign students
  - Students' Unions - 4 European models
  - Revolts in the 1960s - soul searching in the USA and UK

*(2013) Owen, Haven't we seen it all before? Historical Themes in Student Engagement in *Owen & Dunne, The Student Engagement Handbook,* Emerald Publishing

UCL's approach to improving the student experience

- #1 – place students at the heart of our strategy and leadership of education

- #2 – Solid relationship with UCL Students' Union

- #3 – Focus on mediation and informal resolution

- #4 – place students in key leadership roles and empower them to deliver change

Placing students at the heart of our strategy and leadership

- UCL 2034: Our institutional Strategy
  - Principal Theme 1: Academic leadership grounded in intellectual excellence
  - Principal Theme 2: A global leader in the integration of research and education, underpinning an inspirational student experience
  - Key Enabler 1: Giving our students the best support, facilities and opportunities

- Education Strategy 2016-2021
  - Education through research and enquiry
  - Education through participation
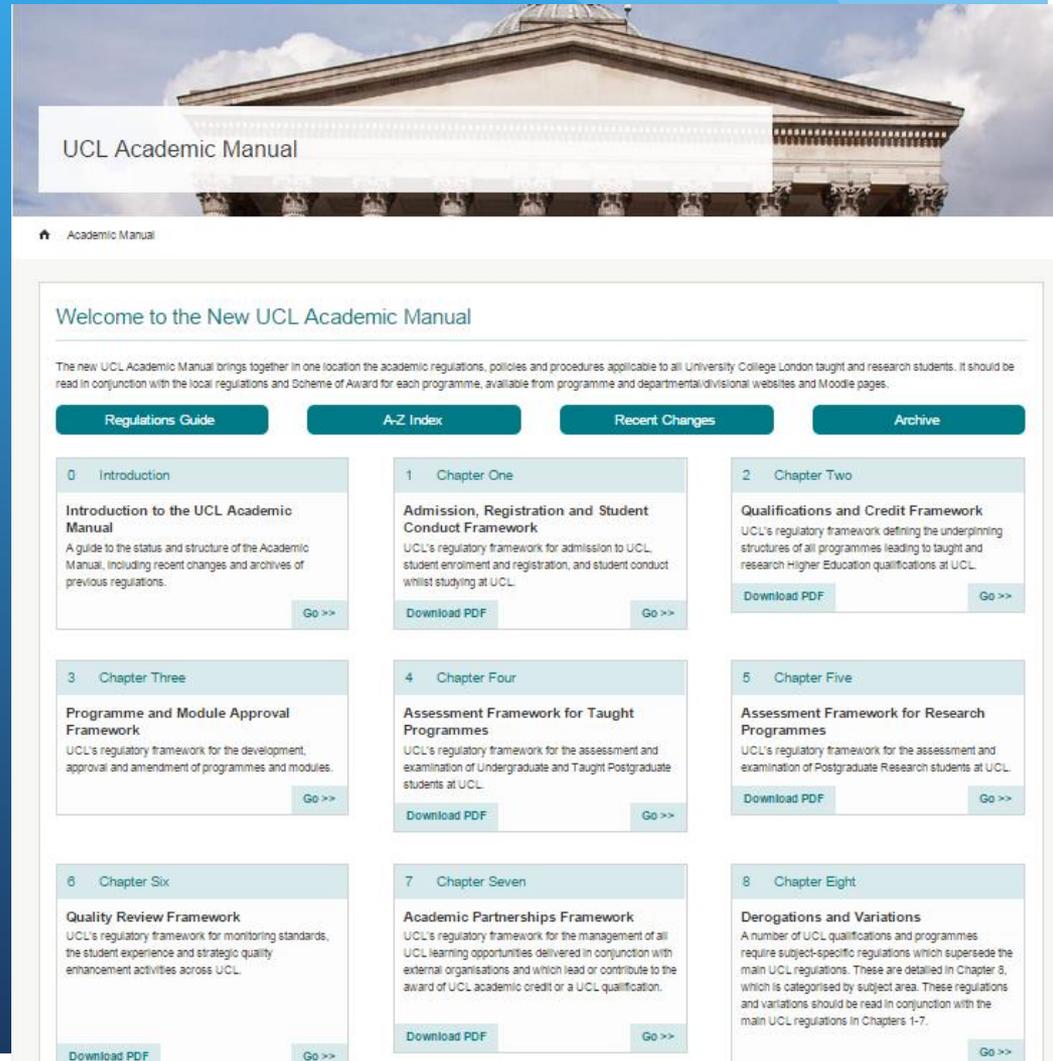 - Education through experience

