



**Committee:** Union Council

**Subject:** No Scheduled Teaching on Wednesday Afternoons

**Approval Date**:

**Renewal Date**:

**Contact:** Wellbeing, Sport & Physical Activity Officer

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Sheffield Hallam Students’ Union Notes:**

1. Student extra-curricular activities at Sheffield Hallam Students’ Union and Sheffield Hallam University, such as Sports, Physical Activity, Societies, Religious Groups, Representation, Media, Stage Services, Volunteering and Give It A Go (GIAG) activities form a crucial part of the Sheffield Hallam student experience.
2. Extra-curricular activities have been noted to improve communication skills, interpersonal skills, self-confidence and self-awareness all vital skills needed in the workplace. It was also found that these skills were enhanced more by extra-curricular participation than via their degree [1].
3. Students who participate in extra-curricular activities have been found to report stronger feelings of belonging as these activities can play an important role in how students adjust to their learning environment. Feeling like you belong somewhere is associated with greater student wellbeing, increased academic attainment and retention [2].
4. University’s should be doing more to increase the horizontal support such as social networks and communities that students have access to. Sheffield Hallam should be providing opportunities to ensure that every student has the opportunity to create a strong network of peers to rely on as it has been found to be more effective at keeping students on their course [3].
5. In February 2016, the Students’ Union undertook research into the effects of scheduled teaching on Wednesday Afternoons, the number of students who have been prevented from playing sports, how it has affected them and how frequently the University schedules teaching on Wednesday afternoons [4].
6. The University is mandated to have no scheduled teaching on a Wednesday afternoon (after 12 midday) for all undergraduate students.

**Sheffield Hallam Students’ Union Believes:**

1. Our students are being put at a disadvantage within the job market as they are missing out on the opportunity to enhance a whole range of skills that are built though taking part in extracurricular activities [1].
2. Sheffield Hallam students would benefit from consistently having Wednesday afternoons free from timetabled teaching to allow them to participate in their chosen extra-curricular activity.
3. BUCS (British University College Sport) hold the majority of their matches on Wednesdays, any student who has a timetabled session on a Wednesday afternoon will not be able to represent their University at their chosen sport. Significantly impacting on their progression and feeling of belonging to Sheffield Hallam and their chosen sport club.
4. The majority of social sport, society activities, volunteering and stage services is also scheduled on Wednesday afternoon, we are denying our students the opportunity to not only be active but to take part in activities that has been proven to improve graduate employability, personal development and social capital.
5. It is widely known by organisations and company’s outside of the Higher Education sector that Wednesday afternoons are free and will schedule events and support at this time.
6. Many colleges also have half days on Wednesday due to participating in BUCS and AoC (Association of Colleges), while also prepping their student for University life.

**Sheffield Hallam Students’ Union Resolves:**

1. To mandate full time elected officers to lobby the University Leadership Team (ULT), College Leadership Teams (CLTs) and timetabling to keep Wednesday Afternoons free from timetabled sessions. Explaining the positive impact participating in extracurricular activities can have on the student offer and experience and student’s employability/employment outcomes. For all students who study at Sheffield Hallam University, the focus initially will be on full time undergraduate students but should quickly extend to students on Post-Graduate taught and part time undergraduate courses.
2. To make best use of the current systems in place for students to report any Wednesday afternoon timetable issues. College Officers can feed these issues straight to the Departments within Colleges in question.
3. To mandate full time elected officers to make all part time, Department Reps and volunteers aware of the policy and work surrounding it and inform respective staff members within their areas at Sheffield Hallam University of the policy.

References:

[1] Clark, G., Marsden, R., Whyatt, J. D., Thompson, L., & Walker, M. (2015). *“It”s everything else you do…’: Alumni views on extracurricular activities and employability. Active Learning in Higher Education, 16(2), 133–147.* doi:10.1177/1469787415574050

[2] Winstone, N., Balloo, K., Gravett, K., Jacobs, D., & Keen, H. (2020). Who stands to benefit? Wellbeing, belonging and challenges to equity in engagement in extra-curricular activities at university. Active Learning in Higher Education, 146978742090820. doi:10.1177/1469787420908209

[3] Dickinson, J. (2021). Here’s what happened when I read every Access and Participation Plan. Wonke. Retrieved from <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/heres-what-happened-when-i-read-every-university-access-and-participation-plan-in-england/>

[4] Crowson, P., McGregor, V., & Wilkes, E. (2016). Students Views on Wednesday Afternoon Scheduled Teaching. Sheffield Hallam Students’ Union. [Find attached with this paper]