

D3.3 Needs Assessment Report



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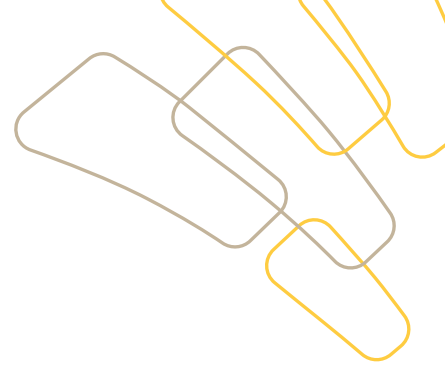


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Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Methodology.....	5
2.1. Sampling, Recruitment, & Research Ethics.....	5
2.2. Survey Instruments.....	5
3. Results.....	6
3.1. University Students Survey.....	6
3.1.1. Sample Description.....	6
3.1.2. Attitudes towards Doping.....	7
3.1.3. Perceived Prevalence of Doping.....	8
3.1.4. Anti-Doping Education Needs.....	8
3.2. University Staff Survey.....	14
3.2.1. Sample Description.....	14
3.2.2. Anti-Doping Attitudes and Perceptions.....	14
3.2.3. Perceived Prevalence of Doping.....	15
3.2.4. Anti-Doping Education Needs.....	16
4. Summary of Key Findings.....	21
4.1. Attitudes towards Doping.....	21
4.2. Perceived Prevalence of Doping.....	21
4.3. Anti-Doping Education Needs.....	21
5. Conclusions and Recommendations.....	23
Appendix 1. EPCS-TE Survey for University Students.....	26
Appendix 2. EPCS-TE Survey for University Staff.....	29



1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Needs Assessment Survey conducted as part of Work Package 3 (WP3) of project EPCS-TE. The report corresponds to Deliverable D3.3, in line with Task 3.3.

The primary aim of the Needs Assessment Survey is to assess the anti-doping education needs of tertiary education students and staff in the four partner countries (Cyprus, Italy, Poland, and Portugal).

The survey was designed to identify:

- Current knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about doping and anti-doping among university students and academic staff.
- The perceived importance and relevance of anti-doping education in tertiary education settings.
- Specific topics within anti-doping that are considered most relevant to different academic disciplines.
- The perceived role of universities in integrating anti-doping education into their curricula.

Findings from this survey directly inform the subsequent phases of EPCS-TE, most notably the co-design of the Framework for the Partnership for Clean Sport Tertiary Education (WP4) and the development of policy and practice recommendations (WP5) presented in Deliverables D4.1 (Framework for the Partnership for Clean Sport Tertiary Education), D5.1 (Guidelines for Implementing and Evaluating the Partnership for Clean Sport Tertiary Education in other European countries) and D5.2 (Guidelines for promoting synergies between NADOs and tertiary education institutions), available on project's website (<https://epcste.eu/>).

This report is structured as follows: Section 2 describes the methodology; Section 3 presents key findings for students and staff separately; Section 4 summarises cross-cutting themes; and Section 5 provides conclusions and recommendations.

2. Methodology

2.1. Sampling, Recruitment, & Research Ethics

The needs assessment survey targeted two main groups across the four partner countries:

- University students enrolled in undergraduate or postgraduate programmes.
- University academic and teaching staff.

Recruitment prioritised students and staff from sport-related disciplines (e.g., Sport and Exercise Science, Physical Education, Sport Nutrition, and Physiotherapy/Sport Therapy), as well as disciplines with direct or indirect relevance to anti-doping practice, including Medicine, Pharmacology, Psychology, Law, Biology, Management, and Journalism. Participation was voluntary and no payment or inducement was offered.

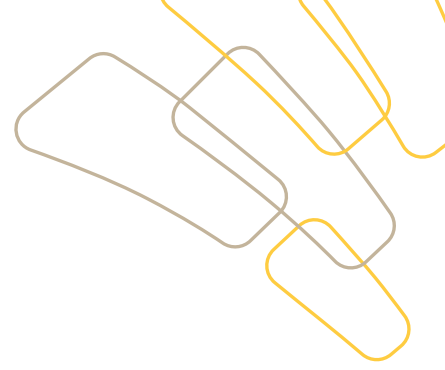
Data collection took place between February 2025 and March 2026. Across the four partner countries, a total of 1,473 surveys were completed by both university students ($n = 1282$) and academic staff ($n = 191$), representing a substantial and diverse sample for the purposes of this needs assessment. Surveys were distributed electronically via secure online survey platforms in each partner country, and survey completion lasted less than 10 minutes.