Our strategic approach to quality assurance and enhancement
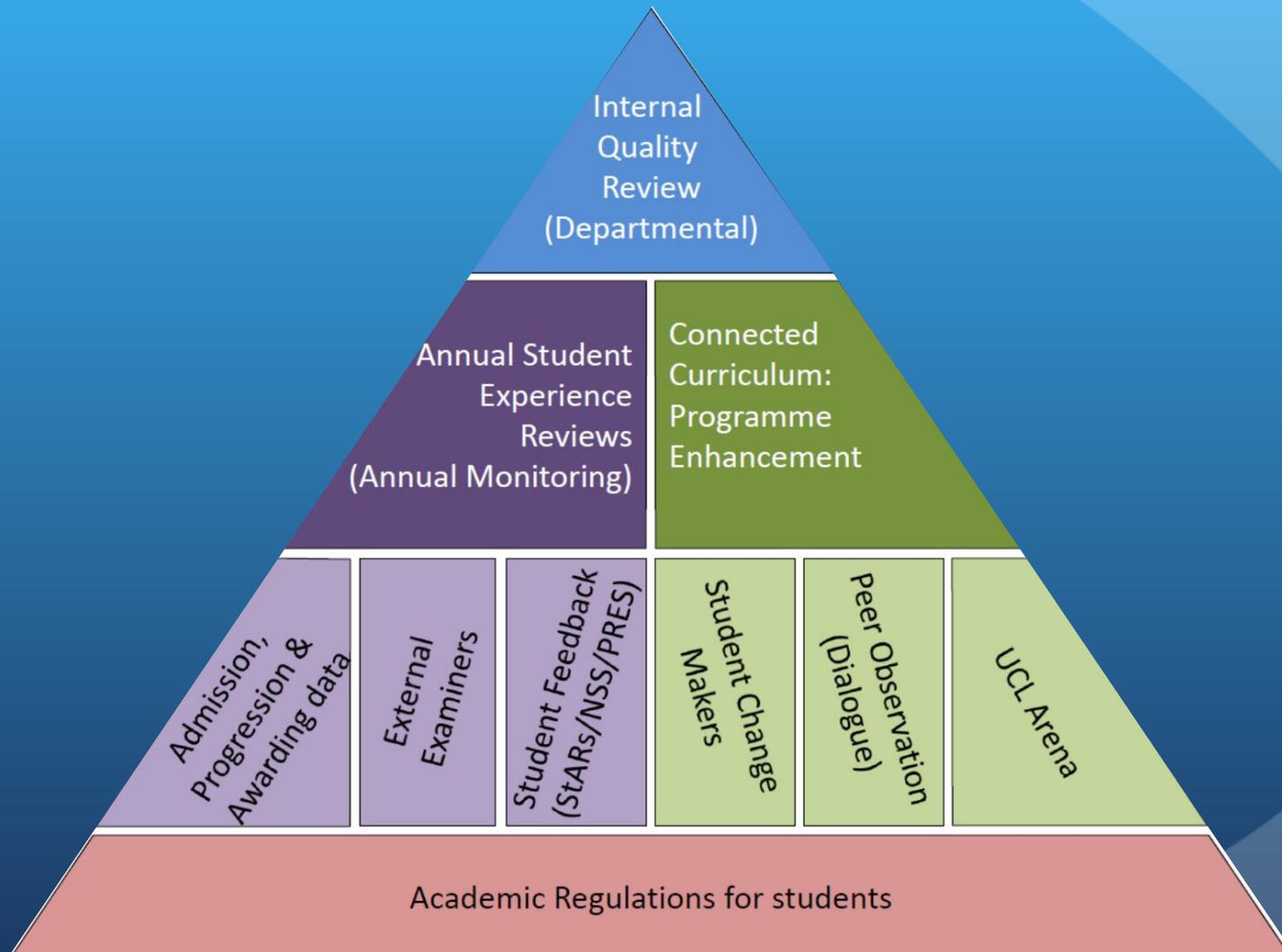
# Sound underpinning regulations: the UCL Academic Manual

7 Chapters

- Admissions, Registration and Conduct

- Qualifications and Credit

- Programme and Module Development

- Assessment (Taught)

- Assessment (PGR)

- Quality Review

- Academic Partnerships

UCL Academic Manual

Academic Manual

Welcome to the New UCL Academic Manual

The new UCL Academic Manual brings together in one location the academic regulations, policies and procedures applicable to all University College London taught and research students. It should be read in conjunction with the local regulations and Scheme of Award for each programme, available from programme and departmental/divisional websites and Moodle pages.

| Regulations Guide | A-Z Index | Recent Changes | Archive |

0   Introduction

Introduction to the UCL Academic Manual

A guide to the status and structure of the Academic Manual, including recent changes and archives of previous regulations.

Go >>

1   Chapter One

Admission, Registration and Student Conduct Framework

UCL's regulatory framework for admission to UCL, student enrolment and registration, and student conduct whilst studying at UCL.

Download PDF   Go >>

2   Chapter Two

Qualifications and Credit Framework

UCL's regulatory framework defining the underpinning structures of all programmes leading to taught and research Higher Education qualifications at UCL.

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3   Chapter Three

Programme and Module Approval Framework

UCL's regulatory framework for the development, approval and amendment of programmes and modules.

Go >>

4   Chapter Four

Assessment Framework for Taught Programmes

UCL's regulatory framework for the assessment and examination of Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate students at UCL.

