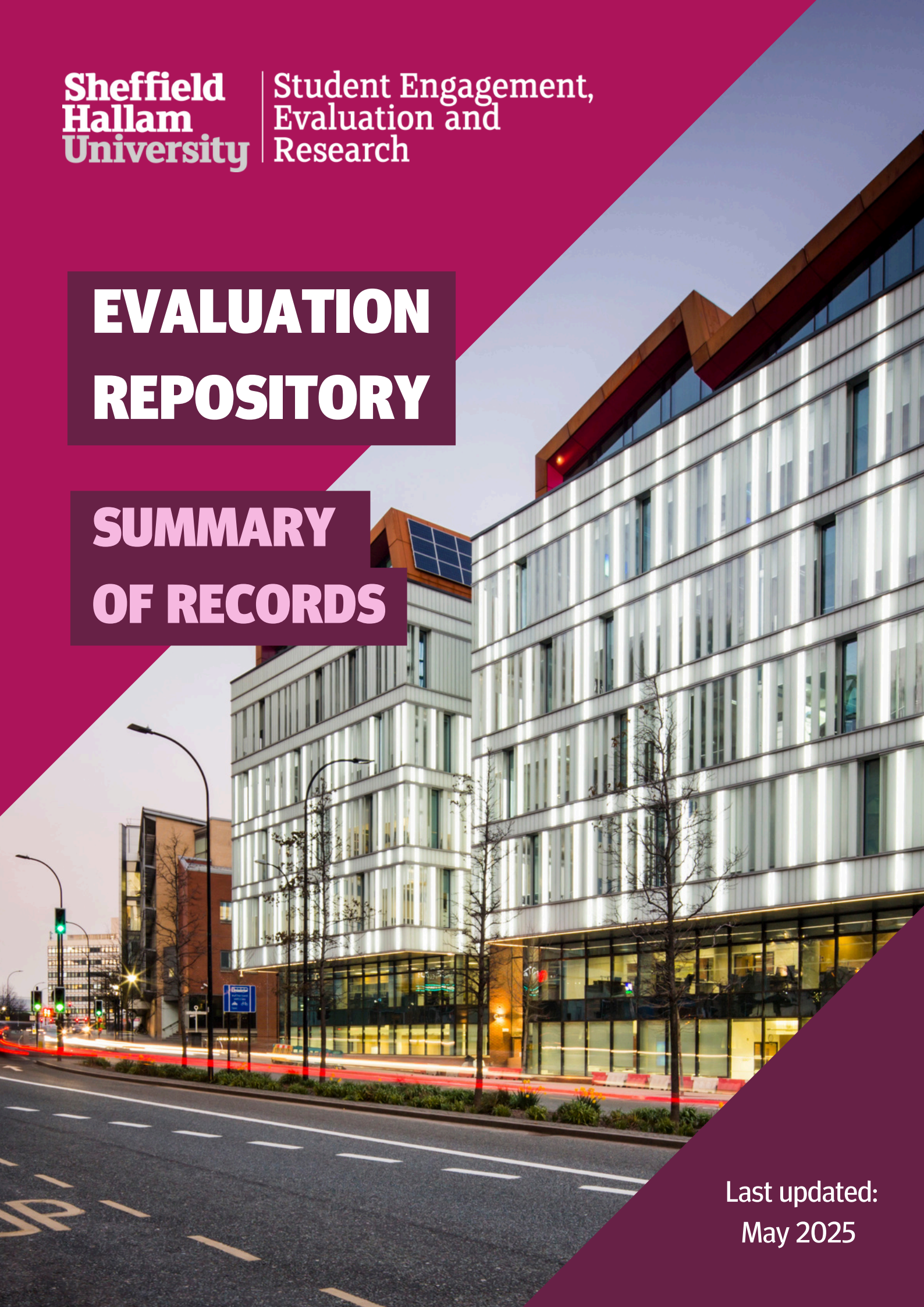


**Sheffield
Hallam
University**

Student Engagement,
Evaluation and
Research

EVALUATION REPOSITORY

SUMMARY OF RECORDS



Last updated:
May 2025

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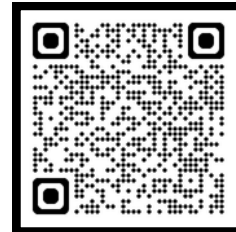
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Sheffield Hallam University's Evaluation Repository

Visit the website at <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/steer/>
or follow the QR code:



What is the Evaluation Repository?

In late 2022, Sheffield Hallam's Evaluation Repository was formally launched by Student Engagement Evaluation and Research (STEER) to share the learning from (previously unpublished) evaluations of interventions and research that are carried out by staff members and students within the University and at partnership organisations. This includes interventions that aim to enhance outcomes at a stage of the student lifecycle (access, success and progression into employment and further study). The purpose of this document is to showcase the items that have been submitted to the evaluation repository, with the aim of raising awareness of practices that users can apply when designing and planning their own interventions and evaluations.

What is 'evaluation'?

There are many different definitions of evaluation that are available. Patton describes evaluation as involving 'making judgements about the merit, value, significance, credibility, and utility of whatever is being evaluated: for example, a program, a policy, a product, or the performance of a person or team'.

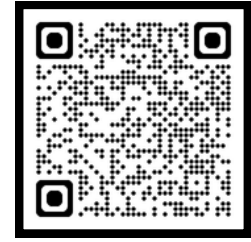
What records are available on the evaluation repository?

A range of evidence is available relating to different stages of the student lifecycle, student and staff groups, and types of evidence (exploratory, narrative and empirical), which refers to the claims that can be made from the findings of the evaluation or research. All the items summarised in this document are accessible on the Evaluation Repository website. Links and QR codes are provided.

How can I find out the meaning of some of the key terms used throughout this document and on the repository website?

Please visit the ['Glossary' page on the website to learn more about the key terms and concepts](#) used.