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, their right to withdraw without penalty or loss of benefits, and the anonymity and confidentiality of their data. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement. Research ethics clearance was secured by the project coordinator (CyADA) from the Cyprus National Bioethics Committee.

2.2. Survey Instruments

Two structured questionnaires were developed in English and then translated into the languages of the project's partner countries (i.e., Greek, Italian, Polish and Portuguese).

The Survey for University Students (Appendix A) assessed: (i) demographic and background characteristics (age, gender, type of studies, degree programme, relationship with sport); (ii) prior experience with anti-doping education; (iii) attitudes and beliefs about doping; (iv) social norms, reflected in the perceived prevalence of doping among elite athletes and coaches; (v) beliefs about the importance and relevance of anti-doping topics to one's study discipline; studies, and future career; as well as (ix) beliefs about whether universities should include anti-doping topics in the curriculum; and (x) preferred anti-doping education topics.



The Survey for University Staff (Appendix B) assessed: (i) demographic and background characteristics (age, gender, main subject area, relationship with sport); (ii) attitudes and beliefs about doping; (iii) social norms, reflected in the perceived prevalence of doping among elite athletes and coaches; (iv) perceived importance of anti-doping education for prevention; (v) perceived relevance of anti-doping topics to taught subjects; (vi) perceived importance of anti-doping knowledge for students' future careers; (vii) views on whether universities should include anti-doping topics; and (ix) preferred anti-doping education topics.

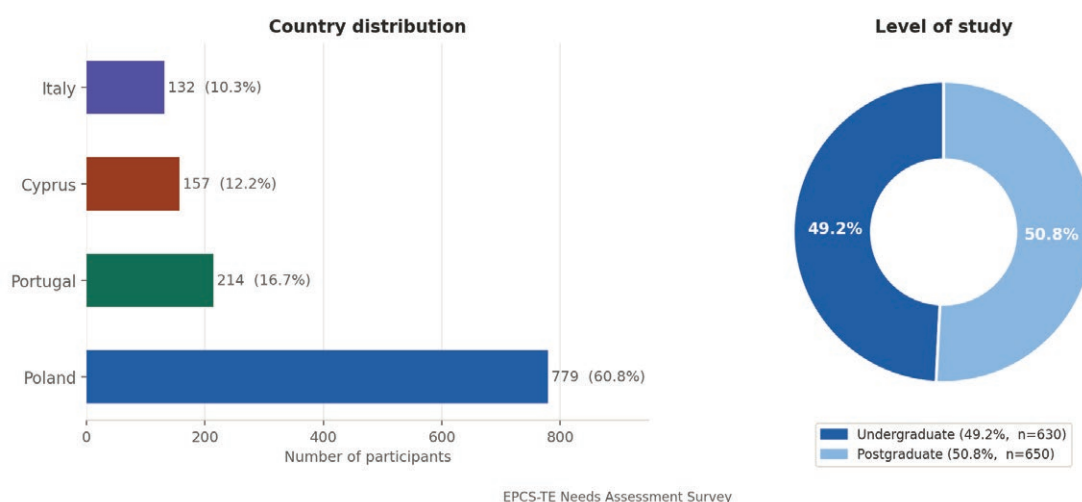
3. Results

3.1. University Students Survey

3.1.1. Sample Description

The following section provides a breakdown of the university students who participated in the study.

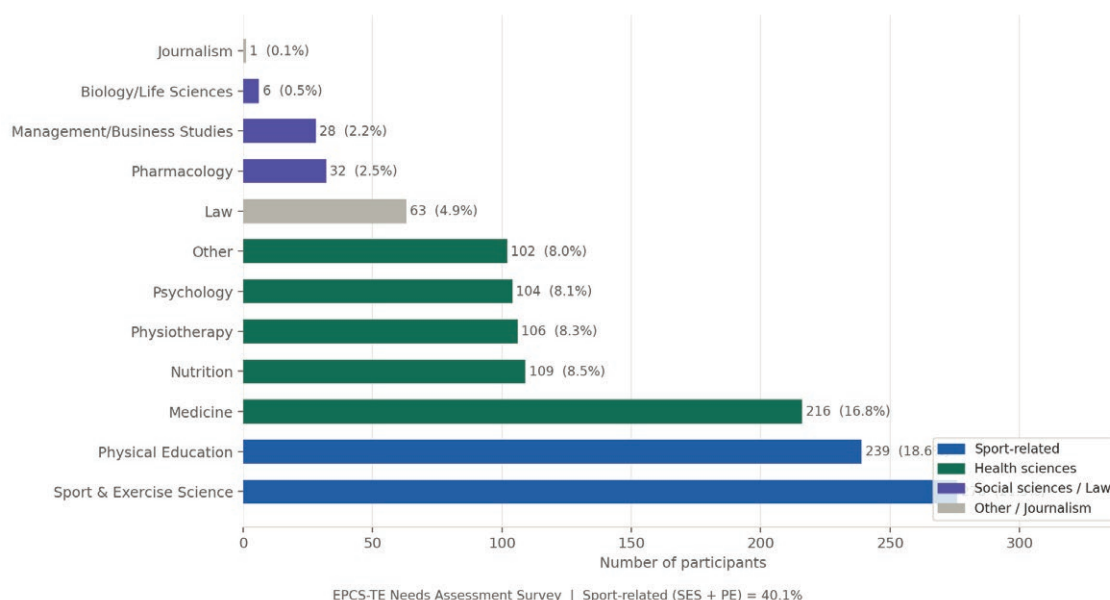
Figure 1. Country Distribution for University Students