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5   Chapter Five

Assessment Framework for Research Programmes

UCL's regulatory framework for the assessment and examination of Postgraduate Research students at UCL.

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6   Chapter Six

Quality Review Framework

UCL's regulatory framework for monitoring standards, the student experience and strategic quality enhancement activities across UCL.

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7   Chapter Seven

Academic Partnerships Framework

UCL's regulatory framework for the management of all UCL learning opportunities delivered in conjunction with external organisations and which lead or contribute to the award of UCL academic credit or a UCL qualification.

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8   Chapter Eight

Derogations and Variations

A number of UCL qualifications and programmes require subject-specific regulations which supersede the main UCL regulations. These are detailed in Chapter 8, which is categorised by subject area. These regulations and variations should be read in conjunction with the main UCL regulations in Chapters 1-7.
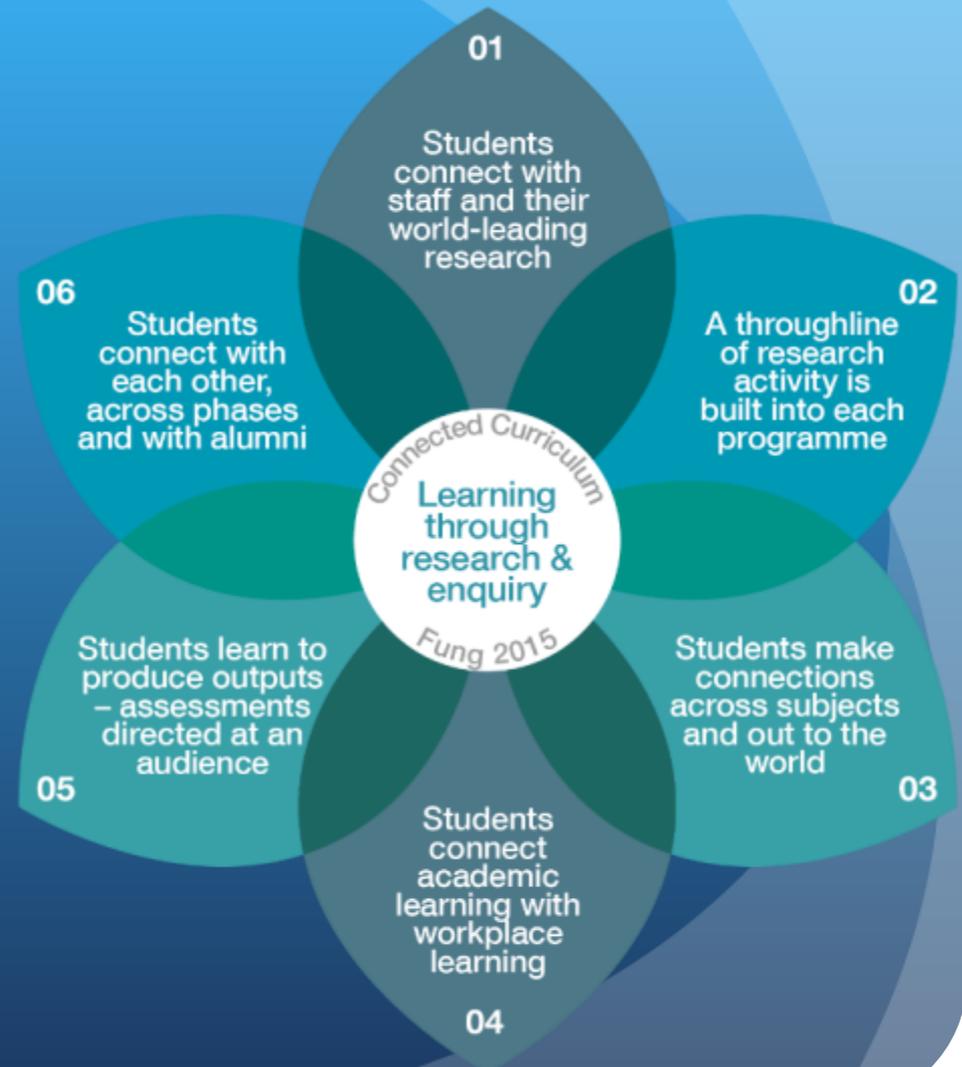
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The Connected Curriculum
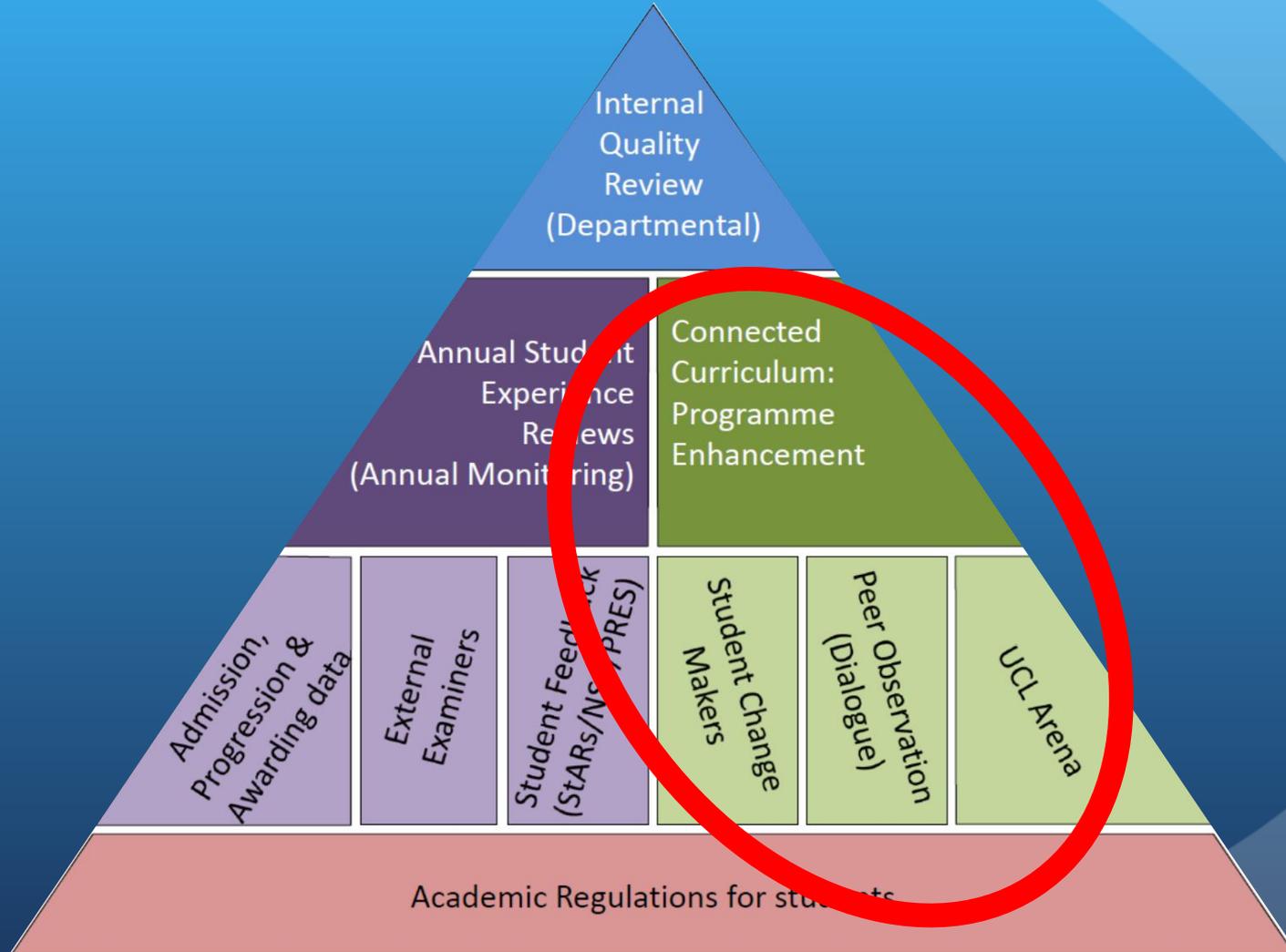
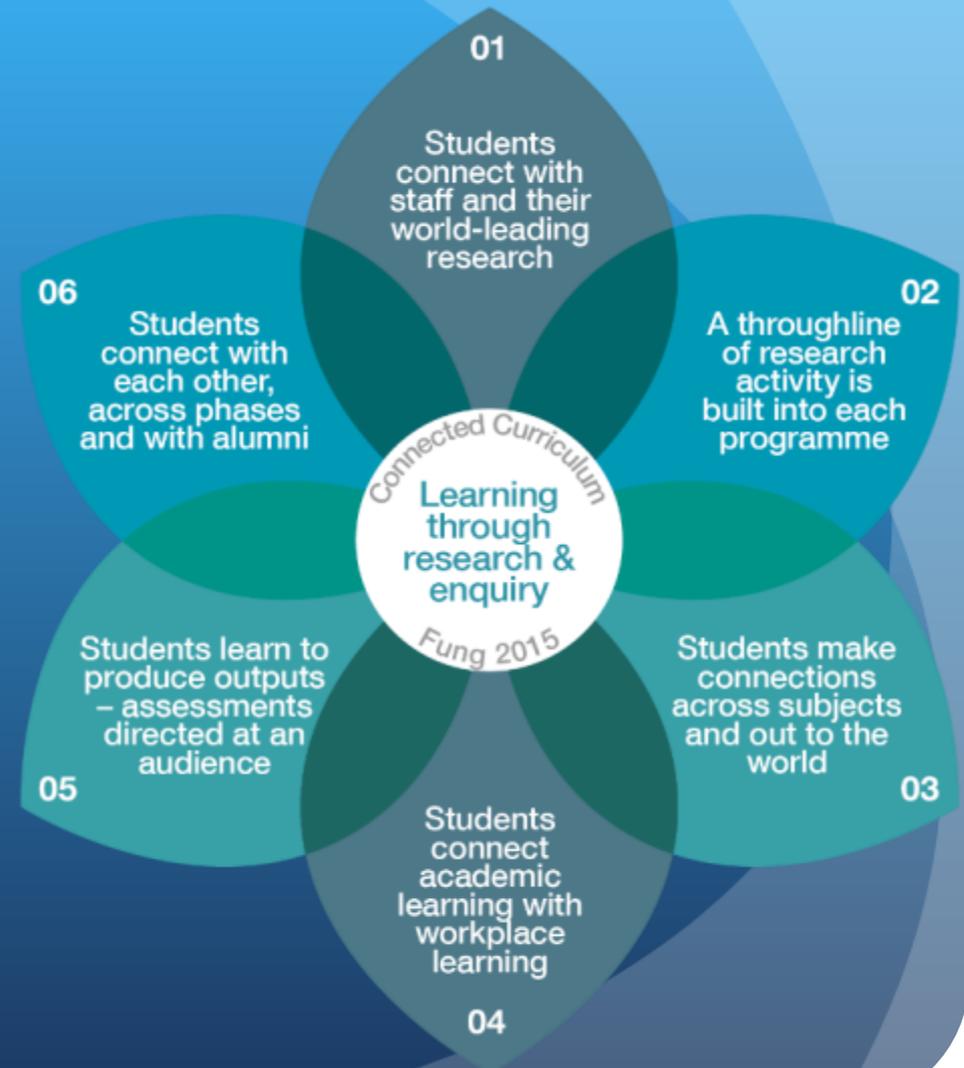# UCL's Connected Curriculum

