



CASE STUDY: UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

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Context

The University of East London (UEL) is a multi-faculty university offering undergraduate and postgraduate taught and research degrees across a broad range of academic disciplines. It has campuses at Docklands and Stratford in East London.

UEL has more than 13,500 students, 10,000 of whom follow undergraduate programmes, the remainder undertaking postgraduate study and research. It has more than 1700 staff.

Training

UEL has established a training plan which uses the Leadership Foundation e-learning materials alongside face-to-face training.

Face-to-face

UEL worked with its local authority – the London Borough of Newham – to develop a version of their WRAP training which was suitable for a university environment. The content of this training had commonalities with the Leadership Foundation Module 1, drawing on some of the same case studies. Delivery of the face-to-face training is by the borough's Prevent lead.

The university has also adopted the practice of involving staff from the university's student wellbeing, equality and diversity teams as part of the training delivery team. This helps to focus training on local policies and procedures. It also helps to reinforce the message that Prevent is part of the university's broader responsibility for student welfare, and that the Prevent agenda is not discriminatory.

The face-to-face training was impactful. The involvement of university support staff, and the nature of the case studies discussed, meant that staff quickly engaged with the issues of student wellbeing and the university's response.

E-learning

The Leadership Foundation e-learning materials are also used to enable a greater number of staff to be trained. The module is hosted on Moodle, the university's virtual learning environment, meaning that completion rates can be monitored for onward reporting. The university considered a number of e-learning approaches to Prevent training, and decided that the Leadership Foundation materials represented a comprehensive and cost-effective approach.

The university is developing a short (three to four minutes) awareness video, which gives an overview of Prevent and provides details of relevant local policies – such as the external speaker policy and the fitness to study policy – with links and contact details. This will be used to supplement the Leadership Foundation e-learning modules as part of the cross-university roll-out. It could also be used as part of induction for new staff, and as a periodic refresher for staff who have already been trained.

Broadening the training

The university's inclusion of equality and diversity staff within the Prevent training team had an unexpected benefit.

Discussions of case studies in the face-to-face sessions would sometimes lead to issues around bias being raised: sometimes staff seemed more likely to ascribe radical intent to certain groups of students; in other cases staff shied away from drawing such conclusions out of concern that they were being biased in doing so.

Lessons learned

Nina Harding identified key lessons from UEL's approach to training staff in Prevent:

- Identify the key staff who need to be aware of Prevent, and consider their training needs first. Which staff roles are most likely to be in contact with students and notice any signs of vulnerability?
- Time spent in planning your training approach will make your training programme more effective. Coupled with this, be realistic about how long you will need to meet your training goals.

- Consider rolling out your training programme in stages, working with different teams or groups of staff in turn.
- A communications plan helps to let people know of the Prevent training and the need for them to engage with it. In a large and busy institution, raising awareness like this is important.