

Year 8

Autumn 2025 SDL Options Booklet

The UCL Academy vision is that students will experience an inspirational world-class education built on a culture of academic excellence, social responsibility and a transformational curriculum. Self-Directed Learning (SDL) supports this vision by offering all students the opportunity to experience learning and skill development outside of the academic curriculum.

SDL activities run on Wednesdays and Thursdays during the last lesson of the day. There are lots of different activities on offer and you are able to give your preferences on which one you do. This is a fantastic opportunity for you to try something you have never done before or to spend more time doing something you already enjoy. A mix of these is best!

This SDL Cycle runs from 17 September to 4 December 2025

SDL runs in Lesson 7 on Wednesdays and Thursdays

Please read the descriptions and key information carefully so you understand when and how often each SDL will run, and also if there are any additional application/auditioning processes required.

Students will be able to apply for their SDL via a Google form. This will be sent directly to your Academy email addresses. You will need to be logged into your Academy account for the form to work.

Complete the form carefully making sure your student name, tutor group and SDL choices are all correct. All students will attend an SDL on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Information about any SDLs added throughout the year will be sent home as they arise. Parents who are interested in running an SDL, know of someone who may be interested in running an SDL or would like further support can email SDL@uclacademy.co.uk.

The deadline for selecting choices online is 5pm on Thursday 17 July.

Contents

Important information about making your choices:	4
Overview of Spring SDL Options for Year 8	5
SDLs Open to All Students - WEDNESDAYS	7
5D Diamond Painting	7
Anti Bullying Champions	7
Arts & Crafts	7
Basketball	7
Chess Club	8
Creative Writing	8
Debate Club	8
Discover Islam	8
Fitness Club	9
Gardening Club	9
Marvel Club	9
Mindfulness	9
Netball	10
Painting By Numbers	10
Performing with UCL	10
Private Study Group	10
Reading Cafe	11
Scrabble	11
Singing the Blues	11
Sparx Club	11
Day: Wednesday	11
Invite Only: Yes and No	11
Continuing SDL: No	11
Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	11
Stem Club	12
SDLs Open to All Students - THURSDAYS	13
5D Diamond Painting	13
Basketball	13
Bead Craft	13
Board Games	13
Cards Club	14
CBBC Club	14
Choir	14
Deconstructing Disney	14
Fencing	14

Fitness Club	15
Mindful Colouring	15
Music Technology	15
Origins of Rituals	15
Premier League Football	16
Private Study Group	16
Student Leadership	16
Table Tennis	16
Volleyball	17
Invite Only SDLs	18
Art Scholars	18
Debate Mate	18
Mathematical Minds	18
Numeracy Club	19
Private Study Group	19
Sparx Club	19
Student Leadership	19

Important information about making your choices:

- Students need to think carefully before making their **top 5 choices** for each day. Students will be assigned SDL activities from their selected top 5 options.
- Be wise! If you have applied late to a popular SDL it will not be possible to allocate it to you. If you apply to a girls-only SDL and you are a boy, you will not be able to attend and will have wasted a choice.
- Students and parents should work together to choose SDLs.
- Students will be able to apply for their SDL via a Google form. This will be sent directly to your Academy email address. You will need to be logged into your Academy account for the form to work.
- Apply by the deadline - it will make a difference to which SDL you are allocated!
- If you don't apply, then you will receive any SDL that has space in it.

Overview of Spring SDL Options for Year 8



Title of SDL	Assigned Day	Invite Only?	Continues into next term(s)?
5D Diamond Painting	Wednesday	No	No
Anti Bullying Champions	Wednesday	No	No
Art & Craft	Wednesday	No	No
Art Scholars	Wednesday	Yes	Yes
Basketball	Wednesday	No	No
Chess Club	Wednesday	No	No
Creative Writing	Wednesday	No	No
Debate Club	Wednesday	No	No
Discover Islam	Wednesday	No	No
Fitness Club	Wednesday	No	No
Gardening Club	Wednesday	No	Yes
Marvel Club	Wednesday	No	No
Mindfulness	Wednesday	No	No
Netball	Wednesday	No	No
Paint by Numbers	Wednesday	No	No
Performing with UCL	Wednesday	No	Yes
Private Study Group	Wednesday	Yes and No	No
Reading Cafe	Wednesday	No	No
Scrabble	Wednesday	No	No
Singing the Blues	Wednesday	No	No
Sparx Club	Wednesday	Yes and No	No
STEM Club	Wednesday	No	No
5D Diamond Painting	Thursday	No	No
Basketball	Thursday	No	No
Bead Craft	Thursday	No	No
Board Games	Thursday	No	No
Cards Club	Thursday	No	No
CBBC Club	Thursday	No	No


