

Clean Sport and Higher Education in the UK

A collaborative research project between UK Anti-Doping and Loughborough University.
Dr Nikola Costa, Shaun Sutehall, Simon Hitchcox, Claire Lane, Sam Pool – UKAD
Dr Jamie Kenyon, Dr Liam Heaney – Loughborough University

Anti-doping education is an essential preventative strategy in the pursuit of fair, clean sport that is free of performance-enhancing drug use.

Whilst Anti-Doping Organisations bear the ultimate responsibility for anti-doping education to athletes and their supporting personnel, universities and other higher education institutions (collectively, HEI) also play a vital role in promoting clean sport.

The purpose of this project is to assess the extent of formal anti-doping education provided within academic courses delivered by HEIs, with the objective of informing new approaches towards enhancing anti-doping education in the UK. The following findings were obtained through a survey of students, graduates, academic teaching staff and sports industry professionals (n=158) conducted between February and July 2023.

Key Findings

- 1. 49% of undergraduate (UG) students reported anti-doping education is embedded within their course.** UG survey respondents included students from 30 different UK HEIs, 96% of which were completing/had completed a sports-related course.
- 2. Only 38% of postgraduate (PG) students reported anti-doping education is embedded within their (taught) course.** PG survey respondents included students from 12 different UK HEIs, all of which were completing/had completed a sports-related course.
- 3. Less than half of the surveyed HEI's taught on the Consequences of Doping.** Only 44% of UG courses and only 24% of PG taught courses contained content on this topic.

4. Just 56% of UG and only 35% of PG courses included the topic Ethics and Values relating to doping in sports. The top 3 most prevalent taught topics (Figure 1) for UG and PG were:

- a. Sports Nutrition & Supplements (78% and 80% for UG and PG, respectively).
- b. Ethics and Values relating to doping in sport (56% and 35% for UG and PG, respectively).
- c. Prohibited Substances and Methods (44% and 35% for UG and PG, respectively).

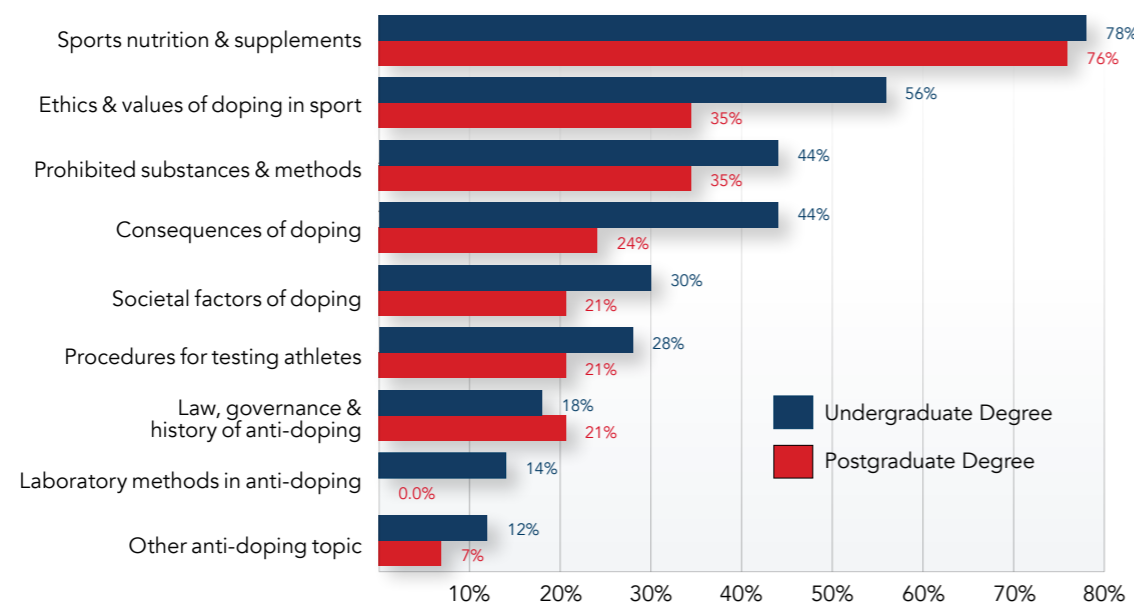


Figure 1 Prevalence of anti-doping topics on degree programmes (n=50) (% of sample that reported receiving anti-doping content on this topic)