Adding to the Evaluation Repository



Any current member of staff working at Sheffield Hallam University or at a partnership organisation (e.g. Sheffield Hallam Students' Union, HeppSY, Hepp) can submit items. Submitting evaluation items to this repository helps others at Sheffield Hallam and across the sector to use the learning for their own practice. It also provides an opportunity for authors to gain greater recognition and visibility for their work, as the items appear on scholarly indexes, such as Google Scholar.



Prior to submitting, please read the **submission guidance** on the website and arrange to speak with a member of STEER by contacting us at **evaluationrepository@shu.ac.uk**

Complete the **online submission form**, where authors are required to outline the key details of the evaluation and upload any relevant outputs or documents.

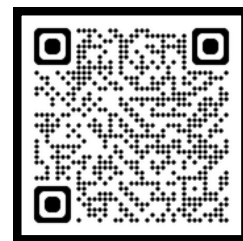


The submission will be **checked by a reviewer** to ensure that it is suitable for inclusion. Please read the **submission guidance** to understand the expectations of each submission.



If the submission is accepted, the item will be **uploaded** and the author will be notified. If a submission is not initially accepted, authors will receive feedback and have the opportunity to resubmit.

Barriers into Higher Education for disabled students (2024)



Authors: [Liam Claricoats](#)

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Student Experience, Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Access and outreach

Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

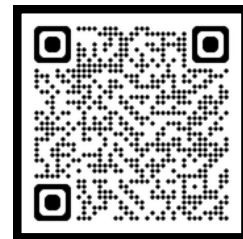
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/33456/>

DOI: [10.7190/STEER/Barriers_Disabled_Students](https://doi.org/10.7190/STEER/Barriers_Disabled_Students)

Summary:

According to Sheffield Hallam University's Access and Participation Plan (20/21-24/25), there has been an increased number of disabled students entering Higher Education (HE), with 14.6% of students declaring a disability in the sector. Therefore, this review of the literature explored potential barriers into Higher Education for students with disabilities. Within Higher Education institutions, disabled students may be categorised into having 'mental health', 'cognitive and learning', 'sensory, medical and physical' or 'multiple impairment' related disabilities. This review was commissioned in collaboration with the Higher Education Progression Partnership (South Yorkshire), with the aim of identifying barriers into Higher Education institutions for disabled students. Evidence provided from this literature review is intended to assist in developing a rationale for an intervention design and delivery that alleviates the barriers into Higher Education for disabled students. From examining the literature, a prominent barrier that emerged was a lack of accessibility at university. For instance, an inconsistent willingness from tutors to make reasonable adjustments to assessments, a lack of understanding of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) characteristics and spread-out university campus buildings that were inaccessible for students with Cerebral Palsy/walking disabilities. The research findings also revealed that there was a lack of accessible spaces on campus for disabled students. Furthermore, disabled students' perceptions of stigmatisation and discrimination of disclosing their disability was another key barrier into Higher Education.

Ditch the Doubt: Headline Project Evaluation Report HeppSY (2022)



Authors: **Jessica Whitby**

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Access and outreach

Type of evaluation evidence: Empirical (evidence has been collected which reports that there have been changes in outcomes for those receiving an intervention)

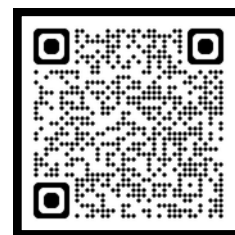
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/32214/>

DOI: [10.7190/STEER/Ditch_Doubt](https://doi.org/10.7190/STEER/Ditch_Doubt)

Summary:

The Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire (HeppSY) works with cohorts of students who face additional barriers to progression to higher education (HE), beyond those of other students of the same age. Ditch the Doubt was developed for Uni Connect Programme students who face such barriers and it ran across 7 centres between March 2022 and June 2022. A total of 93 students participated. HeppSY adopted a mixed-method triangulation approach consisting of pre and post questionnaires, focus groups, rating scale activities and teacher observation forms. The data collected throughout the project was used to explore the impact of the programme in five key areas: HE knowledge, career knowledge, seeing your future self, academic confidence, and likelihood to apply for HE at age 18/19. Ditch the Doubt had a clear impact on the students who participated. Students were equipped with greater knowledge of pathways, which will support them in making an informed choice about HE. Students developed an increased understanding of student life and a greater sense of fit within HE. An increase in personal and academic confidence also emerged through survey and focus group data, as well as via the embedded coaching rating scales. The rating scales indicated that the coaching is a key component of Ditch the Doubt, highlighting its positive impact on the students' confidence, trust in their own judgement and perception of their future.

Hepp Multiple Intervention Programme Pilot Year – Impact and Learning (2023)



Authors: Alexander Bairstow and Thomas Broom

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Higher Education Progression Partnership

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Access and outreach

Type of evaluation evidence: Empirical (evidence has been collected which reports that there have been changes in outcomes for those receiving an intervention)

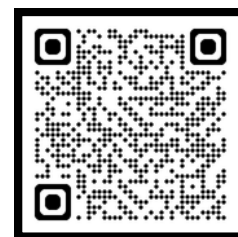
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/34231/>

DOI: 10.7190/STEER/Hepp_MIP

Summary:

In 2022/23 Higher Education Progression Partnership (Hepp) piloted a multiple intervention programme (MIP) for learners in Years 8 to 10. Three interventions were delivered, aiming to provide participants with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed decisions about progression to higher education. Evidence suggests that such sustained interventions are more impactful on increasing HE access, as well as enabling Hepp to conduct more robust evaluation. As a pilot study, we were aiming to test any measurable change in outcomes. We aimed for a wide variation in programme configuration (such as delivery methods, session types, cohort sizes) to see what was most effective. We tested the full range of outcomes derived from Hepp's existing resources to see in which areas the programme was most impactful. We used a pre- and post-survey with 28 pre-validated 5-point Likert scale questions measuring 12 outcomes. Pre- and post-surveys were matched for 840 learners across 18 schools. Overall, there were significant positive differences in scores for fit and belonging, self-efficacy, academic confidence, choices and pathways, and expectations for progression, and for some questions testing financial and career benefits, and social/academic benefits. Qualitative research was also conducted to understand learner experience of the programme. An open question asked learners what they had gained from the programme (n=496) - these showed appreciation of knowledge gained. A focus group showed that they showed a good level of understanding of higher education and future options and a sense of fit and belonging at university.