6 Dimensions of Connectivity

- Over 5 years, every UCL programme will be reviewed

- Integrating the 6 dimensions of connectivity

- Sufficient flexibility to allow discipline variations

Ongoing engagement through:

- Student Change Makers: student led projects and initiatives to improve the curriculum

- Peer Dialogue and Observation of teaching

- UCL Arena: Staff development and engagement with the UK Professional Standards Framework

01 Students connect with staff and their world-leading research

02 A throughline of research activity is built into each programme

03 Students make connections across subjects and out to the world

04 Students connect academic learning with workplace learning

05 Students learn to produce outputs – assessments directed at an audience

06 Students connect with each other, across phases and with alumni

Connected Curriculum Learning through research & enquiry Fung 2015

Student Change Makers

Engaging students as partners to improve their learning and teaching environement:

- Connecting students with staff to initiative and deliver improvement projects

- Training 'student scholars' to act as expert consultants in departments

- . . . Students as peer observers of teaching
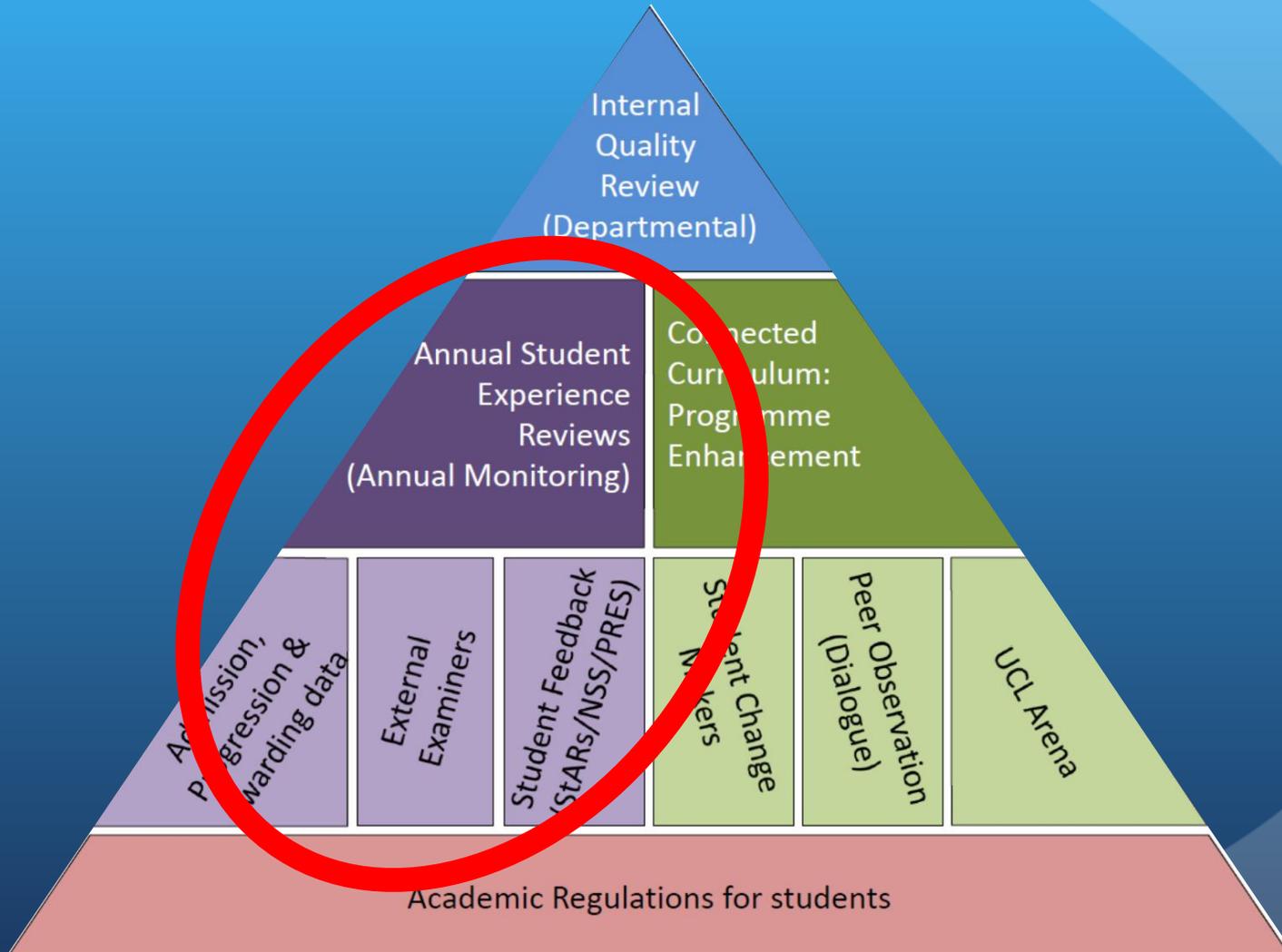
Student Change Makers

