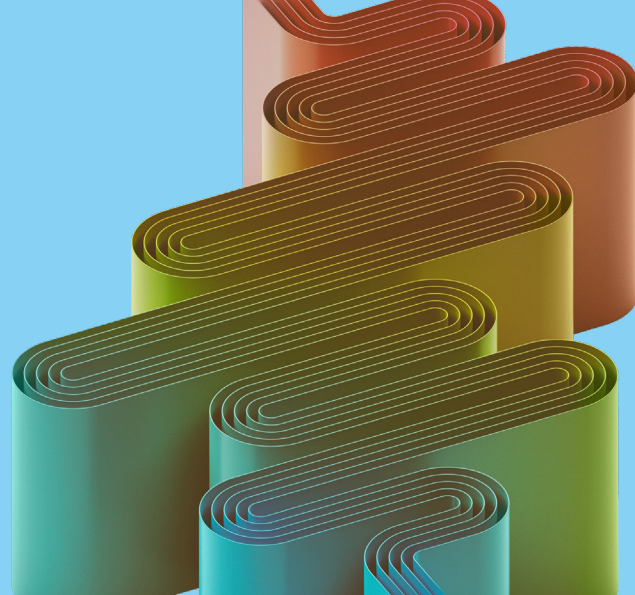




Transforming higher education training

Case study - Consent Matters and Imperial College London

Imperial College London subscribed to *Consent Matters* in 2022 and has since had one of the most successful usage engagements with the course of any institution. There were two key factors in the decision to subscribe to *Consent Matters*. Firstly, the leadership were aware of the importance of having a robust training strategy in this area. Secondly, there had been growing discussion on the topic with the Student Union and other representatives. The overarching goal of the subscription is to help support the institutional strategy of reducing incidents and creating a healthier environment around relationships and sex at the university.



Who did we speak to?

Shervin Sabeghi, *Strategic Projects Manager*
in the Student Support Team.



What kind of subscription do ICL have?

Consent Matters accessed
via the Epigeum platform.



Highlights

Of the over **9,000** students invited, 88% have completed the course. Shervin believes the course is 'something really positive [that] anyone should be doing.'

Implementation

Epigeum programmes are available to use either directly on the Epigeum platform, or through VLE integration. Imperial have used both methods to deliver *Consent Matters*. In their first year, they used the Epigeum platform, and in their second, they used Blackboard Ultra.

Communications with students have been almost entirely via email. In 22/23, every incoming student who received an unconditional firm status was invited to do the course around the beginning of September. *Consent Matters* is not compulsory, but language carefully emphasised that students were expected to do the course.

Targeted reminders were sent on a roughly weekly basis until the end of October, when a deadline of November was given, and students were advised that they should take the course 'to avoid escalation to [their] academic department.' Departments could choose whether to pursue this further. Beyond emails, most wardens in student halls also included a reference to *Consent Matters* in their introductions and a few departments promoted it in their own induction materials.

The team were cautious with the campaign at first, concerned that it may be seen as spam or received poorly. Shervin highlighted some of the team's key takeaways in the wake of successful uptake; 'don't tiptoe around the subject' and 'communicate what needs to be communicated.'

Outcomes

In 22/23, nearly 10,000 users engaged with the course. Of all students targeted, only 9.5% did not engage with the course. In the feedback the project team received for the course, the feeling was generally positive. Interestingly, slightly higher course ratings were received from international students compared to domestic students, and from female students compared to male students.

Shervin also highlighted how positively it has been received by colleagues across the institution, who have been interested in finding out more and willing to promote *Consent Matters* themselves. A key takeaway from their analytics was also the difference in completion rates between pre-term completion, when it was at 90%, and during term, when it dropped to 50%. For technical reasons, communications with the 23/24 intake began later than the previous year, with the first email not being sent until mid-September. However, this doesn't seem to have been a major issue.

So far, of the over 9,000 students invited, 88% have completed the course and only 4% opted out. In future, a suggested solution for this is emphasising the importance of module three, 'Looking Out for Others,' wherein users learn how to be an active bystander. This high completion rate, Shervin believes, is partly due to the integration of *Consent Matters* onto Blackboard; students log in and a reminder is pinned to their homepage. This is substantiated by how departments that don't typically use Blackboard had a lower completion rate. Furthermore, Blackboard allowed for a more seamless process; the students are already logged on via single sign on.

Future

The team have only targeted new starters each year, with the intention of gradual completion throughout the university. Of the current student population, about 70% have been invited to take *Consent Matters*. Of those who hadn't completed the course, despite some concerns that they were spamming students with emails, anonymous feedback suggested many of these students felt there weren't enough reminders, so in future the team may send more.

Shervin offered some advice for other institutions implementing the course; be clear on what you're trying to achieve and the success measures. He emphasised looking at shorter term goals, for example measuring awareness and perception. He also recommended modifying quizzes, which is something institutions who host on their VLEs can do. One modification Imperial made was to set the pass rate at 100% (on the Epigeum platform the standard is 60%). Though they debated lowering it to 80%, they found that this hasn't negatively impacted completion rates with a very small number of students not trying again if they didn't reach this score. He also emphasised that it's key to keep stakeholders involved, particularly given how supportive and interested other staff across departments and halls were in the programme.

Overall, Shervin believes the course is 'something really positive [that] anyone should be doing.' He highlighted that 'we always feel like we can contact Epigeum' for support and this support has 'exceeded [their] expectations.'



Get in touch

To find out more about any of our programmes and what Epigeum can do for your institution, please get in touch.