HeppSY Partnership Evaluation Reports (2023)



Authors: Chuanyan Zhu, Jessica Whitby, Jacqueline Gill, Daniel Fletcher, Lucy Clague and Stefanie Williamson

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Access and outreach

Type of evaluation evidence: Empirical (evidence has been collected which reports that there have been changes in outcomes for those receiving an intervention)

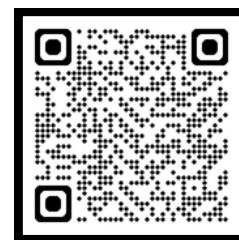
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/33478/>

DOI: 10.7190/STEER/HeppSY

Summary:

The Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire (HeppSY) is part of the Uni Connect Programme (UCP), funded by the Office for Students. The main focus of Uni Connect is to provide targeted higher education outreach to young people in Years 9 to 13 living in particular geographic areas. From November 2017 to 2023, HeppSY conducted an annual Learner Survey to evaluate the students' understanding of higher education, their expectations, and important factors related to their academic performance and choices. HeppSY evaluators consistently employed gap analysis method to analyse the learner survey data and to identify: changes in outcomes between different academic year; gaps of specific learning outcomes between different demographic groups; and the cold spots (areas where there is no outreach delivery). Annual partnership reports provide insights from the analysis of survey data to inform what worked and what more needs to be done. They are valuable tools for strategic planning for HeppSY interventions.

HeppSY Uni Connect Outreach: Longitudinal Evaluation (2023)



Authors: Daniel Fletcher

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Access and outreach

Type of evaluation evidence: Empirical (evidence has been collected which reports that there have been changes in outcomes for those receiving an intervention)

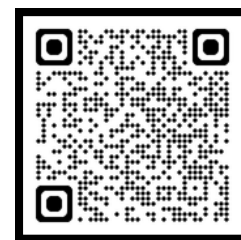
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/32215/>

DOI: [10.7190/STEER/Longitudinal](https://doi.org/10.7190/STEER/Longitudinal)

Summary:

The Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire (HeppSY) is part of the Uni Connect Programme (UCP), funded by the Office for Students. The main focus of Uni Connect is to provide targeted higher education (HE) outreach to young people in Years 9 to 13 living in particular geographic areas. From August 2021 this broadened out to include the targeting of adult learners (learners aged 19 and above). HeppSY is working in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University, The University of Sheffield and South Yorkshire schools and colleges. To provide evidence for the impact of HeppSY outreach on outcomes relevant to HE access, a series of analyses were conducted matching together multiple waves of an annual student survey, HeppSY activity data, and student HE access data drawn from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The results indicated that students who participated in more hours of outreach displayed greater increases in self-reported HE knowledge across survey waves, while evidence for an association between outreach engagement and increases in intention of applying to HE was mixed. Importantly, greater engagement in HeppSY outreach was associated with increased odds of accessing HE, and this relationship remained significant after controlling for baseline intentions of applying to HE.

Pre-HE Mentoring Programmes: Rapid Evidence Review (2023)



Authors: Julian Crockford

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Student Experience, Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Access and outreach

Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/32024/>

DOI: [10.7190/STEER/Pre_HE_Mentoring](https://doi.org/10.7190/STEER/Pre_HE_Mentoring)

Summary:

This is a rapid review of a sample of evaluation reports concerning pre-HE (outreach) mentoring programmes for young people. The report identified a number of key practical and implementation issues associated with the impact of mentoring programmes, including the targeting, selection and recruitment of mentees and mentors, the role of mentor training, and how mentoring is understood to deliver its objectives (either as a delivery mechanism for other programme elements, or itself the key mechanism of change). The report goes on to provide an overview of the evaluation approaches adopted across the case studies and identifies a series of evaluation challenges, many of which are likely to be common to the evaluation of other pre-HE outreach activities. The report concludes with a summary of 9 case studies, comparing mentoring programme design and implementation, intended outcomes and evaluation approach. Although primarily written for an audience considering developing or delivering a mentoring programme in this space, we hope that elements of this report, including a discussion of evaluation challenges, may have wider relevance.

Supporting Care Experienced, Mature and Young Carer Learners into HE: Sustained Programmes and Train the Trainer Interventions (2022-2023)

Authors: Kelly Self (1-3) and Nathaniel Pickering (2)

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Higher Education Progression Partnership and Student Experience Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Access and outreach

Type of evaluation evidence: Narrative (a narrative is provided about why an intervention is being carried out and why it might be effective)

Summary:

Hepp (Higher Education Progression Partnership) is a jointly funded initiative by Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Sheffield that provides impartial advice and guidance across South Yorkshire and North East Derbyshire. Hepp aims to encourage more children, young people and adults that have experienced personal, systemic, or cultural barriers to accessing higher education to consider it as a viable option. Underpinned by extensive literature reviews, these reports provide narratives and Theory of Change models for sustained programmes and train the trainer activities, which aim to increase awareness and knowledge about higher education among Hepp's stakeholders. There are separate records for three different groups of learners: care experienced; mature; and young carers.