5. The most common method of teaching anti-doping content was during topic-focused lectures (52% and 50% for UG and PG, respectively). 60% of undergraduate respondents reported this content was not formally assessed, with only 38% and 36% reporting assessment through exams or coursework, respectively.

6. Only 15% of survey participants were happy with the level of anti-doping education content they received during their higher education studies. The majority of participants (61%) said there was not enough anti-doping content within their studies (Figure 2).

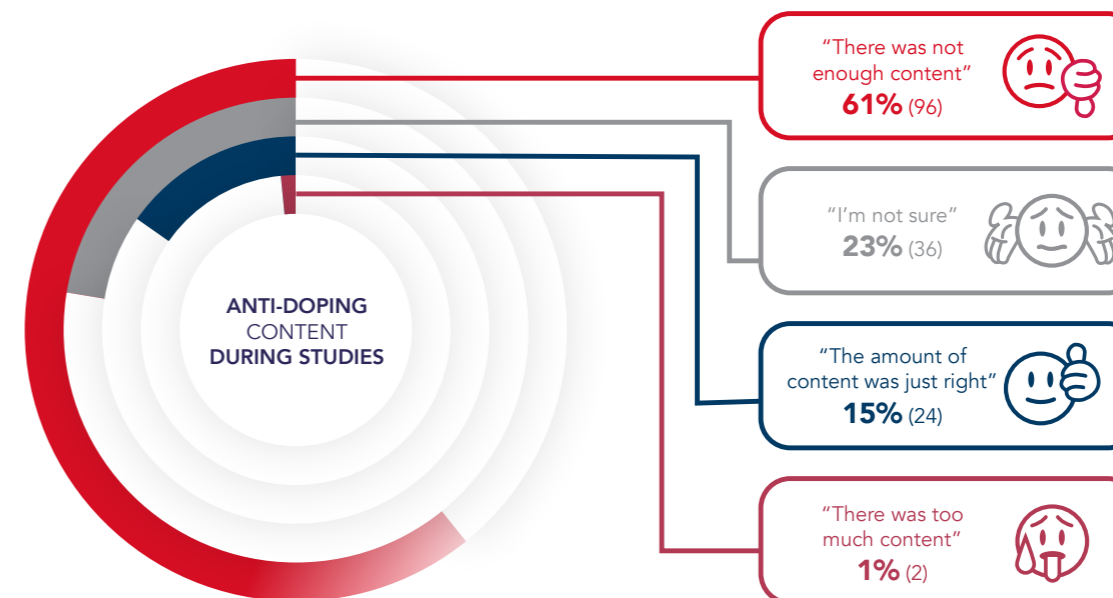


Figure 2 Amount of Anti-Doping content during studies

7. Only 58% of respondents considered themselves knowledgeable in anti-doping. Exploring respondent's self-perceived knowledge of anti-doping (Figure 3), 34% considered themselves as slightly knowledgeable and 16% as moderately knowledgeable. 35% said that they were not at all knowledgeable.

