

MEDIA RELEASE

February 3rd 2009

UCL Partners reaches shortlist to become Academic Health Science Centre

UCL Partners, Europe's largest academic health science partnership, has reached the Department of Health's shortlist of organisations seeking official status as an "academic health science centre".

UCL Partners, which was created last year, comprises University College London; Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust; Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust; the Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust; University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Together, UCL Partners will support over 3,500 scientists, senior researchers and consultants, with a combined annual turnover of around two billion. By pooling resources and expertise, UCL Partners will be able to produce more world-class research in key areas, including cancer and heart disease, and deliver the benefits more rapidly to patients in London, and around the world.

A final decision as to which organisations will be granted official "academic health science centre" status will be made in early March.

Sir Cyril Chantler, Chairman of UCLP, said

"Making it on to the shortlist is a boost for our efforts to create Europe's leading health research powerhouse. UCL Partners has the potential to transform healthcare for Londoners, to enhance training for medical students and to undertake ground-breaking research that will benefit patients here and around the world."

Notes to editors

1. For further information, please visit the UCL Partners website at www.uclpartners.com or contact Neil Goodwin, Project Director, UCL Partners, on +44 (0)7831 886 834 or at neil.goodwin@uclh.nhs.uk

2. The establishment of Academic Health Science Centres was one of the major reforms recommended in Health Minister Professor Lord Darzi's review, 'Healthcare for London: a framework for action', published in July 2007 by NHS London. It sets out how London needs to change in order to meet Londoners' health needs over the next ten years. More recently, Lord Darzi reaffirmed the importance of Academic Health Science Centres as a central plank of NHS reform in his 'NHS Next Stage Review Final Report - High Quality Care for All', published on 30 June 2008. The report recognizes that "the potential of AHSCs to deliver research excellence and improve patient care and professional education is tremendous."
3. As measured by citations in academic publications monitored by the independent ISI Essential Science Indicators service, UCL and its partners are world-class in a number of fields:
 - Neuroscience - top in Europe and 2nd in the world
 - Clinical Medicine - top in Europe
 - Immunology - second in Europe
 - UCL is the most highly cited University in the UK overall.