1. Care Experienced Learners:

<https://shura.shu.ac.uk/31774/>



2. Mature Learners:

<https://shura.shu.ac.uk/30907/>

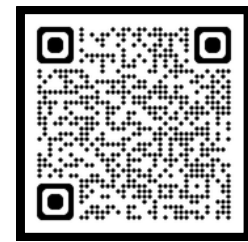


3. Young Carer Learners:

<https://shura.shu.ac.uk/32575/>



Higher Education Engagement among Students with Armed Services Backgrounds: A Literature Review (2023)



Authors: Katherine Rogers

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Sheffield Hallam Students' Union

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Access and outreach, Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

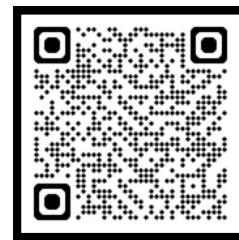
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/31850/>

DOI: [10.7190/STEER/Armed_Services](https://doi.org/10.7190/STEER/Armed_Services)

Summary:

A systematic review of the literature relating to British military families (service and ex-service personnel, spouses and partners and children) and access to, and retention in, higher education; the review evaluates twenty-one articles and reports. Lord Ashcroft's 2014 Veterans' Transition Review provided a comprehensive account of the contemporary situation with regard to military service personnel and their families, and transition into civilian life (including access to higher education). This review examines the findings of the Ashcroft report and subsequent research to identify (positive and negative) factors that influence access to, and retention of students with an armed forces background in higher education. By synthesizing the literature, this report makes recommendations about actions to improve access to university, and retention, of students with an armed services background. Students with an armed services background are not a single homogenous group; the Centre for Military Research, Education and Public Engagement identifies six distinct groups. This report examines the different barriers encountered by different groups and makes specific recommendations for different groups of students with an armed services background.

The Value of Second Chances: Reflections of Undergraduate Students on their Foundation Year Experience (2022)



Authors: Nathaniel Pickering

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Student Experience Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Access and outreach, Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

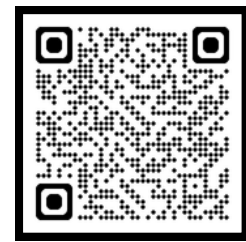
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/32197/>

DOI: [10.7190/STEER/Second_Chances](https://doi.org/10.7190/STEER/Second_Chances)

Summary:

Foundation year (FY) provision provides access to Higher Education for those not meeting the requirements for undergraduate study by developing skills and subject-specific knowledge. The provision has experienced significant growth and now plays a crucial role within many institutions, helping them reach their widening access and recruitment targets in a highly competitive market. However, the 2019 Review commissioned by the Government (informally known as the Augar Review) raised concerns about the 'poor value for money' and the quality of these courses. Current research establishes a counter-narrative that shows the value and positive impact on students of FY courses. However, questions remain about how they prepare students to progress/succeed in their degrees and the value of that experience for those that access them. This presentation addresses these gaps by reporting findings from 18 interviews with students. The results show that the FY often provides students with a 'second chance' at education, and their value can be understood within four interrelated domains of value: functional, psychological, social, and monetary.

A Process and Impact Evaluation of the PGCert and MA Student Engagement in Higher Education programme (2022)



Authors: Alan Donnelly and Liz Austen

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Student Experience Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Empirical (evidence has been collected which reports that there have been changes in outcomes for those receiving an intervention)

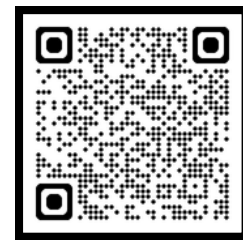
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/30905/>

DOI: 10.7190/STEER/PGCert_MA

Summary:

This executive summary provides a brief overview of a project which evaluated the processes and impact of the Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) and Master's (MA) in Student Engagement in Higher Education at the University of Winchester. The postgraduate programme of study focuses on student engagement practices, policies and partnerships in UK Higher Education (HE) and it was created in 2018 to address a lack of professional development opportunities for practitioners who are responsible for engaging with students in HE. A Theory of Change approach was adopted to structure the evaluation, which aimed to understand 'how much' and 'how and why' change had occurred on the course since its inception. A mixed-methods post-test design was used. An Advisory Group of practitioners, who were either studying on the course or had graduated, were recruited to co-design the evaluation and co-create the Theory of Change model. Evidence of impact was collated from practitioners studying on the course, graduates and staff on the course via peer-led interviews, online reflective activities and other sources of evidence. The evaluation findings highlighted that the programme had a positive impact on practitioners while studying on and after completing the course across several areas, for example, within their knowledge, skills and practices, confidence in academic spaces, networks and career progression. Impact was also reported within practitioners' organisations of employment. The blended delivery of the programme enabled individuals to study on the course alongside their professional roles and the effectiveness of these processes facilitated the impact outcomes.

A Process and Impact Evaluation of a University's Module Evaluation Questionnaire (2021)



Authors: Alan Donnelly and Caroline Heaton

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Student Experience Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Empirical (evidence has been collected which reports that there have been changes in outcomes for those receiving an intervention)

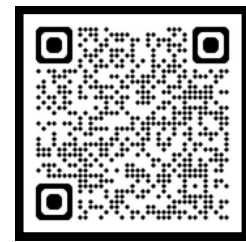
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/34404/>

DOI: [10.7190/STEER/MEQ_Evaluation](https://doi.org/10.7190/STEER/MEQ_Evaluation)

Summary:

A review was commissioned by Sheffield Hallam University's Leadership Team into the Module Evaluation Questionnaire (MEQ) to find out what difference it was making and how the data was being used. A range of evidence was gathered and drawn upon for this mixed-methods evaluation, including: online focus groups and interviews with 60 module leaders across three colleges; an online reflective activity with teaching and learning (T&L) portfolio leads from 10 departments; interviews with 19 student course representatives; monitoring data and other evidence; and findings from literature and research across the sector. The steady fall in response rates in recent years, not just when the delivery of MEQs changed from paper to online, had limited the use of the data and its ability to fulfil its intended purposes in relation to quality assurance and quality enhancement. The standardised design of the MEQ was seen as a factor that restricted its potential usefulness. Relevant literature highlighted a range of factors that are helpful in promoting questionnaires to students, but there was a limit to how much effect these practices had. Some practices were perceived to be harder to implement when teaching and learning was delivered predominantly in an online environment. The switch to online delivery of MEQs a few years before made it harder to personalise and explain their purpose and value to students. Some student reps were motivated to take part in the MEQ process, but others were reluctant to engage. There is a need to strengthen evaluation capacity building at all levels. Recommendations are provided to address specific issues identified from the evaluation findings.