EPCS-TE Needs Assessment Survey

With regards to the scientific disciplines represented in the student survey the results indicate diversity across academic fields, extending beyond sport-related subjects.

Figure 2. Distribution by Scientific Discipline

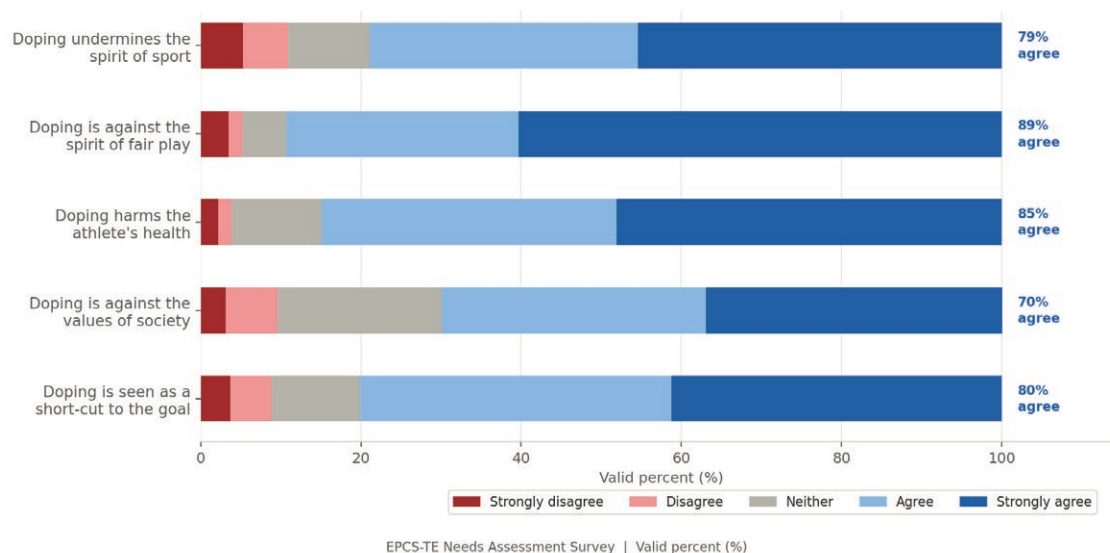


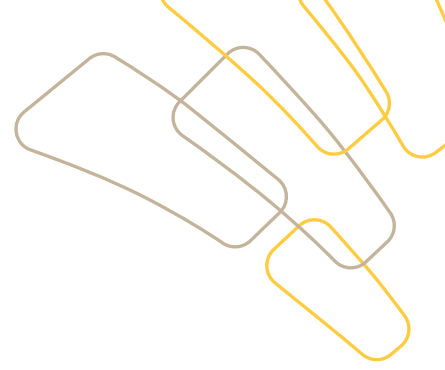
In total, 49.2% (n = 630) of students were enrolled in undergraduate courses and 50.8% (n = 650) were in postgraduate courses.

