



University
of Dundee

Core Pre-Matriculation Awareness Module

Executive Summary



Proposal for Future Implementation

Content Warning: This document may contain information that some readers may find distressing. If you are impacted by any of the content, please consider visiting the [University mental health webpage](#).

The University of Dundee have not yet approved or endorsed any of the content within the proposal paper. Given this is an internal project, however, the use of the university logo was sought and approved by the Director of External Relations. Please refer to the full paper for further details concerning this proposal.

Proposal Summary

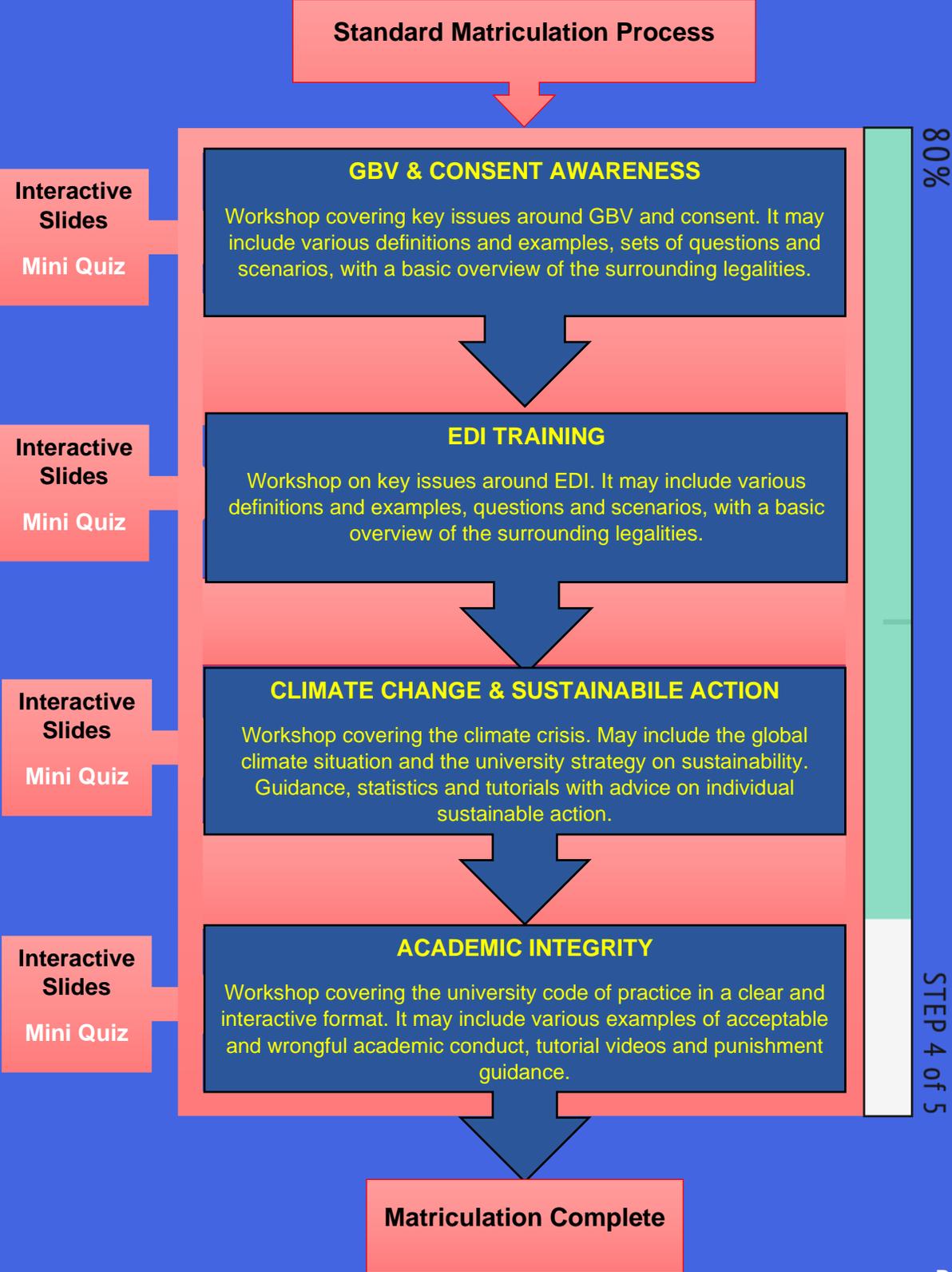
This proposal calls for the future implementation of a core pre-matriculation awareness module. The proposed module includes four key sections that should be delivered in an engaging and educational format, designed to build awareness as a mandatory element of student matriculation. The sections are explained in considerable detail throughout this paper. Not only is this proposed module a golden opportunity for our university in several ways, but it is unequivocally the right thing to do. Moreover, this project could be direct evidence that the university genuinely listens to its students. This is a long-overdue step that the university must take in fulfilling many of their commitments, in reaching their goals and catching up with other universities and their commendable efforts within this space.