Calm Spaces: A Strategic Intervention for Enhancing Wellbeing, Inclusion, and Psychological Safety (2025)



Authors: Jozef Sen

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Student and Academic Services

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Narrative (a narrative is provided about why an intervention is being carried out and why it might be effective)

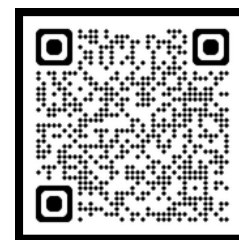
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/35612/>

DOI: [10.7190/STEER/CalmSpaces](https://doi.org/10.7190/STEER/CalmSpaces)

Summary:

The Calm Spaces Initiative at Sheffield Hallam University was developed in response to increasing demand for accessible, preventative mental health and wellbeing interventions embedded within everyday campus environments. Grounded in a Theory of Change framework, the initiative integrates sensory-friendly, emotionally regulating resources - such as posters and digital media -into high-traffic and reflective university spaces. Co-produced by Student Wellbeing Services, Hallam Students' Union, and informed by research into student mental health, neurodiversity, and wellbeing promotion, Calm Spaces aims to reduce barriers to support, foster emotional self-regulation, and contribute to a psychologically safe campus culture. This initial evaluation report outlines how the Calm Spaces Initiative is expected to contribute to improved mental wellbeing for students and staff across Sheffield Hallam University. The report also summarises evidence of user engagement and feedback as well as reflections of the project lead about successes and the next steps of the initiative. Early evaluation evidence suggests the initiative has achieved high visibility and positive reception among students and staff, with qualitative feedback highlighting its accessibility, practicality, and particular benefit for neurodivergent individuals. The simplicity and unobtrusiveness of the design were cited as strengths, enabling discreet access to wellbeing prompts without the need for formal help-seeking. Calm Spaces aligns with national strategies promoting a whole-university approach to mental health, and aims to contribute to broader institutional outcomes including improved wellbeing, enhanced academic engagement, and greater retention.

Evaluation of Bursary and College Projects: Producers of Enhancement, Evaluation and Research (PEER) (2024)



Authors: **Claire Wolstenholme and Nathaniel Pickering**

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Student Experience Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Empirical (evidence has been collected which reports that there have been changes in outcomes for those receiving an intervention)

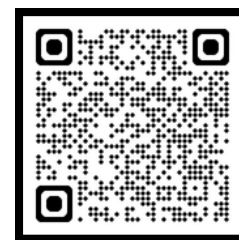
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/34551/>

DOI: **10.7190/STEER/PEER**

Summary:

This evaluation examined the Producers of Enhancement, Evaluation and Research (PEER) programme at Sheffield Hallam University. The study aimed to assess the implementation and outcomes of PEER, focusing on the benefits and challenges of staff-student collaboration. The PEER programme, which has employed nearly 200 students and delivered over 100 projects in three years, aims to enhance student experiences and outcomes through staff-student collaborations. This evaluation involved semi-structured interviews with 10 student researchers and 9 staff project leads, to understand their motivations, experiences, and perceptions of the programme's impacts. Findings indicate that involvement in PEER has, for some students, led to skills development, with students gaining valuable research experience, as well as the ability to work with staff in open and collaborative ways that may not have been previously experienced. Staff reported benefiting from the insights of students and the opportunity to get to know them in a more personal way. Challenges identified included communication issues, time constraints, and delays from ethical approval process difficulties. Effective communication and relationship-building between staff and students were important enablers of success. The study highlights the importance of clear guidance and support from the Student Engagement Evaluation and Research (STEER) team. Recommendations include improving the matching process for staff and student researchers and ensuring staff and students are clear about roles and expectations.

Evaluating the Impact of Higher Education Funding Aimed to Address Student Hardship: Survey Findings (2021)



Authors: Alan Donnelly

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Student Experience Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Empirical (evidence has been collected which reports that there have been changes in outcomes for those receiving an intervention)

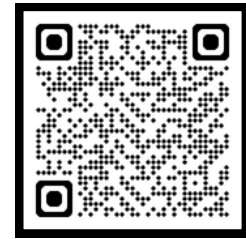
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/30729/>

DOI: [10.7190/STEER/Student_Hardship](https://doi.org/10.7190/STEER/Student_Hardship)

Summary:

This report explores the findings of an evaluation conducted at Sheffield Hallam University to understand the impact of institutional financial support provided to students who are under-represented in higher education or who are facing hardship. This evaluation implemented the validated financial support evaluation toolkit, which is recommended by the Office for Students, as the framework for this data collection and analysis (McCaig et al., 2016). The survey tool, which was used in this current phase of the evaluation, contains closed and open-ended questions that explore what the funding has enabled its recipients to do and what might have not been possible otherwise. A total of 5,302 students received financial support from the University in 2020/21 and 347 of these responded to the survey, which is a response rate of 7%. The survey findings highlighted how respondents used other financial sources, aside from the hardship funding, to pay for their higher education, such as loans, overdrafts, earnings from work and money from friends or family. Without the financial support, its recipients reported that they would not only find it difficult to access the essential provisions of teaching and learning but also to be able to pay for basic living costs. Other key benefits reported by respondents were that the financial support enabled them to: concentrate on their university work, with the money helping many to pay for devices and IT equipment: continue with their studies; and ease their anxieties and support their mental health. However, it is important to note that the low response rate limits the generalisations that can be made from the survey respondents to the wider population.