3.1.2. Attitudes towards Doping

Overall, university students reported predominantly negative attitudes towards doping. Responses to the five attitudinal items (rated from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) are summarised as follows:

Figure 3. Attitudes towards Doping among Students

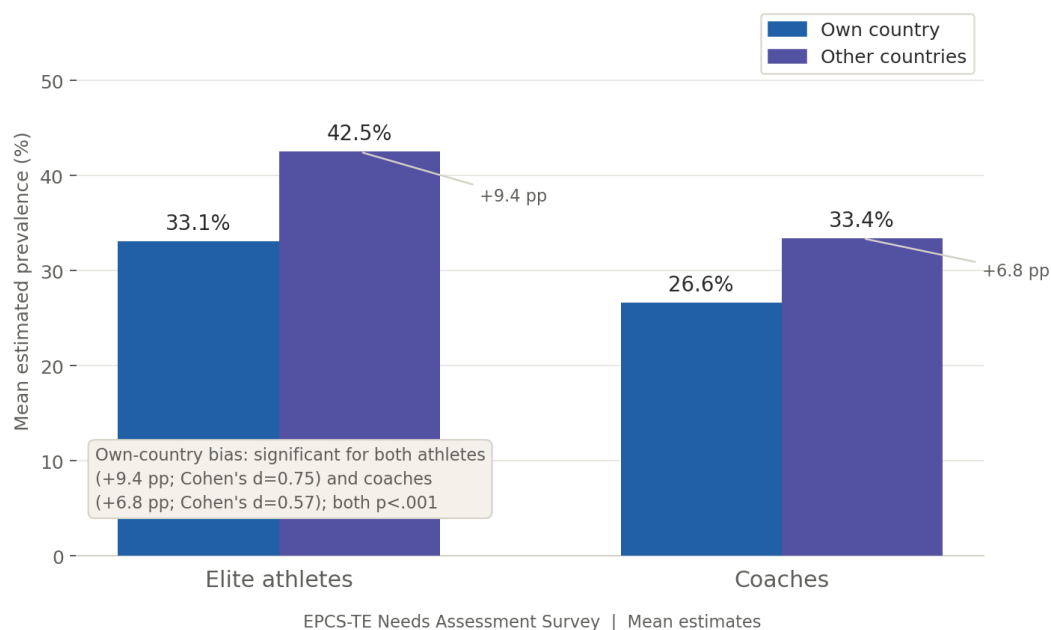




3.1.3. Perceived Prevalence of Doping

University students systematically perceived doping in their country (used by athletes and endorsed by coaches), to be lower as compared to perceived doping in other countries.

Figure 4. University Students Perceptions about the Prevalence of Doping



Paired samples t-test indicated that this difference was statistically significant, $t_{athletes} (1232) = 26.49$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 0.75$; $t_{coaches} (1236) = 20.15$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 0.57$.

3.1.4. Anti-Doping Education Needs

Responses were given on a 7-point scale where 1 = "not at all" and 7 = the highest positive endorsement for each item. The first four items share the stem proposition "anti-doping education is...", completed by four different descriptors. The fifth item asked directly whether respondents believed their university should include anti-doping topics in their subject area or discipline (1 = Definitely not, 7 = Definitely yes). Results are presented by discipline group and focus on the proportion of respondents selecting scores 6 or 7, (i.e., those giving the highest positive endorsement) as the primary indicator of need. Where relevant, score 7 alone is noted as a secondary highlight to indicate the intensity of endorsement within the top band.

Four discipline groups were compared:

- Sport Science & Physical Education (SES & PE; n = 515)
- Biomedical & Health Sciences (Biomed & Health; n = 469)
- Social Sciences & Humanities (SSH; n = 196)
- Unclassified disciplines, including Engineering, Information Technology, and other technology-oriented disciplines (n = 102)

Table 1 presents the proportion of respondents in each discipline group selecting scores 6–7 (combined) for each of the five education needs items.

Table 1. Anti-doping education needs by discipline group (% scoring 6–7)

Anti-doping education is...	SES & PE (n=515)	Biomed & Health (n=469)	SSH (n=196)	Unclassified (n=102)
...important for preventing doping	65.5%	55.7%	57.8%	62.6%
...interesting personally	35.4%	19.2%	14.3%	21.5%
...relevant to my studies	43.2%	22.8%	17.7%	14.3%
...important for my future career	50.9%	32.4%	19.9%	27.5%
<i>University should include anti-doping*</i>	48.1%	28.0%	15.3%	19.2%

* Full item wording: 'Should your university include anti-doping topics in your subject area/discipline?'
(1 = Definitely not, 7 = Definitely yes)

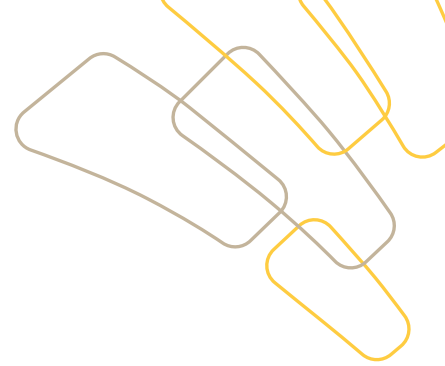


Figure 5 presents the results as a grouped bar chart comparing the four discipline groups across all five items.

