

OFFICE FOR  
INSTITUTIONAL  
— EQUITY —



University of  
East London

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# BELONGING @ UEL

PROMOTING ACADEMIC SUCCESS



# OBJECTIVE...

To explore UEL's evolving  
Belonging Framework





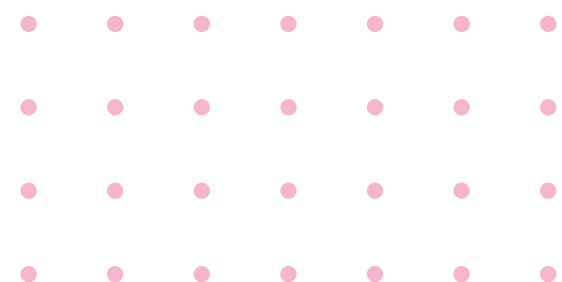
# BELONGING

The feeling that our students are an integral part of their academic and social community.

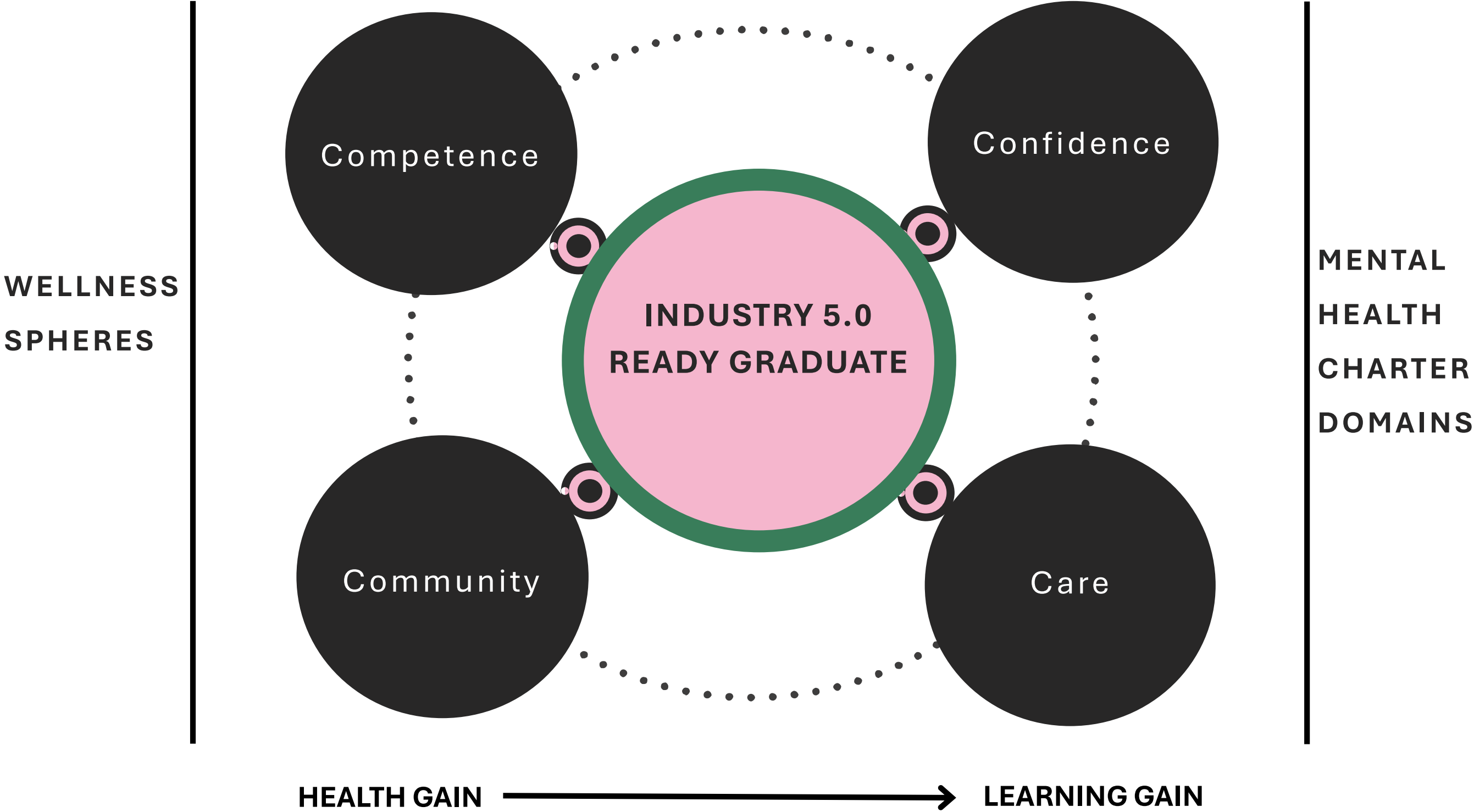
Involves a sense of acceptance, value, and emotional security, where individuals feel recognised, respected, and supported for who they are.