Some examples:

- Improving information for module choice

- Language Exchange

- Reviewing marking criteria

- Buddy schemes

- Curriculum review

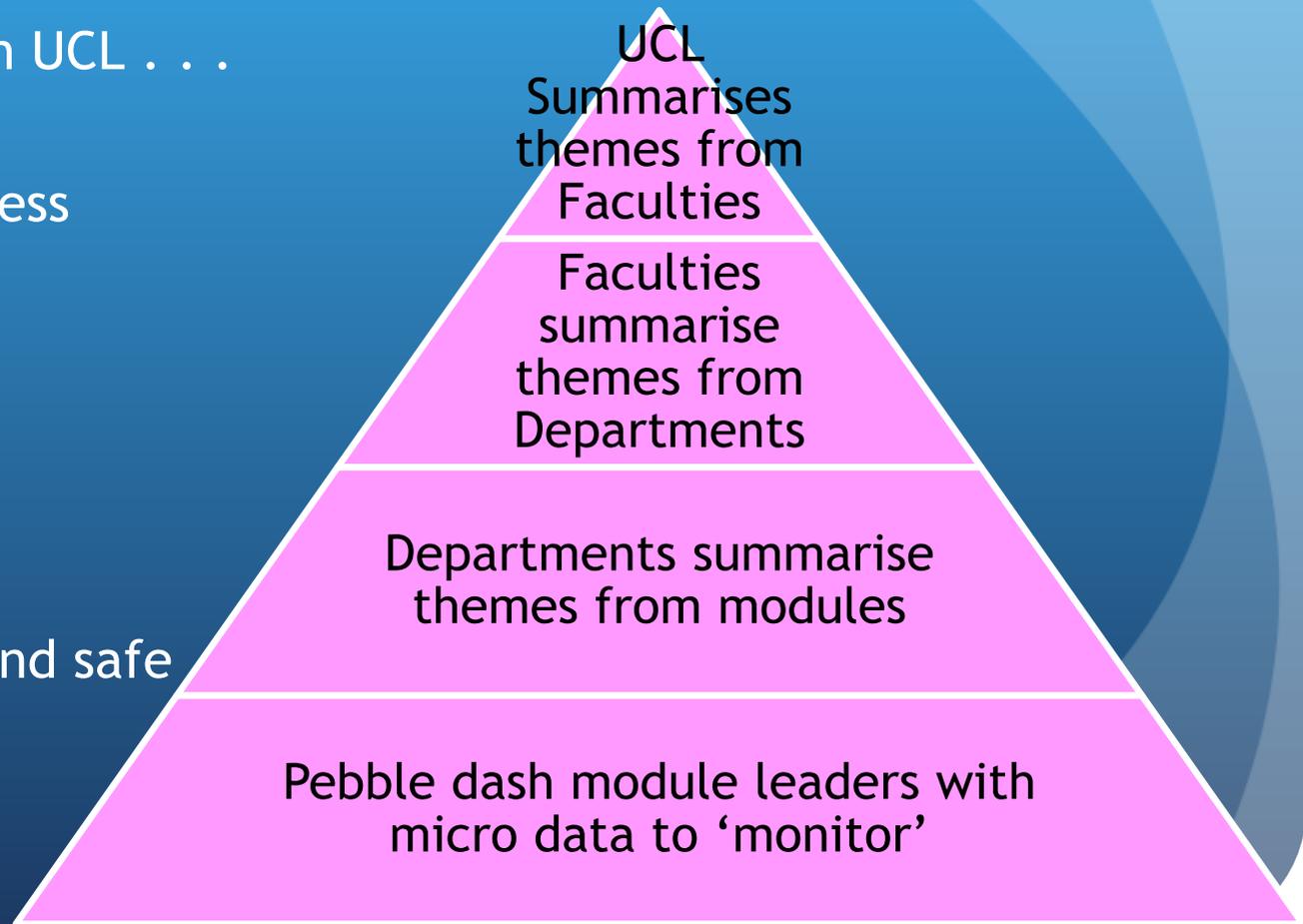# UCL's Annual Student Experience Review

UCL's Annual Student Experience Review

- Precision focus on standards and student experience

- Using robust intelligence and data:
  - Quantitative student feedback (NSS, PTES, PRES)
  - Qualitative student feedback (StARS, DSSCS, JSSCC, UCLU)
  - External Examiners Reports
  - Progression, completion and awarding data

UCL's Annual Student Experience Review: flipping the process

- Once upon a time in UCL . . .

- The pyramidal process

- Chinese whispers

- Slow, cumbersome
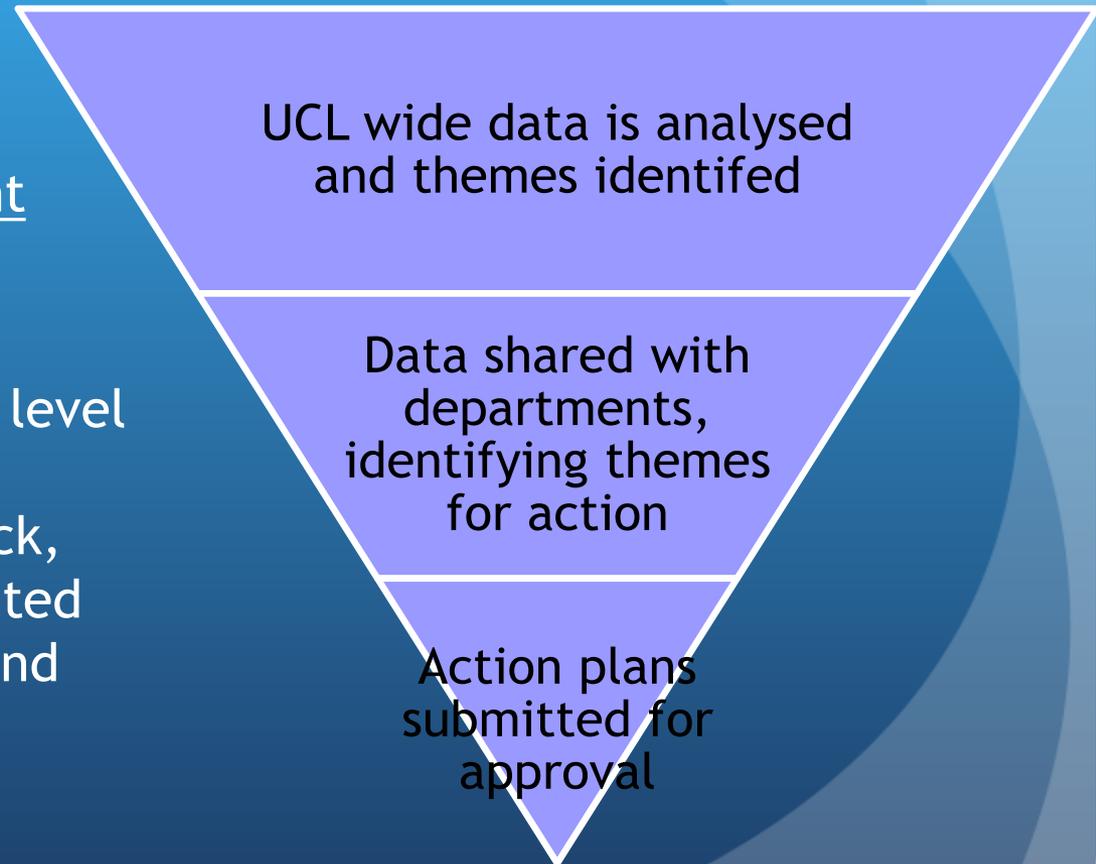
- But, conventional and safe

UCL Summarises themes from Faculties

Faculties summarise themes from Departments

Departments summarise themes from modules

Pebble dash module leaders with micro data to 'monitor'

UCL's Annual Student Experience Review

Focus on data and student experience.

Triangulate data – use student feedback, inc. complaints

Explore data at a meaningful level e.g BME achievement, International student feedback, progression rates complemented by qualitative data from EE and students

Use action plans to drive enhancement activity

UCL wide data is analysed and themes identifed

Data shared with departments, identifying themes for action

Action plans submitted for approval

Annual Student Experience Review

- UG, PGT and PGR cycle

- Every Department produces and Action Plan

- Follow up meetings with Vice-Provost

- UCL-wide actions (e.g. training and development, changes to regulations)

- UCL-wide sharing of good practice

- Precision focus on the student experience and taking action

The UCL Student Relationship

- Refused to adopt a Student Charter!