Exploring Course Leaders' Reflections of Learning Communities at Sheffield Hallam University (2021)



Authors: Alan Donnelly, Rachael Parsons and Dan Pearson

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Student Experience Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

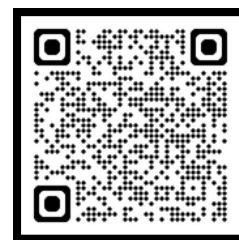
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/32216/>

DOI: 10.7190/STEER/Learning_Communities

Summary:

The overarching aim of the project was to explore and capture examples of practices and ideas for success to enhance the course experience for students, with a particular emphasis on the theme of learning communities. Learning communities was an area that received a notable decrease in student satisfaction in the 2021 National Student Survey (NSS) at Sheffield Hallam University. Interviews were carried out with eight course leaders to explore: the practices used on their courses; the aspects that could be made even better; and the evidence that they draw upon to understand the effectiveness of these practices. The following themes were identified: 1) staff-student relationships; 2) curriculum content and pedagogy; 3) peer networks and relationships; 4) supportive relationships between staff members; 5) societies and external networks. The practices identified by course leaders were consistent with practices identified in other relevant literature.

Increasing the Reach of the Skills Centre (2024)



Authors: Samuel Dougherty

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Student and Academic Services

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Empirical (evidence has been collected which reports that there have been changes in outcomes for those receiving an intervention)

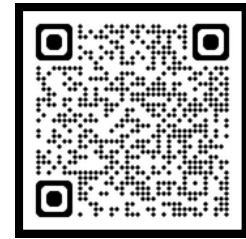
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/33557/>

DOI: 10.7190/STEER/Skills_Centre

Summary:

The Library Skills Centre provides centralised academic support to students across all levels and courses within the university. In the 2021/22 academic year, the Skills Centre saw 3837 unique students. While the service is inclusive, groups of students are underrepresented in attendance figures, who have also been highlighted in the university's Access and Participation Plan. In order to address this, a small scale research project was undertaken by the Library's Skills Centre to ascertain potential barriers to learning and make suggestions about possible meaningful interventions to overcome these. Research was undertaken by Skills Centre staff alongside student researchers and findings were used to inform the co-creation of a new induction workshop with the input of Skills Partners. This report summarises the main findings from the project, insights about working and co-creating resources with students and recommendations to inform future practice.

“It’s Hard to Make Friends on Zoom Calls”: Navigating ‘Culture Shock’ and Academic Identity Development in Higher Education (2024)



Authors: Bryony Rose, Jessica Mason and David Peplow

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Sheffield
Institute of Education

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could
be used to design an intervention)

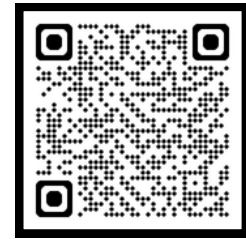
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/34399/>

DOI: [10.7190/STEER/Zoom_Calls](https://doi.org/10.7190/STEER/Zoom_Calls)

Summary:

This small-scale project investigated student academic identity development within a university setting. It focused on the challenges encountered by students at university, particularly when beginning higher education, and explored how these had an impact on their self-esteem, confidence, and academic engagement. The project explored the journeys that students undertook and the barriers that they experienced. The project collected data using focus groups and questionnaires, which took place between May and August 2023, and four participants took part. The data was analysed and the findings were reported under three key themes: digital spaces, expectations, and time and workload. In the first theme, participants collectively experienced similar concerns and stresses within the university’s digital spaces. For example, being unaware that a large portion of their course would be held online, which was in part due to COVID. For some, this led to difficulties in forging new relationships within a digital environment. In the second theme, participants held inaccurate or negative expectations about university life before their arrival, such as it being strict and exam-based. In the third theme, students’ workloads and time commitments, exacerbated by COVID and the cost-of-living crisis, left little room for socialising and networking. The project also identified good practices and strategies aimed at supporting students to develop a confident academic identity.

Minority Ethnic Male University Students' Perceptions of, and Preferences for Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Services at SHU (2023)



Authors: Claire Wolstenholme and Jozef Sen

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Student Experience, Teaching and Learning, Student and Academic Services

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

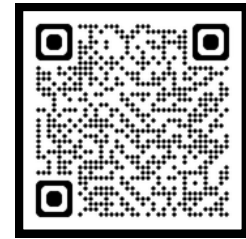
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/33011/>

DOI: [10.7190/STEER/Mental_Health_Support](https://doi.org/10.7190/STEER/Mental_Health_Support)

Summary:

University support services are often underutilised by ethnic minority male students. This research aimed to identify the perceptions of ethnic minority male students around using university mental health support services, including the barriers and facilitators to utilisation. The project used Listening Rooms for data collection, whereby participants pair up and undertake a recorded conversation based around talking points pertaining to the project. Fourteen pairs (n=28) participated in conversations. A round table analysis of the data took place, followed by further thematic analysis on the transcripts using Nvivo. Participants overall appeared to be positive about and grateful for, the existence of a mental health support service, despite a mixed level of awareness of its existence and differing conceptualizations of what mental health means. Barriers to service utilisation could be split into institutional and sociocultural. Institutional barriers included a perceived lack of cultural and ethnic representation amongst practitioners, as well as bureaucratic factors such as access difficulties, whereas sociocultural barriers pertained to cultural taboos and fear of judgement. As university intakes become ever more diverse, university support services must adapt to meet the needs of their populations. Findings support the need for a more representative staffing of services which would engender confidence in ethnic minority male students. Working to further raise awareness levels of the service as well as explaining how, when and why one might access the service would also be beneficial to those who do seek support.