Figure 5. Anti-doping education needs by discipline group (scores 6–7 combined, %)

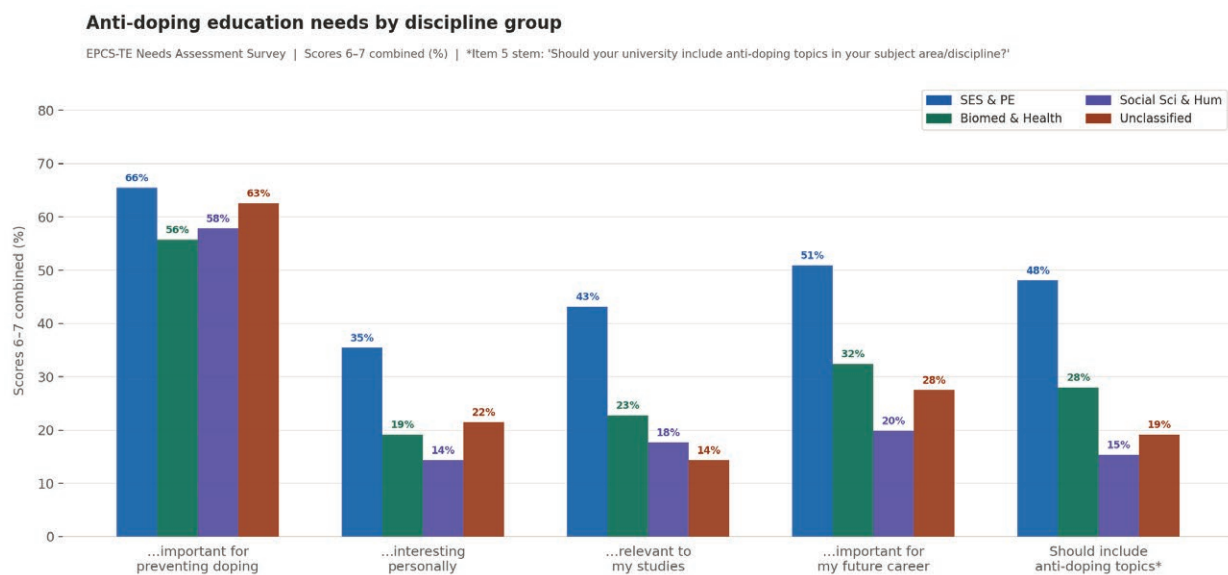


Figure 6 presents the same data as discipline-specific panels, showing both the score 6–7 combined band (lighter shade) and score 7 alone (darker shade).

Figure 6. Anti-doping education needs by discipline group (darker = score 7; lighter = scores 6–7 combined)