## **More specifically, belonging means that students:**

- Feel connected to their peers, Schools, and the institution
- Believe they are valued contributors to their academic community
- Experience emotional and psychological safety

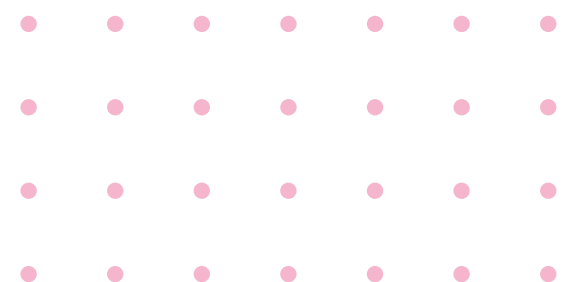


# UEL BELONGING FRAMEWORK



# COMMUNITY

- The sense of belonging students feel when they are part of a supportive network of peers, faculty, and staff.
- A strong sense of community enhances student engagement, well-being, and academic persistence.
- **How to foster community:**
  - **Collaborative learning:** Integrate group work, peer review, and discussion forums to promote peer connections
  - **Inclusive classroom culture:** Ensure classroom environment is welcoming and inclusive.
  - **Create opportunities for informal interactions** between students and academics to foster a sense of support.



# CARE

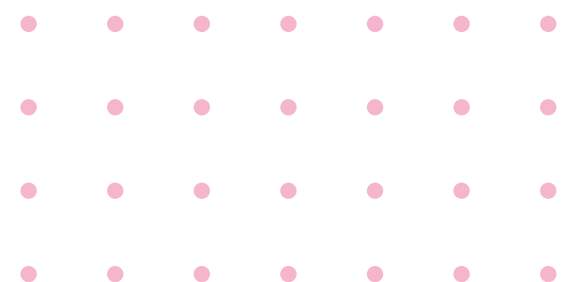
- The emotional support and understanding that students receive, ensuring their well-being is prioritised.
- Students who feel cared for are more likely to reach out for help, overcome challenges, and succeed academically.
- **How to foster care:**
  - **Buddy systems:** Work with Students' Union to connect new and returning students to enable integration into student life
  - **Wellness resources:** Signpost students to activities, resources, and services that support wellbeing
  - **Mentoring:** Partner students with mentors to help them prepare for employment or entrepreneurial opportunities

# COMPETENCE

- Students' belief in their ability to successfully meet the demands of their academic work.
- Students who feel competent are more likely to engage fully in their learning, stay motivated, and achieve academic success.
- **How to foster competence:**
  - **Scaffold learning activities:** Use Blooms Taxonomy to progressively build skills
  - **Clear expectations:** Set clear learning goals
  - **Frequent feedback:** Provide regular, constructive feedback

# CONFIDENCE

- The belief students have in their ability to achieve success and thrive in academic and social environments.
- Confidence allows students to take on challenges, participate in discussions, and seek help when needed.
- **How to foster confidence:**
  - **Growth mindset:** Frame challenges as opportunities for learning
  - **Low-stakes assessments:** Provide low-stake assessments early on to help students build confidence without fear of failure
  - **Celebrate successes:** Acknowledge students' progress and small wins to reinforce their self-belief





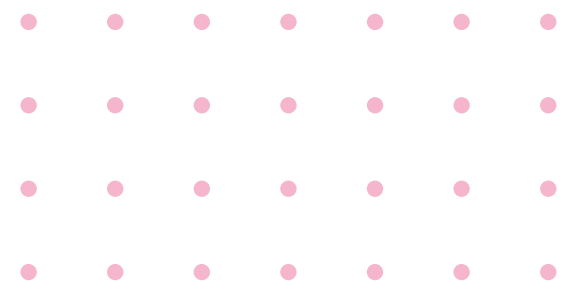
# PROJECT BENEFITS

- Amplify our commitment to belonging
- Scaffolding on our existing framework
- Connecting different stakeholders towards the same vision
- Improving retention, satisfaction, learner success and reduce degree awarding gap.



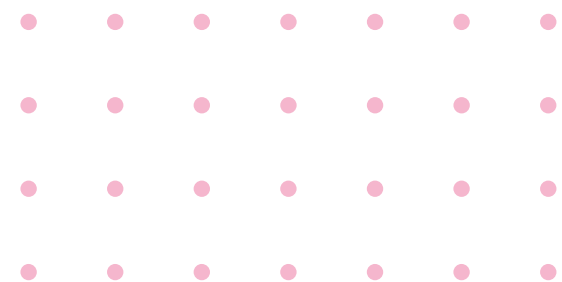
# PROGRESS TO DATE

- Staff development day
- Programme / school Induction events
- Attend start of term engagement across schools
- Added belonging questions to MEQ & student PAQ



# SUCCESS

- Unique relationship building opportunities with SU officers
- Integrated thinking and delivery of project (dismantling silos)
- Systematic data collection on belonging
- Data informed intervention planning
- Project hyper visibility



# THEORY OF CHANGE - HIGHLIGHTS

Aim

Drive progress toward institution Vision2028 targets through improving a sense of belonging amongst students

Situation/Problem

Meet targets for retention, learner success, continuation, and degree awarding gap

Outcomes/Impact

Examples: short-term > awareness; med-term> attendance, satisfaction, personal assessment; long-term> 97% retention, etc.

Inputs

Framework, staff and student resources, funding

Outputs

Community of practice, initiatives/interventions, case studies

Mechanisms/Assumptions

Belonging is a driver to improve student outcomes, community of practice helping staff to develop interventions, effective communications throughout student journey to encourage engagement with interventions and support...



# THANK YOU



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