We want to stress from the outset that the module should not be designed to present information, scenarios and questions in a patronising or lethargic way. This must not end up being another tokenistic or tick-box initiative. A matriculation module is not enough in itself to create better awareness across the student community, but it is indeed a powerful and wise step in the right direction. This module will hopefully place all incoming students on a more level playing field with a common understanding on key issues, whilst highlighting important services, policies and procedures within the university and beyond. This module's aim goes beyond understanding and awareness building, this could hugely empower our student body through the use of education, this could stimulate healthy debate and encourage greater tolerance and respect for others. This module could also be a focal point for a selection of signposting and further resources that would never normally be positioned within this critical stage of the student journey. These opportunities must never be dismissed or downplayed, these are exciting possibilities that should be immediately seized and driven forward by our university.

The implementation of this module will clearly be a complex and time-consuming project, and it will unlikely be accomplished within one academic session. As the full proposal paper illustrates, several stakeholders, professional services and departments will need to collaborate to make this feasible. The working group emphasise that student input and co-design is paramount, especially since it would be a module that students undertake themselves.

We also acknowledge that some academic schools and services within the university already have an integrated set of content, similar to that of the proposed module. In saying this, we firmly believe that this proposed (mandatory) module would effectively address various underlying issues that are clearly existent, including the widespread disengagement with such resources. An intricate and all-encompassing matriculation module could do many positive things, which will be outlined throughout this paper. As a starting point, this could be a strong example of our institutions forward-looking attitudes. This could emphasise how serious we take our zero tolerance policies. This could give the student community something to be proud of and unite behind. This could show our students how open, respectful and supportive we are as a community and this could indeed put our university ahead of others in how they address the concerned topics. We are asking the university to avoid falling behind, to appreciate the issues that underpin this proposal and accordingly make the right decision in accepting what we request.

Proposed Module Structure



Section Summary (1) GBV and Consent

What We Have

Our university currently have a variety of student support services with several safeguarding and zero tolerance policies. Students can access information on official university platforms and DUSA lead several initiatives and services that deal with consent, GBV and safety matters. MyDundee also offers students the optional GBV Prevention and Support module, positioned within the organizations section. There is occasionally student or staff led events and workshops that feature GBV awareness.

What We Propose

We propose that the university either integrate the optional GBV module into student matriculation, as part of the wider matriculation module, or otherwise develop their own GBV and consent module with further signposting and clear university policies, which would ideally be codesigned with students.

Why This Proposal

Understanding consent and GBV should never be an option. Students arrive to university with different levels of understanding and attitudes, which raises the need for core training to ensure a more equal level of understanding. Student safety must be of the highest priority within a university setting. Greater education and caution ought to be delivered to students, especially when they first arrive to the university. The current GBV training is optional, difficult to locate and is deeply under promoted. By virtue of it being optional, the modules uptake and general awareness of its existence is minimal.

What We Achieve

The proposed actions are not enough on their own to establish a better culture of consent and safety across university life, but it is a strong step in the right direction. Aside from placing all our students on an equal footing of awareness, we would totally reform the way our university seemingly treat these issues, thereby immensely improving our standing and attitudes. Overall, the university would be promoting and respecting an incredibly important issue, all the while putting their commitment to the GBV charter into direct action.

Section Summary (2) EDI Training

What We Have

The university have made several commitments to doing more to confront and eradicate racial discrimination and inequality across the institution. The university have a plethora of EDI policies, and all staff must complete EDI training courses as part of their employment. Students currently have the option to complete an EDI module on MyDundee. We also host events and occasionally organize guest panels to discuss EDI. Our academic schools have EDI committees that collaborate with the university EDI office, who oversee a variety of matters in this space.

What We Propose

We propose that the university develops a fresh EDI module that all students must complete during matriculation. The module should be tailored to our community, codesigned to ensure it is embraced by students and it should have content that is both appropriate and comprehensive. Alternatively, we propose that the current (optional) EDI course gets integrated into student matriculation.

Why This Proposal

The realities and issues around EDI must never be swept under the carpet. This proposed section would not only raise crucial awareness, but it could also pave the way for more open discussions that educates and stimulates healthy debates across the entire student community. Students arrive to university with different levels of awareness and attitudes, which raises the need for core training to ensure a more equal level of understanding. EDI must be of the highest priority within a university setting. Greater education and caution ought to be delivered to students, especially when they first arrive to the university. The current EDI training is optional, difficult to locate and is deeply under promoted. By virtue of it being optional, the module uptake and general awareness of its existence is minimal

What We Achieve

These actions would demonstrate our universities unique, forward-looking, and welcoming culture, highlighting how serious we treat EDI. Aside from awareness raising, this module could provide students with crucial signposting, guidance, and training, all the while satisfying our overdue action plans and charter recommendations.