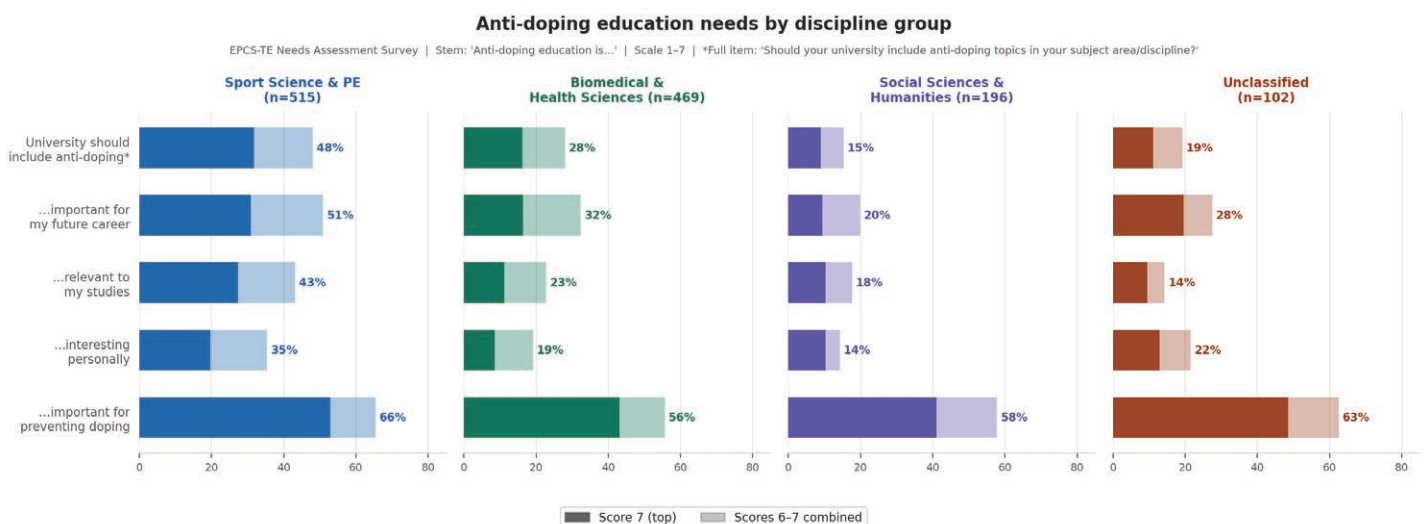
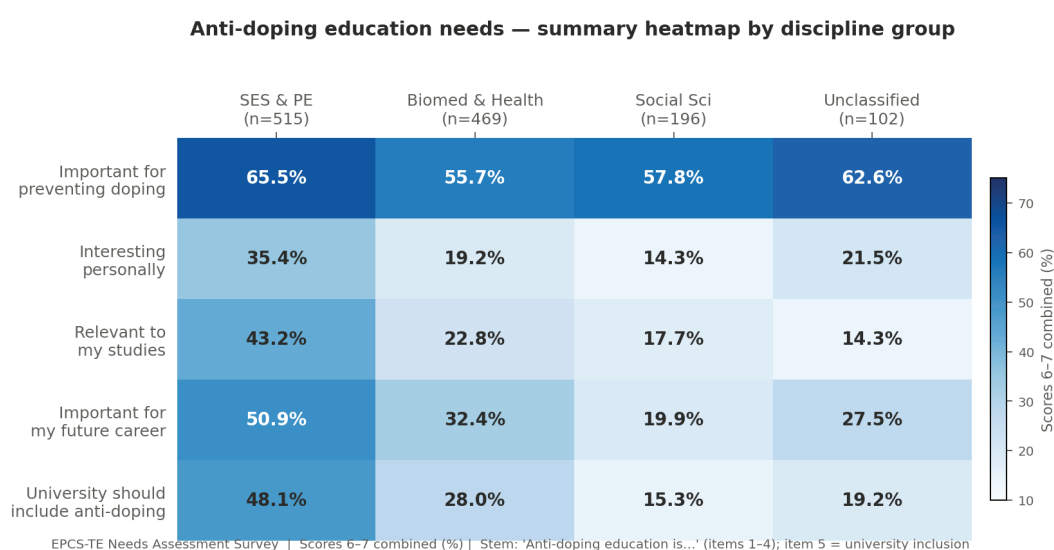


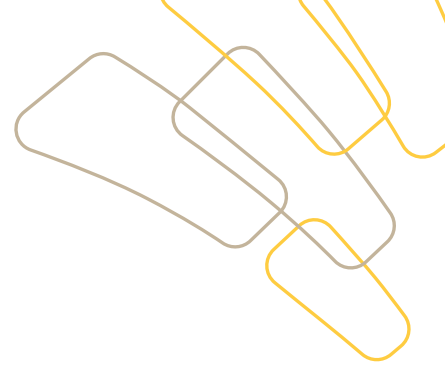
Figure 7 provides a summary heatmap for rapid cross-disciplinary comparison.

Figure 7. Summary heatmap with scores 6–7 combined (%) by discipline group and item



Across all four disciplinary groups, anti-doping education was most consistently endorsed as important for preventing doping. In the SES & PE group, 65.5% of respondents selected scores 6 or 7 on this item, with 53.0% selecting the top score of 7 alone, the highest rate across all groups and items. Endorsement remained substantial in the Unclassified group (62.6%), and in the Social Sciences & Humanities group (57.8%), with the Biomedical & Health Sciences group showing the lowest rate on this item (55.7%). The breadth and consistency of this finding across disciplinary groups, where even the lowest-scoring group still shows a clear majority in the top band, reinforces the conclusion that the preventive value of anti-doping education is broadly recognised irrespective of academic discipline.

Personal interest in anti-doping education showed the greatest variation across groups and was the most weakly endorsed item in all but the SES & PE group. Specifically, in SES & PE students, 35.4% scored in the 6–7 band, which was considerably higher than any other group, reflecting the direct professional relevance of anti-doping to their field. By contrast, only 19.2% of Biomedical & Health Sciences students, 21.5% of Unclassified students, and 14.3% of Social Sciences & Humanities students selected scores 6 or 7. The Social Sciences & Humanities group also showed the highest proportion of low-range responses on this item, suggesting that anti-doping education feels most personally distant to students in disciplines with no direct link to sport or health practice.