- Co-developed the student relationship document instead

- A powerful, joint statement involving the entire academic community.

- Now being challenged by the CMA!

Final reflection

What does student engagement look like?

Partner – joint decision and delivery!
Full involvement in decisions, taking responsibility for action, assisting with delivery

Expert – Full participation in decision making
Present and contributing to all important decisions
Strategic and operational

Observer - Two way discussion
As below but with also given a chance to propose solutions. Observe decision making.

Monitor - One way discussion
Identifying problems and good practice, no role in solutions. HEIs know what's best
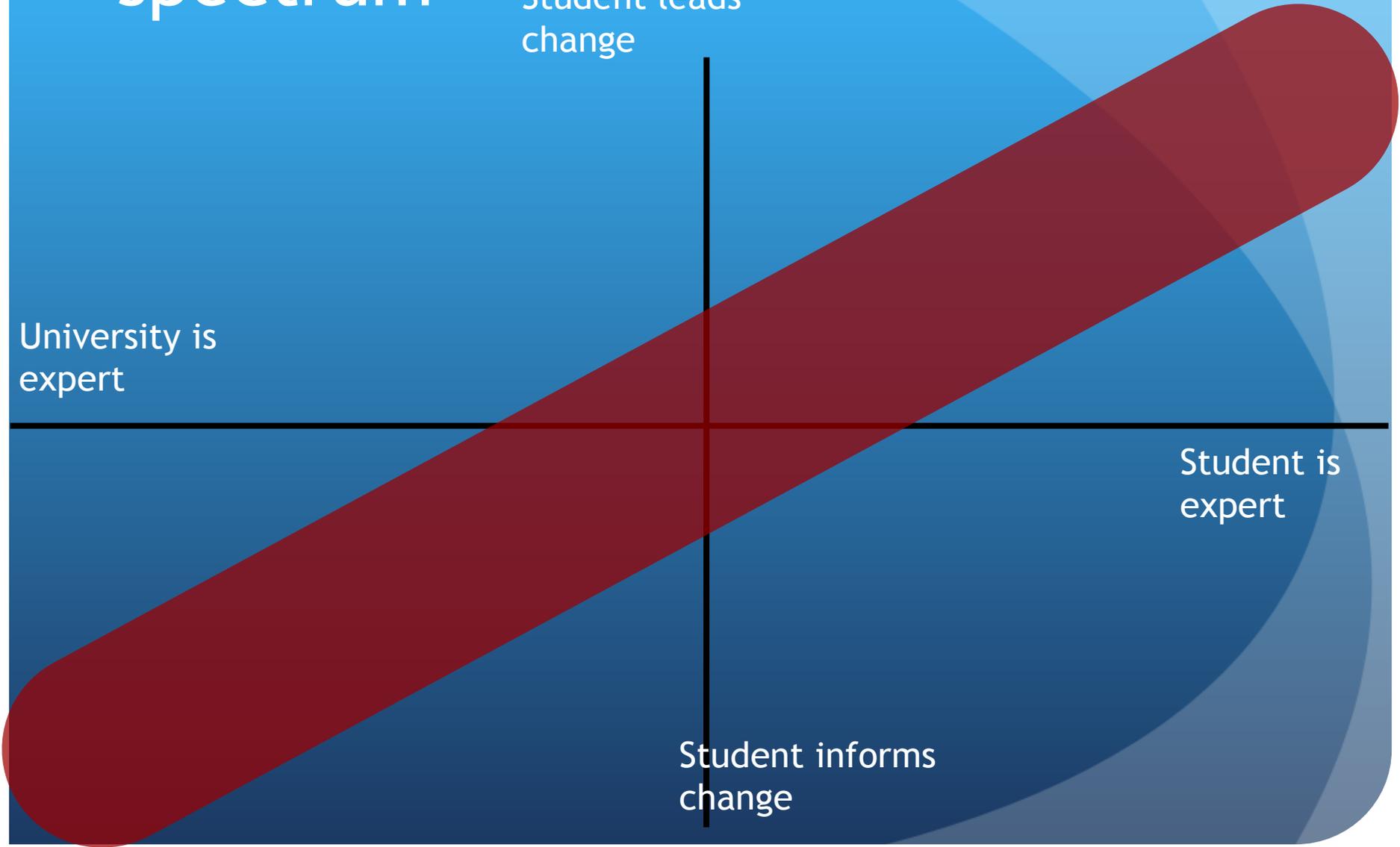
Where do complaints sit on the spectrum

Student leads change

University is expert

Student is expert

Student informs change

Conclude

- The relationship with students is complex

- To create confidence we need to:
  - be consistent in our language and tone
  - Understand and define the sort of relationship we want with our students
  - Involve students in the process

- To improve services we need to:
  - Engage students in design of services
  - Use their complaints to inform approaches to enhancement and curricular development. Make sure the close of the complaint is not the job done.
  - Involve students in decision making

- How do we involve student more effectively in the complaints process?