Research-Informed Teaching Toolkit (2022)



Authors: David Smith, Katie Shearn, Joanne Lidster, Girish Ramchandani, Jonathan Wheat, Melissa Lacey; Libby Allcock, Lewis Partington, Hannah Brierley, Ben Robinson and Tamas Sebok

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Department of Biosciences and Chemistry, Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Department of Sport and Physical Activity

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

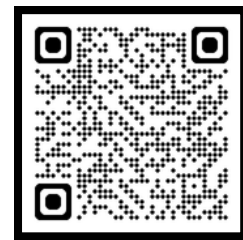
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/32120/>

DOI: [10.7190/STEER/Research_Informed_Teaching](https://doi.org/10.7190/STEER/Research_Informed_Teaching)

Summary:

Research-informed teaching is a term used to describe the different ways in which students are exposed to research content and activities during their time at university. Depending on your discipline this could also be called practice-informed teaching. A four-year body of research involving over 600 students from across Sheffield Hallam University has been used to draw together the following five key Curriculum Design Principles to embed research and practice into teaching: 1) Embed research and practice skills at the course level and develop them through the course. Moving students from consumers of research and best practice to creators of research and best practice. 2) Academic research and practice can form the basis of taught content and be used as direct examples of applied knowledge. 3) Accessing research literature is a high-level skill and requires scaffolding. 4) Research and practice skills should be taught in context and task linked. 5) Research undertaken by the students should be co-created, with students involved in the design process. Students and University staff from Sport, Nursing, Midwifery, Biosciences and Chemistry were involved in the creation of this toolkit. The toolkit includes an introduction to research-informed teaching, how students perceive research, the barriers and enablers for staff and students to engage with research-informed teaching, skills students develop and ideas for the integration of research-informed teaching.

Student-Led Evaluation of a Practitioner Research Project on Linguistic Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education (2024)



Authors: Melike Bulut Al Baba

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Sheffield Institute of Education

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

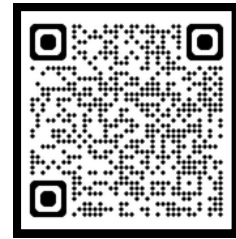
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/34326/>

DOI: [10.7190/STEER/Multilingual_Learners](https://doi.org/10.7190/STEER/Multilingual_Learners)

Summary:

This report offers insights into the research methodology developed to incorporate student-led evaluation into a practitioner research project titled "Enhancing Learning for Multilingual Learners in Higher Education". This was a funded Research and Enhancement project in the College of Social Sciences and Arts at Sheffield Hallam University. While the primary findings related to the exploration and utilization of students' linguistic diversity will be discussed in a separate document, this report focuses on the rationale behind recruiting students for evaluation, the process of their recruitment, and reflections on their participation and engagement throughout the project.

Student Experiences of Using Elicit for Literature Reviews (2024)



Authors: Claire Wolstenholme, Frankie Wardale, Jill Lebihan and Helen Parkin

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Student Experience, Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

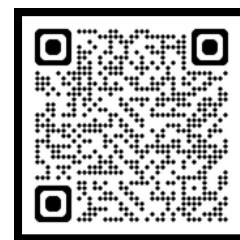
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/34504/>

DOI: 10.7190/STEER/Elicit

Summary:

This study investigated student experiences with Elicit, an AI tool designed to support students with developing literature reviews. The research aimed to understand student perceptions of Elicit's usability and its impact on developing key research skills. Students from various courses and study levels, used Elicit to support their work on an upcoming assignment and shared their views in a focus group or interview. Findings revealed a mix of views on the usefulness and usability of Elicit. While some students found Elicit useful for highlighting key literature on a chosen topic, and appreciated its speed and reliability compared to other AI tools, others criticized the lack of quality assurance of the articles obtained and noted the article summaries as inadequate. Concerns were raised about potential over-reliance on AI tools, with the potential to hinder the development of critical research skills. Participants also debated the ethical implications of AI use in academia, with some viewing it as unfair and flagging the potential for academic misconduct. The study highlights the need for universities to provide clear guidance on AI tool usage to ensure ethical practices and support students in effectively integrating these technologies into their academic work. Despite its small scale, this research underscores the importance of understanding AI's role in teaching and learning.

Study Well, Stay Well: An Exploration of the Relationship between Academic Skills Development and Student Wellbeing (2023)



Authors: **Liam Claricoats**

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Student Experience Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

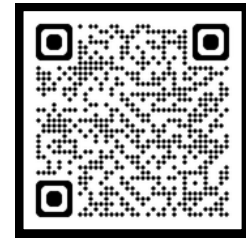
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/31789/>

DOI: [10.7190/STEER/Study_Well](https://doi.org/10.7190/STEER/Study_Well)

Summary:

This review of the literature examined academic skill development and student wellbeing within a Higher Education context. This review was commissioned by the Study Well, Stay Well Working Group at Sheffield Hallam University. This is a cross institutional collaboration between the Skills Centre and Student Support Services, with the aim of increasing student mental wellbeing via academic skill development. Evidence provided from this literature review is intended to assist in developing a rationale for an intervention design and delivery, whilst also demonstrating approaches to evaluation and the identification of outcomes and measures. Upon review of this evidence and that gathered from Listening Rooms research, a Theory of Change will be co-designed with students and key stakeholders to support student wellbeing via the development of academic skills. This review initially explored the relationship between academic skill development and student wellbeing in Higher Education institutions. Additionally, specific academic skills emerged as being predominantly associated with improving mental wellbeing in the student population. Peer mentoring interventions were predominantly used within research, although, academic writing workshops and embedding wellbeing into the curriculum were also implemented. Very limited research has considered the impact of academic skill-based interventions for particular student groups; however, available research did indicate positive outcomes for these students' mental wellbeing. Lastly, the data gathering methodologies that were employed to evaluate the impact of these interventions are discussed, followed by key recommendations.