Perceived relevance of anti-doping topics to one's studies followed a clear disciplinary gradient. SES & PE students reported the highest perceived relevance by a substantial margin, with 43.2% scoring in the 6–7 band, which is more than double the rate observed in the Biomedical & Health Sciences group (22.8%). Social Sciences & Humanities (17.7%) and Unclassified students (14.3%) reported the lowest perceived relevance ratings, consistent with the greater disciplinary distance of these groups from sport and health science. This pattern underscores the need for discipline-tailored approaches to anti-doping education that make explicit the connections between anti-doping and the specific academic context of each student group.

Perceived importance of anti-doping knowledge for future career followed a similar pattern. SES & PE students again led with 50.9% in the 6–7 band, followed by Biomedical & Health Sciences students (32.4%). Unclassified students (27.5%) rated career importance modestly higher than Social Sciences & Humanities students (19.9%), likely reflecting some overlap between these disciplines and sport-adjacent professional roles (e.g., engineering in sport technology). The Social Sciences & Humanities group had the weakest scores in perceived importance of anti-doping knowledge for future career, with only 9.4% selecting the top score of 7, the lowest single top-score rate across all items and groups. This finding highlights the particular challenge of communicating the career relevance of anti-doping knowledge to students in disciplines where the connection is indirect or non-obvious.

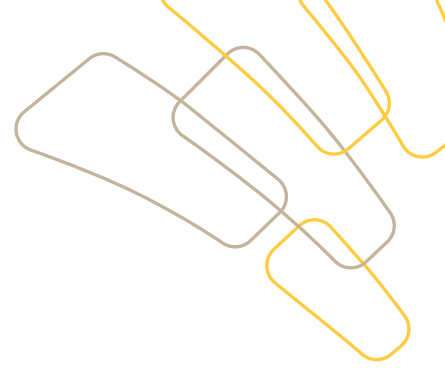
The item asking whether the university should include anti-doping topics in the respondent's subject area or discipline showed the sharpest disciplinary divide. Among SES & PE students, 48.1% scored in the 6–7 band and 31.8% selected the top score of 7 ("definitely yes"), reflecting strong institutional support for curricular integration in this group. In contrast, only 28.0% of Biomedical & Health Sciences students, 19.2% of Unclassified students, and 15.3% of Social Sciences & Humanities students scored in the top band. Among Social Sciences & Humanities students, 13.8% selected the lowest score ("definitely not"), the highest negative response rate for this item across all groups. These results suggest that while there is need for anti-doping education in curricula among students in health and sport-related disciplines, students in more distant disciplines are either unconvinced of its relevance or actively sceptical of its inclusion; a finding that points to the importance of discipline-specific framing and co-design in developing any future curricular initiatives.

Overall, the disciplinary breakdown reveals that endorsement of anti-doping education needs is not uniform across the university student population. Sport Science & Physical Education students

consistently show the highest positive endorsement across all five items and are the group most likely to regard anti-doping education as personally relevant, professionally important, and appropriate for inclusion in their academic curriculum. Biomedical & Health Sciences students show moderate but meaningful endorsement, particularly on the prevention and career importance items. Social Sciences & Humanities and Unclassified students show consistently lower endorsement, most notably on the items concerning personal relevance, career importance, and curricular integration. These patterns carry important implications for the design of the EPCS-TE Framework: a one-size-fits-all approach to anti-doping education in higher education is unlikely to be effective. Discipline-specific content, framing, and delivery modes will be needed to engage students across the full breadth of academic programmes represented in tertiary education institutions.

Key finding:

Endorsement of anti-doping education needs varies substantially by disciplinary group. Sport Science & Physical Education students consistently report the highest positive endorsement across all items. Social Sciences & Humanities and Unclassified students show the weakest endorsement, particularly for perceived relevance to studies, importance for future career, and support for curricular integration. Across all groups, the preventive value of anti-doping education is broadly recognised. These findings support the need for discipline-tailored approaches to anti-doping education in tertiary settings.

