An institution-wide approach to reducing plagiarism in a UK University.

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About Sheffield Hallam University.

- Established in 1843 as the Sheffield School of Design and became a university in 1992;

- Our vision is to be the world's leading applied university, achieving outstanding outcomes for our students and our city, and showing the world what a university genuinely focused on transforming lives can achieve;

- Nearly 30,000 enrolled students-the seventh largest in the UK;

- Made up of two campuses within easy walking distance of one another.

Why a new approach?

Sheffield Hallam University, one of the UK's largest, has recently changed its approach and regulations regarding identifying and managing plagiarism across the institution of approximately 30,000 students. The academic staff had lost faith with the way the university managed academic misconduct. There was particular dissatisfaction with the range of sanctions administered in cases where an allegation of misconduct was proven. The feeling among academics was that students were 'getting away with cheating', and therefore change was needed.

This poster presents the key policy changes, including publication of a Code of Academic Conduct, and outlines how these changes were designed and enacted.

What principles underpin the new approach?

- Procedural fairness and natural justice, i.e. that the process and outcome is morally right and fair;

- The burden of proof remains with the University;

- Judgements regarding allegations are decided on the balance of probabilities;

- The process rests on academic evidence-based judgement.

A new code of academic conduct.

- Key changes have been made, which include a new code of academic conduct. This asserts that "the university is committed to developing a culture of good academic conduct, and ensures that all assessments are conducted fairly and equitably. Furthermore, the code adds that academic conduct plays an important role in students' intellectual and professional development, as well as in their successful transition to graduate employment and future careers. It is also an ethical standard by which the academic community operates"

https://students.shu.ac.uk/regulations/conduct_discipline/Academic%20Conduct%20Regulations%202017-18.pdf

Key changes made.

- A more nurturing, supportive approach in the first instance- *"A concern has been raised regarding your academic conduct....";*
- Coursework and examinations are dealt with separately;
- We aim to complete the process within 40 working days of notifying the student;
- A simplified set of 5 sanctions;
- Mitigating circumstances (supported by documented evidence) can be taken into consideration by academic conduct panels at sanction stage;
- Online training resource for students to complete.

We wanted to see some other improvements…

❖ The proportion of proven cases of misconduct among BME students to be reduced;

❖ More effective signposting to resources supporting academic integrity, and to explore whether there are students struggling to engage with resources, and whether a more targeted approach is worthwhile;

❖ Facilitate a more supportive, nurturing and developmental approach to academic integrity among students early in their study at SHU, using the new academic concerns;

❖ For all, and particularly BME students, to have raised awareness of the risks of plagiarism, and more generally what issues arouse concerns with the integrity of their coursework.

We wanted to see some other improvements…(2)

❖ For all students, and particularly BME students to feel more confident to engage with existing supporting resources, both face-to-face and online;

❖ Increase awareness, knowledge and understanding of academic integrity among academics, and professional services colleagues;

❖ Facilitate a more joined-up approach to outline best practice, by working alongside key stakeholders including the Student Union Advice Centre and Assessment, Awards & Regulations;

❖ The constitution of the academic conduct panels to more closely represent the diversity of the student body.

Further information.

Further information:

www.hallamstudentsunion.com/advice_help/

https://shuspace.shu.ac.uk/

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