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# An inclusive approach to reducing academic irregularities in NLS

*“Colleagues wanted to take a targeted inclusive approach to preventing plagiarism and academic irregularities”*

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Area of Focus	To develop ways to better support students through the academic irregularities process by providing greater clarity particularly for BTEC students and International students.
Context	Course teams noticed that international students and those with a BTEC background were falling foul of academic irregularity issues more frequently than other students. In discussion at academic irregularities panels, these students sometimes expressed that they did not understand what they had done wrong due to different cultural expectations and educational background. Colleagues also requested development support to help ensure consistency of approach to noticing and dealing with academic irregularities.
Approach	The incoming chair of the School Academic Irregularities Panel recognised the need for intervention. Colleagues wanted to take a targeted inclusive approach, aiming to address problems experienced by international and BTEC students, whilst also acknowledging that all students may benefit from such interventions to prevent plagiarism and academic irregularities. Colleagues from the school worked with the eLearning team in CADQ and an educational developer to design a bespoke intervention.
Interventions	<p>An electronic package was developed for students to work through. This package is bespoke to Law so that the training feels relevant for the students. It also shows students how Turnitin is used to check work. Students then complete a multiple-choice test, where they need to answer 12 out of 15 questions correctly. Students with too many incorrect answers are required to go through it again: in some cases, the personal tutor follows this up as part of their standard meetings with the student.</p> <p>Personal tutors in NLS were involved with this new strategy. Often, the students who most need to go through the package and do the test are those less likely to engage with it. Personal tutors are therefore asked to chase the students who have either not engaged with it or failed the multiple-choice test.</p>
Initial Outcomes	<p>Across NLS, 1828 students attempted the final assessment in the training package. 1515 students passed, and 213 did not. This leaves 1100 students who have not yet engaged with the test.</p> <p>It has been noted by academics that there has been a general improvement over the last year to referencing standards. Academic irregularities cases have not decreased at this point, but this does not mean that the training package has not been a success; training was also given to academic staff regarding noticing and reporting academic irregularities, the number of reported cases is likely to increase initially.</p> <p>Secondly, those students who are invited to an academic irregularities panel are now better informed. Additionally, panel members can see whether the student has completed the training.</p>

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## Challenges and next steps

One consideration for the school was the coincidental creation of a university-wide package that also aimed to tackle this issue of academic irregular practice. Ultimately, the Law school decided to continue using and perfecting their bespoke package. There were also some IT issues, where students who had successfully completed the quiz were receiving reminder emails. The school is exploring ways to iron out these issues.

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## Contact details

Amanda Rushby, Academic Irregularities Panel Chair

[amanda.rushby@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:amanda.rushby@ntu.ac.uk)