Section Summary (3) Climate Action

What We Have

Our university are extremely successful in terms of climate action on a global level. We have several ambitious sustainability goals and integrated policies relevant to this. Interested students occasionally have the opportunity to engage in climate action projects, conferences, sustainability initiatives internally and across the community. We also have several leading degree programmes and research activities that centre around the climate and sustainability.

What We Propose

Proposing a mandatory climate action module are somewhat detached from our achievements and policies as an institution. This proposed section centres around awareness, which is currently sparse and very much needed for a plethora of reasons. The module information need not be demanding or patronising, it may only provide advice and could present students with a variety of options that merely encourage action and engagement.

Why This Proposal

The calls for climate change awareness within education are becoming increasingly common, particularly the responsibility that universities have. “The fight against climate change and everything it implies...requires a greater awareness and improved willingness to act by all civil society actors.”¹ Students should be given the knowledge, guidance, and opportunities to get more involved.

What We Achieve

A core training module that focuses on the wider climate crisis and one which provides guidance on individual action could prove extremely beneficial in many ways. Not only would it demonstrate our universities steadfast commitment to global environmental challenges, but it could encourage all of our students to consider how they can be part of the fight against the imminent dangers we face.

¹ [Climate awareness - Iberdrola](#)

Section Summary (4) Academic Integrity

What We Have

The university currently provide a very short overview of academic integrity within one section of the online matriculation process. This information can be ignored and signed off like any other terms and conditions form. Students are also provided with various warnings and reminders during assessment periods, within their module handbooks and across MyDundee and university resources. Some schools run their own workshops and initiatives, though this is not consistent across all schools.

What We Propose

We propose for the creation and mandatory implementation of a short training course on academic integrity. The course could be a simple overview of the rules, types of misconduct and an explanation of the consequences in instances of bad practise. The course could also allow students to navigate through scenarios and exemplar pieces of work.

Why This Proposal

The University regards academic misconduct as an extremely serious offence, and students should be aware of the potential penalties that can be imposed for academic misconduct related offences. The severity and problems around academic good practise can and should be addressed through greater education and guidance. We firmly believe this is best achieved through a mandatory course on academic integrity for all incoming students.

What We Achieve

Whilst the direct benefits are hypothetical and somewhat unpredictable, we have had several consultations and feedback which firmly suggests that instances of academic misconduct would be less frequent, should this mandatory course be placed within matriculation. We also believe that this is effective in underlining the principles of good practise, which students can carry forward into their future careers. This module would also ensure that everyone arrives to our university with a more equal level of awareness.

Student Opinion Survey

The importance of student opinion cannot be understated. Whether a university survey is asking about the curriculum, student experience, or blended learning during COVID, it is highly valuable to understand the viewpoint of students, especially if decisions are to be made at the highest levels of the institution. The working group thought it was crucial for this paper to include direct evidence of the student opinion relating to this proposal. A short survey was circulated to several academic schools across university and shared around social media platforms. The student led survey was designed to be very brief to capture the general student opinion in a quick and conclusive manner. Three questions were put to survey responders, and no questions sought to clarify specific characteristics such as gender, age, or ethnicity. The working group did not feel such details were necessary, especially since this proposal is focussed on the student body as a whole.

Integrity of Survey Data

Only students within the University of Dundee were able to complete the survey, this was ensured using Microsoft forms, with students being required to sign into the survey via their student emails. Only one response per student was permitted.

Response Turnout

906	01:10	Active
Responses	Average time to complete	Status

The working group originally hoped to receive at least 1000 responses, so the final turnout was somewhat disappointing. In saying that, this survey was released close to the DUSA elections, which had a very low turnout itself, and may have been a distraction alongside the busy assessment period. The declining turnout of students in elections and surveys is clearly a problem on a national scale, and not just our student body. After some feedback, future projects and surveys of this nature would be best launched at the start of a semester or before reading week. Nevertheless, over 900 responses will likely capture the wider student opinion, as it is still a significant number of student respondents that is likely to be a clear cross-section of our community.

Further Feedback Opportunities

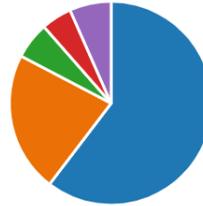
Students were also invited to provide written or oral feedback in any way they wished. We received over 40 written emails, all dealing with different concerns and positive suggestions. DUSA also supported this initiative through setting up their own feedback channel, as a supporting organisation. The DUSA led data is also presented in this section. Please refer to the full paper for a full summary of the student voice.