Title of SDL	Assigned Day	Invite Only?	Continues into next term(s)?
Choir	Thursday	No	Yes
Debate Mate	Thursday	Yes	No
Deconstructing Disney	Thursday	No	No
Fencing	Thursday	No	No
Fitness Club	Thursday	No	No
Mathematical Minds	Thursday	Yes	No
Mindful Colouring	Thursday	No	No
Music Technology	Thursday	No	No
Numeracy Club	Thursday	Yes	No
Origins of Rituals	Thursday	No	No
Premier League Football	Thursday	No	No
Private Study Group	Thursday	Yes and No	No
Student Leadership	Thursday	Yes and No	Yes
Table Tennis	Thursday	No	No
Volleyball	Thursday	No	No

SDLs Open to All Students - WEDNESDAYS

5D Diamond Painting Day: Wednesday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Mr Iyoke	Description: You will create stunning, sparkly artwork by placing tiny resin “diamonds” onto a sticky, pre-printed canvas. It’s easy to learn, calming to do, and the results are beautiful. No artistic experience is needed.
Anti Bullying Champions Day: Wednesday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms Sef	Description: You will discuss what bullying is, look at different types of bullying, why it happens, and how it makes people feel. You will learn how to help people who are bullied and consider immediate and long-term solutions to stop it from happening.
Arts & Crafts Day: Wednesday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms Noukhas	Description: We will have different arts and crafts sessions each week. Painting. Crafting with recycled material. Origami. Using chenille needles to sew through different kinds of material. Rock painting. Drying flowers.
Basketball Day: Wednesday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Mr Adem	Description: Students will learn basketball skills, like shooting, dribbling and scrimmage, to develop their game.

Chess Club Day: Wednesday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Mr Castano	Description: The Chess SDL is a space to learn and practise chess at all levels with students, as well as compete in matches. There is an opportunity for advice and coaching within our sessions and for students to test themselves against their peers. We will look to participate in Camden/Brent Chess Tournaments in the year.
Creative Writing Day: Wednesday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms Byass	Description: Students will be introduced to various writing techniques in order to create their own pieces. Students will learn to write with a variety of emotions and perspectives.
Debate Club Day: Wednesday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of staff: Ms Black	Description: Want to boost your confidence, sharpen your speaking skills, and learn how to win any argument? Join the Debate Club. It's fun, powerful, and helps you think fast, speak clearly, and lead with confidence. Whether you're loud or shy, everyone has a voice – come and use yours!
Discover Islam Day: Wednesday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of staff: Mr Muse	Description: Learn about the fastest growing religion in the world through fun stories, exciting quizzes and much more. Regular prizes to be won.

Fitness Club Day: Wednesday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Mr Toyyuab	Description: Students will have access to the fitness suite and take part in a variety of sessions, including HIIT training, Zumba, Just dance and Boxercise. Great exercise to develop health and fitness.
Gardening Club Day: Wednesday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: Yes, into Spring and Summer 2026 Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Mr Eyre	Description:  Do you love digging in the dirt, planting seeds, and watching things grow? Then our Gardening Club is the perfect place for you! You will go on exciting adventures in our garden—planting colorful flowers, growing yummy veggies, and even making homes for bugs and butterflies! You'll learn how to take care of plants, discover cool facts about nature, and help make our community a greener, happier place. No gardening experience needed—just bring your curiosity, your energy, and your love for the outdoors. 
Marvel Club Day: Wednesday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms Khan	Description: Explore the universe of Marvel through film. Experience its stories and characters. <i>"With great power comes great responsibility."</i> <i>"I am Iron Man."</i> <i>"I am Groot!"</i>
Mindfulness Day: Wednesday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms Al-Hakim	Description: These sessions will include a range of mindfulness activities, including meditation and mindful colouring. They aim to help you live in the moment, relax and deal with the stresses of modern teenage life.

Netball Day: Wednesday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms Friend	Description: We will learn about the world and the people in it. There will be a lot of Geographical challenges (countries of the world, flags, and capitals), as well as riddles and puzzles to test students' brains and encourage them to think critically.
Painting By Numbers Day: Wednesday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms El-Rimali	Description:  Looking for a relaxing, creative way to express yourself? Painting by Numbers is the perfect blend of art and focus—no experience needed! Easy to follow; watch your masterpiece come to life. It's calming and fun!
Performing with UCL Day: Wednesday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: Yes, into Spring 2026 Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms Verity	Description: You will work with an expert to create a piece of performance work that will be performed at UCL's Bloomsbury Theatre in March 2026! It is an opportunity to be creative, collaborate with people who work in the Arts industry and create a unique piece of theatre.
Private Study Group Day: Wednesday Invite Only: Yes and No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms Jahangir	Description: Quiet time of study to catch up with Home Learning.

