

# Effect of a Student Exercise and Wellness Project on the Student Experience

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<sup>1</sup>The Centre for Sport & Exercise Science, <sup>2</sup>Public Health Hub <sup>3</sup>Academy of Sport and Physical Activity. Sponsored by Sheffield Hallam Student's Union.

## INTRODUCTION

Student health and wellbeing plays an important role on the student experience. In addition, employability of graduates is also high on the agenda within Higher Education. Therefore, a pilot student-led exercise and wellness project was developed. This venture was aligned with Sheffield Hallam Student Union's strategic health and sustainability vision to:

*"...develop positive futures and raise aspirations by supporting transferable skills development, inclusion initiatives and healthy lifestyle interventions."*

## AIM

The aim of the project was to have a positive impact on the student experience including;

- 1) Student health and wellbeing
- 2) Student employability

## METHOD

The project involved student-led health and fitness checks and a pedometer challenge for healthcare students studying at Sheffield Hallam University. Final year undergraduate students studying Physical Activity and Health related courses (n=6) delivered the sessions on a voluntary basis as part of a Student Wellness Internship.

### The student-led health and fitness check included:

Assessment of health outcomes including blood pressure, height, weight, body mass index, strength, flexibility and aerobic fitness; provision of individualised verbal and written feedback in a report; advice on physical activity; signposting to other local student wellbeing services.



A student-led health and fitness check

### Student Exercise and Wellness Intern Testimonial

*"The Exercise and Wellness Internship I volunteered for at Sheffield Hallam gave me great work experience, and has proven to be a key element in finding employment after completion of my undergraduate degree." Alex Vamplew, Sheffield Hallam University Graduate.*



Student Exercise and Wellness Interns (L-R) Charlotte Cooper, Mark Greenwood, Zara Kenedy, Alex Vamplew, Manon Brilliant and Matt Howe, with project manager Sue Kesterton.

## RESULTS

### Student participants health and wellbeing benefits:

80% of students made changes to their **health** and **lifestyle** as a result of the student wellness pilot. 87% of students agreed that the study had a positive impact on their **motivation** and **confidence** to make healthy lifestyle changes.

### Student interns employability benefits:

83% of Student Exercise and Wellness Interns reported their main reason for volunteering to deliver health checks was to gain **experience**. 100% of Student Wellness champions reported their **confidence** increased to take physical measures, adopt a client centred approach and apply for jobs in exercise and health

### Student Experience:

85% of students who participated agreed that taking part in a student led wellness project **enriched their student experience**.

## SUMMARY

A student-led health and fitness check had a positive impact on the student experience including; improved healthy lifestyle behaviours and increased employability.

**Recommendations:** It is planned this project will be developed for 2013 to include a greater number of students.

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