1. The University of Dundee should implement a short module as part of the student matriculation process, designed to educate and raise awareness on matters surrounding Gender Based Violence and Consent, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Environmental Sustainability and Academic Integrity.

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

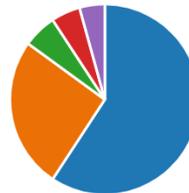
Strongly Agree	547
Agree	202
Neutral	53
Disagree	44
Strongly Disagree	60



2. The proposed module could help create a better understanding of important issues that affect us as a student community, and such a module will help ensure all students arrive to Dundee University with a more equal level of awareness around the proposed topics.

[More Details](#)

Strongly Agree	537
Agree	233
Neutral	52
Disagree	45
Strongly Disagree	39

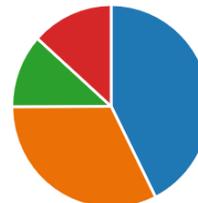


3. As a Dundee University student, do you feel there is a lack of readily available training and education on the issues that the proposed module would cover?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

Yes	386
To an extent	293
I don't know	106
No	121



For the overall proposal, 82% of respondents (749) either strongly agreed or agreed to the implementation of a mandatory awareness module. 6% were neutral (53). 12% of respondents opposed this module. This data immediately indicates strong student support for this proposal.

An overwhelming 85% of respondents either agreed (233) or strongly agreed (537) to the suggestion that this module would achieve its core aim of building awareness and understanding. This data indicates that while some students oppose the module, they still agree it could be effective in achieving its aims. 9% of respondents still disagreed.

This question was included to gather insight about current resources and training available to students, with 43% of respondents (386) feeling there is a lack of readily available training and resources which the proposed module would cover. Whilst this response rate is considerably lower than other results, 32% of respondents (293) still feel there is a shortage to some extent. 12% of respondents (106) did not know, and 13% did not feel there was a lack of readily available resources. This data highlights a clear need for better placement and promotion of training and resources, which we strongly believe to be achievable through placing a mandatory

Conclusion

This is a proposal that aims for a positive outcome, this is not a damning indictment, nor is it a set of unrealistic demands. In saying this, our proposed module is not a nice thing to have, it is emblematic of the deeply troubling issues that affect us as a community. The full proposal paper highlights that awareness is crucial as a first step in tackling various problems that we, as a student community, face in differing ways. If we choose to turn a blind eye to these problems, they will only fester. The full paper is a testament to what we are already working towards as a community, an open, welcoming, and forward-looking university, a university that takes these topics seriously. Our proposal is not suggesting that our students are intolerant or uneducated, we are merely pushing for a more equal and greater level of awareness. Training brings far more to the table than a tokenistic gesture, it benefits us all, it sparks debate, it encourages more open discussions and allows all of us to consider things in a different light.

The student voice is abundantly clear, the majority of us want mandatory training within matriculation, and an even greater majority of us believe that it will bring about much needed awareness, despite some opposing it. The university have done a lot thus far, we already have voluntary training courses, we have a solid system in place with policies that aim to protect various groups of students, we have robust complaints procedures, we have student support networks and all the information we need. Nevertheless, the serious problem with all of this is the lack of awareness, promotion, signposting and engagement. Implementing these resources and this information into the student matriculation process will ensure that all of us, no matter our level or course, will be exposed to this crucial content. Indeed, some of what we are asking for will take considerable lengths of time, more consultations and feedback may be required. This paper is merely a first step in instigating solid action.

We are not campaigning for this module in efforts to tick a box, to simply say we have pushed for mandatory training, this is just the start of a long journey that will have a lasting legacy for our student community, a community that will hopefully experience a substantial change. Any future modules must not end up as patronizing and simplistic initiatives. What we have presented is a genuine proposal with a genuine aim. There is no reason why we should not excel in creating a more compassionate culture with a strong will for greater awareness around various societal and university issues.

We sincerely hope that university considers this proposal in full, and accordingly decide to implement a core pre-matriculation awareness module that covers the four proposed sections. As the paper outlines, certain elements of this proposal may not be possible at this time, but we have made it very clear what should take priority. We have also offered both additional and alterative recommendations, but we trust that the university will take note of the student voice, the rationale, and the potential that this module offers our university.

Short-Term Requests | UEG Actions

After considering this proposal paper in full, the working group respectfully request that the University Executive Group (UEG) and all associated decision makers take the following short-term actions in direct response to this proposal. The following requests are in no particular order of priority.