<p>Reading Cafe</p> <p>Day: Wednesday</p> <p>Invite Only: Yes and No</p> <p>Continuing SDL: No</p> <p>Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups</p>	<p>Name of Staff: Ms Canolli</p>	<p>Description: Love books or want to read more? Join us as we explore a different genre each half-term — from fantasy to real-life stories. You'll choose your own books, take part in fun activities, and share recommendations in a relaxed, friendly setting. All reading levels welcome!</p>
<p>Scrabble</p> <p>Day: Wednesday</p> <p>Invite Only: No</p> <p>Continuing SDL: No</p> <p>Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups</p>	<p>Name of Staff: Ms Rahman</p>	<p>Description: Scrabble is the classic board game for 2 to 4 players that always spells F-U-N! Consisting of interlocking words onto a playing board, Scrabble challenges players to spell out words using letter tiles with various score values. The object of the game is to get the highest score. More than just a game, Scrabble actually improves your vocabulary as you're introduced to new words each time you play!</p>
<p>Singing the Blues</p> <p>Day: Wednesday</p> <p>Invite Only: No</p> <p>Continuing SDL: No</p> <p>Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups</p>	<p>Name of Staff: Ms Anekwe</p>	<p>Description: Make like the stars and sing your heart out! Are you a Tyla who unties your vocal chords? Or is your voice worth £5000k like 50 Cent? Then come along, let off some steam and sing away your troubles.</p>
<p>Sparx Club</p> <p>Day: Wednesday</p> <p>Invite Only: Yes and No</p> <p>Continuing SDL: No</p> <p>Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups</p>	<p>Name of Staff: Mr Felix</p>	<p>Description: This is a space to do and get support with your Sparx Maths homework.</p>

Stem Club Day: Wednesday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed year groups (L1 and L1P)	Name of Staff: Mr Halim	Description: Explore the wonders of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) in a fun, inclusive, and safe environment. You will dive into exciting projects, practical experiments and discussions.
---	-----------------------------------	--

SDLs Open to All Students - THURSDAYS

5D Diamond Painting Day: Thursday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms Ossman	Description: You will create stunning, sparkly artwork by placing tiny resin “diamonds” onto a sticky, pre-printed canvas. It’s easy to learn, calming to do, and the results are beautiful. No artistic experience is needed.
Basketball Day: Thursday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Mr Stiven	Description: Students will learn basketball skills, like shooting, dribbling and scrimmage, to develop their game.
Bead Craft Day: Thursday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms Oyelade	Description: Every week students will make different designs of bracelets, necklaces, earrings, phone or bag chains. Be creative and combine different types of beads to make something beautiful.
Board Games Day: Thursday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Mr Abbas	Description: Roll the dice! Come along to the Board Games SDL where you can meet and mix with new people whilst playing a range of different games.

Cards Club Day: Thursday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Mr Sutherland	Description: You will learn a range of card games that require a mixture of skill, luck and strategy. Learn about the deck, colours, suits, tricks and trumps. Aim to be crowned the ace card shark in the tournament at the end.
CBBC Club Day: Thursday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms Abdulahi	Description: We will be going through classic CBBC shows that every child will love. From Tracey Beaker to the 4 O'Clock Club and so much more, it's time we put streaming to an end and swim in a sea of nostalgia.
Choir Day: Thursday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: Yes, into Spring and Summer 2026 Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Mr Baxter	Description: Stretch your vocal chords and be an integral part of the Academy's performance team. The Choir contributes to concerts both in and out of the Academy. Last year we performed at the Royal Albert Hall! It will also play a large role in the Academy's theatre production.
Deconstructing Disney Day: Thursday Invite only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned year groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of staff: Ms Abdi	Description: We will be critically analysing Disney and deconstructing all the hidden messages in our favourite childhood films. Come with an open mind and suggestions!
Fencing Day: Thursday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Coaches from Camden Fencing Club	Description: Be like Zorro, the Bride or Puss in Boots and learn the basics of Fencing and the discipline it requires. You will start with plastic equipment before moving onto real steel.

Fitness Club Day: Thursday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Mr Cherif	Description: Students will have access to the fitness suite and take part in a variety of sessions, including HIIT training, Zumba, Just dance and Boxercise. Great exercise to develop health and fitness.
Mindful Colouring Day: Thursday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms Abdulkarim	Description: A chance to unwind and colour in interesting outlines. Be creative, relax, practise attention to details and leave with your own piece of art.
Music Technology Day: Thursday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Mr Winston and Mr Hedemann	Description: This is an opportunity for students to learn how to use the app, Logic Pro, used widely in the music industry. Create and edit awesome beats, riffs and rhymes using our Mac technology. It will be co-delivered by our expert drum instructor, Brian Hedemann.
Origins of Rituals Day: Thursday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms Thakore	Description: “The Neurobiology of the Divine” – Explore the brain’s response to rituals, gods, spiritual connection, and why it might feel transcendent in different cultures.

