


## Policy Briefing – Tea and Consent Video in Lecture Halls during Induction week in complement to our trainings on consent

Welfare & Community Zone, May 2022

### What is the current situation at UCL related to this proposal?

As part of the Full Stop campaign, UCL and the Students' Union are working together on the I  Consent campaign to promote sexual consent and put an end to sexual violence at UCL.<sup>1</sup> A short online module called Sexual Consent Training is available for students to complete on Moodle.<sup>2</sup>

The SU and UCL also run the Active Bystander Programme to help tackle unacceptable behaviours, including sexual misconduct and harassment.<sup>3</sup> The Active Bystander Programme consists of an online training module (30 mins) and a live online or face-to-face workshop (60 mins). It is considered mandatory for all students in their first term, with returning students needing to complete the online module as a refresher each year. In 2020-2021, nearly 10,000 students took part in the Active Bystander programme, representing approximately 22% of the student body.<sup>4</sup>

UCL's Report + Support (R+S) tool provides students and staff with one place to find out about support, report anonymously, or contact an advisor about bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct, or domestic abuse. From February 2020 – February 2021, 166 students (<1% of the student body) made a report.<sup>5</sup> Overall, sexual misconduct was reported 56 times (12% of reports) by both students and staff, with undergraduates making 55% of the sexual misconduct reports.<sup>6</sup>

### What is the relevant national/ international context to this situation?

In 2015, the Thames Valley Police launched a “consent is everything” campaign along with a [Tea and Consent](#) video, aimed at raising awareness about sexual consent.<sup>7</sup> However, the video has also been

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<sup>1</sup> <https://report-support.ucl.ac.uk/campaigns/i-heart-consent>

<sup>2</sup> <https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=16709>

<sup>3</sup> <https://studentsunionucl.org/active-bystander>

<sup>4</sup> <https://d2gppjca7iyv2p.cloudfront.net/e1303899-3626-4c3d-9bd0-9ed0a16b14cc/2fda728e-78cd-4317-affa-e8c397a21ace>

<sup>5</sup> <https://d2gppjca7iyv2p.cloudfront.net/e1303899-3626-4c3d-9bd0-9ed0a16b14cc/2fda728e-78cd-4317-affa-e8c397a21ace>

<sup>6</sup> <https://d2gppjca7iyv2p.cloudfront.net/e1303899-3626-4c3d-9bd0-9ed0a16b14cc/2fda728e-78cd-4317-affa-e8c397a21ace>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-34656527>

criticized for not adequately addressing concerns around drunk consent<sup>8</sup> and turning a serious topic into a comedy sketch.<sup>9</sup>

In the UK, it is estimated that 1 in 5 women and 1 in 20 men have experienced rape or sexual assault as an adult.<sup>10</sup> Between 2018-2019, there were 1,436 reported instances of sexual harassment or violence against students at university, up from 476 reports two years prior.<sup>11</sup> Approximately 80% of cases go unreported.<sup>12</sup> The National Union of Students (NUS) found in a 2019 report that 75% of respondents in higher education had had an unwanted sexual experience at least once.<sup>13</sup>

Among UK universities, approximately two-thirds teach sexual consent.<sup>14</sup> However, in a 2020 survey of 36 UK universities, only five considered these classes compulsory, while the others made them optional.<sup>15</sup> Some universities have used the Tea and Consent video in their trainings, including Durham University<sup>16</sup> and Thompson Rivers University (Canada).<sup>17</sup>

A poll conducted by the Higher Education Policy Institute and YouthSight in 2020 found that 58% of students think passing a sexual consent assessment should be required to enter university.<sup>18</sup> A third (32%) of students 'disagree' that their school education provided them with a 'comprehensive understanding of sexual consent', while half (49%) 'agree'.<sup>19</sup> However, 66% of students do feel confident in challenging inappropriate sexual behaviour.<sup>20</sup>

## Are there any legal implications to this policy proposal?

The oversight of introductory lectures across UCL does not directly lie with the Union, so it would only be in the Union's power to lobby or to work with UCL for them to implement this proposal if passed.

## Does this relate to any existing SU policy?

The Students' Union has a zero-tolerance stance to any kind of sexual harassment.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <https://theconversation.com/sexual-consent-really-isnt-like-a-cup-of-tea-but-at-least-were-talking-about-it-50638>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/articles/sexual-consent-is-not-like-tea>

<sup>10</sup> <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-informed/statistics-sexual-violence/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-49893389>

<sup>12</sup> <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-informed/statistics-sexual-violence/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/articles/report-on-sexual-violence-in-further-education>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.theweek.co.uk/103698/two-thirds-of-unis-teach-sexual-consent-classes>

<sup>15</sup> <https://thetab.com/uk/2020/09/25/revealed-the-unis-offering-compulsory-consent-classes-this-year-173000#:~:text=Five%20universities%20are%20making%20consent,have%20made%20the%20classes%20mandatory.>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.dur.ac.uk/sexualviolence/education/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://campusmentalhealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/TRU-Consent-Tea-Toolkit.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2021/04/29/most-students-think-passing-a-sexual-consent-test-should-be-compulsory-before-starting-higher-education/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Sex-and-Relationships-Among-Students-Summary-Report.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2021/04/29/most-students-think-passing-a-sexual-consent-test-should-be-compulsory-before-starting-higher-education/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://studentsunionucl.org/advice-and-support/safety/sexual-violence-and-harassment>

## Are there any financial, resource or stakeholder/ public relations issues with this policy proposal?

Yes, there are resource and stakeholder/public relations concerns. Resources and training would need to be provided to the lecturers tasked with showing this video, to ensure they have the appropriate skills and information to address and questions or concerns arising from students in their class upon viewing the video. Additionally, support and resources would need to be made appropriately available to survivors of sexual assault.

There are also stakeholder/public relations considerations. On the one hand, it is important to raise awareness about sexual consent as this may help reduce rates of sexual assault and rape on campus. The university has a duty to provide students with information and skills to keep themselves and their peers safe. On the other hand, however, some students, particularly survivors of sexual abuse, may find it distressing to watch this video in a lecture hall with lots of other students with various backgrounds. Lecturers may also not feel they are adequately prepared to lead a discussion regarding sexual assault and consent.

## What would the next steps be if the proposal passed?

The SU would need to lobby/work with UCL to implement this video in lecture halls, and provide appropriate resources and support to students and staff.