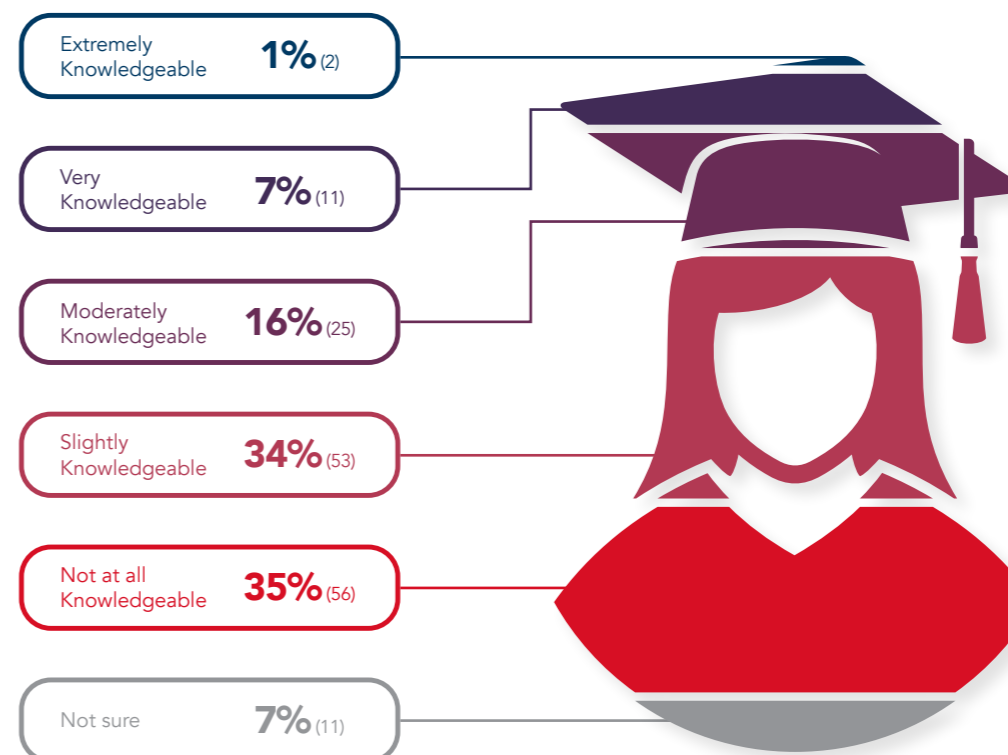


Figure 3 Overall self-perceived knowledge of Anti-Doping

8. **Only 34% of academic teaching staff currently include anti-doping (AD) content within their courses.** 20% of all academic respondents stated that they had delivered AD material previously, while 31% do not currently deliver AD content. Of those academics who include AD content, 75% reported an increase in the amount of material taught over the past five years.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, the following recommendations for anti-doping organisations, the UK sport industry, and higher education institutions are proposed:

1. **Promotion:** Highlight the correlation between anti-doping education delivered within HE with graduate's level of knowledge and attitudes towards clean sport. Aim: Increase reach of values-based education and anti-doping knowledge across all HEI cohorts.
2. **Collaboration:** Foster positive working relationships with key stakeholders from across the sport and education sector to create further opportunity to engage with a wider target audience and influence decision making. Aim: Provide guidance, support and resources, wherever possible to elevate the standard of anti-doping education.
3. **Standardisation:** Work with key stakeholders to develop and implement a more standardised approach to anti-doping education to ensure a comprehensive coverage of anti-doping principles and practices within relevant qualifications:
 - a. **Academics:** Engage with relevant individuals (and institutions) within the field of anti-doping to share ideas, resources and examples of best practice. Aim: Standardise delivery of key anti-doping topics, ensuring content is relevant and up-to-date.
 - b. **Professional Bodies:** Explore opportunities with relevant partners such as BASES, SENR, CIMSPA, to embed a standardised approach to include anti-doping content when certifying courses and through professional accreditation processes. Aim: Graduates are equipped with anti-doping knowledge as they achieve and maintain professional accreditation.
 - c. **Review Cycle:** Establish and embed mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation of anti-doping content within courses.

Note: The data represented here are derived from 158 survey respondents (46 students and graduates, 35 academic teaching staff and 67 sports industry professionals), captured over an 18 week period in 2023. The findings presented here answer just one of three research questions within the project.