<p>Premier League Football</p> <p>Day: Thursday</p> <p>Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No</p> <p>Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups</p>	<p>Name of Staff: Mr Pirbhai</p>	<p>Description: "Each week, we'll watch highlights from the latest Premier League matches, analyse key moments, debate controversial decisions, and track our favourite teams and players. This SDL is all about fun, football, and friendship. Whether you're a die-hard supporter or just getting into the game, come and be part of the conversation. Bring your football passion—no boots required!"</p>
<p>Private Study Group</p> <p>Day: Thursday</p> <p>Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No</p> <p>Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups</p>	<p>Name of Staff: Mr Rago</p>	<p>Description: Quiet time of study to catch up with Home Learning.</p>
<p>Student Leadership</p> <p>Day: Thursday</p> <p>Invite Only: Yes and No Continuing SDL: Yes - if you are elected as a Student Ambassador in the Autumn Term you will continue for the remainder of the year.</p> <p>Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups</p>	<p>Name of Staff: Ms Prodromou</p>	<p>Description: Student ambassador meetings to discuss the issues facing the students and work to make improvements to the student experience. Ambassadors will also receive leadership training and work with senior leaders on a regular basis.</p>
<p>Table Tennis</p> <p>Day: Thursday</p> <p>Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No</p> <p>Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups</p>	<p>Name of Staff: Ms Uddin</p>	<p>Description: With every spin, bounce, and slam, players engage in a lightning-fast mental and physical duel, where precision and reflexes are tested to the limit. It's a game of strategy and agility, teaching you how to think on your feet, improve focus, and master quick decision-making, all while building your hand-eye coordination and reflexes.</p>

<p>Volleyball</p> <p>Day: Thursday</p> <p>Invite Only: No</p> <p>Continuing SDL: No</p> <p>Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups</p>	<p>Name of Staff: Ms Friend</p>	<p>Description: Volleyball is an exciting team sport where two groups of six players face off on a court, separated by a net. The goal? Hit the ball over the net and try to land it on the other side—or work together to outplay the other team and cause a mistake. It's fast, fun, and all about quick moves, smart plays, and great teamwork. Whether you're passing, setting, or going for the perfect spike, volleyball keeps you moving and makes every point count.</p>
---	--	---

Invite Only SDLs

Invite only SDLs

Some invite-only SDLs will appear on the Google form and you should select these if you have been told you will have been invited by a teacher. If you are not told, but selected by a teacher, then you will be placed on this SDL. Invited students are expected to attend the SDL. Any additional choice you make for the same day will not be considered.

Art Scholars Day: Wednesday Invite Only: Yes Continuing SDL: Yes, into Spring and Summer 2026 Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms Hirson, Mr Williams and Ms Incedal	Description: Varying specialised art workshops and projects to push and inform our Art Scholars in different styles and techniques.
Debate Mate Day: Thursday Invite only: Yes Continuing SDL: No Assigned year groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of staff: Ms Llapashtica	Description: Want to boost your confidence, sharpen your speaking skills, and learn how to win any argument? Led by an external group, join the Debate Mate. It's fun, powerful, and helps you think fast, speak clearly, and lead with confidence. Whether you're loud or shy, everyone has a voice – come and use yours!
Mathematical Minds Day: Thursday Invite only: Yes Continuing SDL: No Assigned year Groups: Mixed year groups	Name of staff: Mr Campbell	Description: Students will investigate mathematical concepts they won't find in the classroom. They will learn to spot patterns and connections, to generalise algebraically, to solve problems and to see maths in different contexts.

Numeracy Club Day: Thursday Invite Only: Yes Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms Devlin	Description: Come and improve your number skills in a fun and supportive way.
Private Study Group Day: Wednesday or Thursday Invite Only: No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms Jahangir (Wednesday) and Mr Rago (Thursday)	Description: Quiet time of study to catch up with Home Learning.
Sparx Club Day: Wednesday Invite Only: Yes and No Continuing SDL: No Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Mr Felix	Description: This is a space to do and get support with your Sparx Maths homework.
Student Leadership Day: Thursday Invite Only: Yes (following election to the Council) Continuing SDL: Yes - if you are elected in the Autumn Term you will continue for the remainder of the year. Assigned Year Groups: Mixed Year Groups	Name of Staff: Ms Prodromou	Description: Student ambassador meetings to discuss the issues facing the students and work to make improvements to the student experience. Ambassadors will also receive leadership training and work with senior leaders on a regular basis.

The deadline for selecting choices online is **5pm on Thursday 17 July**.