The impacts of a Sheffield Hallam University Male Student Peer Support Group (Talk Club) on its Peer Facilitators (2024)



Authors: Claire Wolstenholme and Jozef Sen

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Student Experience, Teaching and Learning, Student and Academic Services

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment)

Type of evaluation evidence: Empirical (evidence has been collected which reports that there have been changes in outcomes for those receiving an intervention)

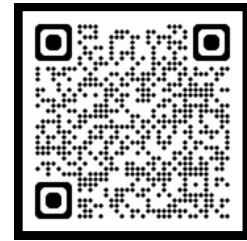
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/35587/>

DOI: [10.7190/STEER/TalkClub](https://doi.org/10.7190/STEER/TalkClub)

Summary:

This small-scale evaluation explores the impacts of a male-only peer support group, Talk Club (TC), on its peer facilitators (captains) at Sheffield Hallam University. The TC was implemented at Hallam to address the underutilization of university wellbeing services by male students, providing a male only wellbeing support group that was peer led. Hallam Talk clubs ran as weekly sessions led by three male student captains, supported by the Lead Wellbeing Practitioner (LWP). The study aimed to understand the perceptions of the impacts on the male student peer facilitators themselves of their role as Captains leading the Talk Clubs at Hallam. Using a qualitative methodology, data were collected through focus groups and interviews with the Captains and the LWP. Thematic analysis revealed significant benefits for the Captains, including improved relationships, enhanced communication skills, and reduced feelings of isolation and loneliness. Key factors contributing to these outcomes included the structured format of TC, consistent support and training from the LWP, and the Captains' own previous experiences with mental health support. Findings suggest that university-based male-only peer support groups can help to address the challenges male students face in discussing mental health and help to develop feelings of belonging and community amongst this demographic. Future research or evaluation work could seek to understand the perception of male attendees of the Hallam Talk Club. The TC format could also be tested with other student groups with a shared demographic.

Course Evaluation Bursary Scheme 2021-22 (2024)



Authors: Nathaniel Pickering

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Student Experience Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment), Progression into employment and further study

Type of evaluation evidence: Exploratory (evidence of a specific topic that could be used to design an intervention)

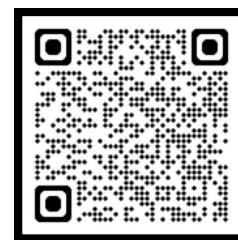
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/33457/>

DOI: [10.7190/STEER/Bursary_Scheme_2122](https://doi.org/10.7190/STEER/Bursary_Scheme_2122)

Summary:

This interim report reflects on the first five months of the Course Enhancement Bursary Scheme (CEBS), which was implemented from September 2021 to July 2022. It explores student and staff views against the expected outcomes of the scheme. Both sets of participants were positive about the scheme but found that seeking ethical approval slowed the projects down.

Evaluation of the Global Citizenship Portfolio (2020)



Authors: Alan Donnelly, Emily Houfe and Temi Labinjo

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Student Experience, Teaching and Learning, Student and Academic Services

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment), Progression into employment and further study

Type of evaluation evidence: Empirical (evidence has been collected which reports that there have been changes in outcomes for those receiving an intervention)

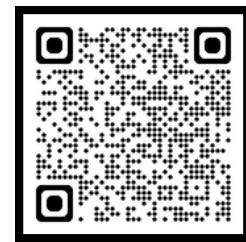
Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/30365/>

DOI: 10.7190/STEER/GCP

Summary:

This evaluation measured the impact of the Global Citizenship Portfolio (GCP), which is a non-credit bearing module at Sheffield Hallam University that aims to support students to become 'global citizens'. The GCP engages students in self-directed learning by combining: academic-run sessions; lectures; an intercultural experience which happens on campus, locally or abroad; and reflection. The evaluation was focused on the cohort of 78 students who started the module in October 2019 or January 2020 and completed it in May 2020. A mixed-methods project was conducted to provide quantitative and qualitative evidence from pre and post-module surveys and a sample of reflective journals. The findings of the evaluation highlighted that the GCP has had a positive impact on students' development in becoming 'global citizens'. Analysis of the data indicated that the majority of participants in the evaluation have demonstrated evidence of acquiring intercultural competencies, regardless of whether they undertook an experience 'at home' or abroad. This will help these students to engage with different value systems, communicate effectively across cultures and understand how their actions and those of others have global consequences. However, the drop in the number of respondents from the pre-module survey to the post-module survey might introduce a bias to the results of the evaluation. Recommendations are provided on the steps that can be taken to enhance the provision of the GCP and to increase the robustness of the evaluation.

Evaluation of Implementation of Models of Academic Advising in Post Graduate Taught Courses (2024)



Authors: Sarah Bosch

Departments, Directorates or Groups (at the time of submission): Student Experience Teaching and Learning

Stage of the Student Lifecycle: Success (e.g. retention and attainment), Progression into employment and further study

Type of evaluation evidence: Empirical (evidence has been collected which reports that there have been changes in outcomes for those receiving an intervention)

Link: <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/33594/>

DOI: [10.7190/STEER/Academic_Advising_PGT](https://doi.org/10.7190/STEER/Academic_Advising_PGT)

Summary:

The first aim of this project was to develop evidence-informed models of academic advising for Postgraduate Taught (PGT) courses that was aligned to the institutional Academic Advising Framework, provided a consistently good experience, and yet was flexible enough to cater for diverse courses and student requirements. The second aim was to evaluate the effectiveness of these models. Three main models were created: Model 1 (out of curriculum); Model 2 (embedded approach); Model 3 (extended advising). A fourth, by permission only, student-led 'Model X', was also created in response to the needs of particular cohorts and departments. Following model implementation student awareness of the Academic Adviser (AA) role and of who theirs is was significantly greater. There were significant increases in the perceptions that academic advisers provided useful advice and guidance, referred to further support as appropriate, and took a personal interest in them, as well as a decrease in end of year withdrawal rates, post-model implementation compared with pre-model implementation. Comparing models, Model 2 (embedded) elicited the most positive results. A higher proportion of students experiencing Model 2 reported they had the opportunity and took up the opportunity to meet with their AA compared with any other model. Thematic analysis qualitative data, pre- and post-implementation revealed six themes: Academic, Professional, Personal, Relational, Contact and AA Model. Recommendations for practice are provided.

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