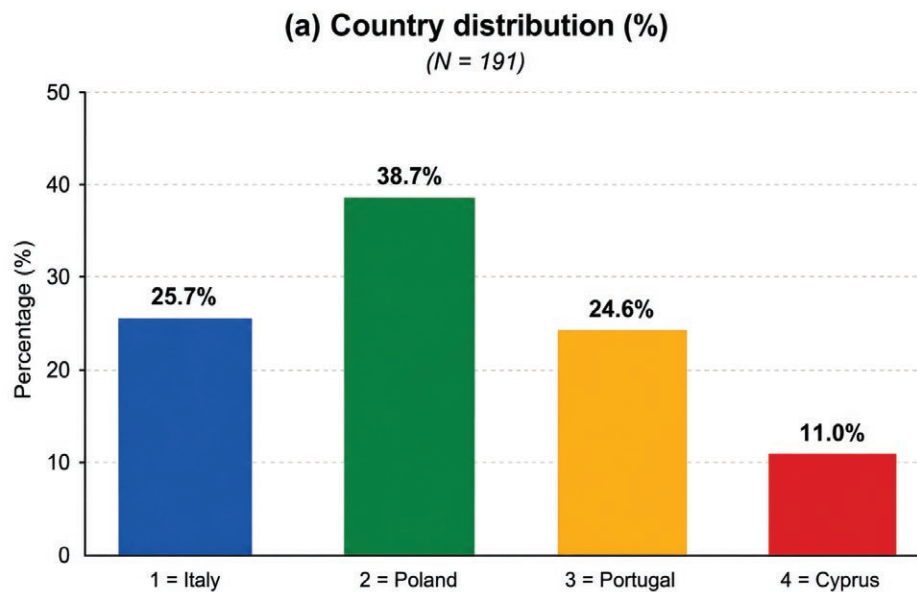


3.2. University Staff Survey

3.2.1. Sample Description

The following section provides a breakdown of the university staff who participated in the study.

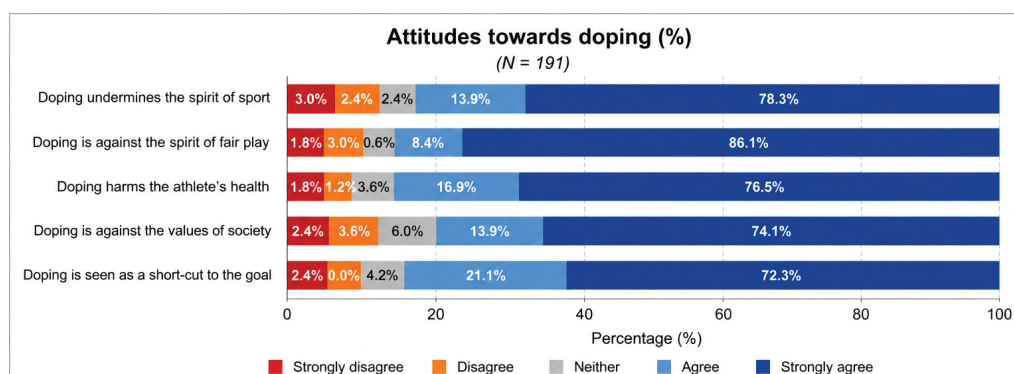
Figure 8. Country Distribution for University Staff



3.2.2. Anti-Doping Attitudes and Perceptions

University staff expressed overwhelmingly negative attitudes towards doping across all five items, with "strongly agree" rates ranging from 72.3% ("doping is seen as a short-cut to the goal") to 86.1% ("doping is against the spirit of fair play"). This pattern is consistent with the findings from the student sample, where all five items also attracted majority agreement, though the strength of endorsement was markedly higher among staff.

Figure 9. Attitudes towards Doping among Staff



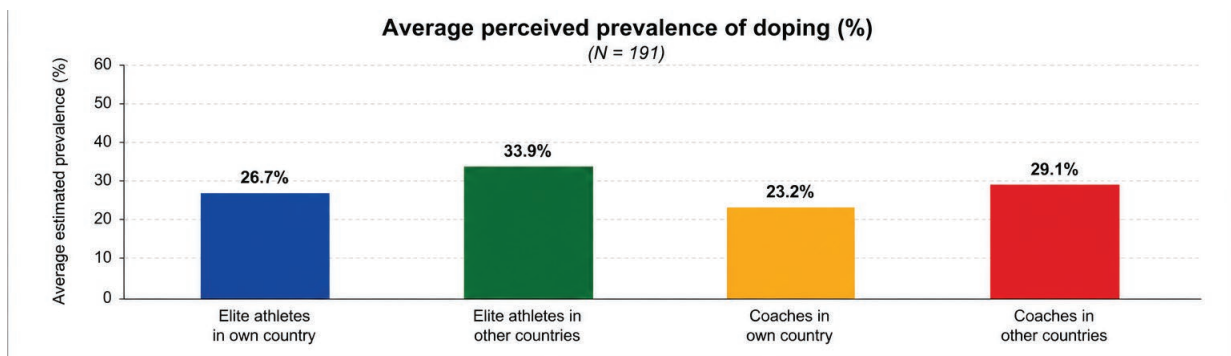
3.2.3. Perceived Prevalence of Doping

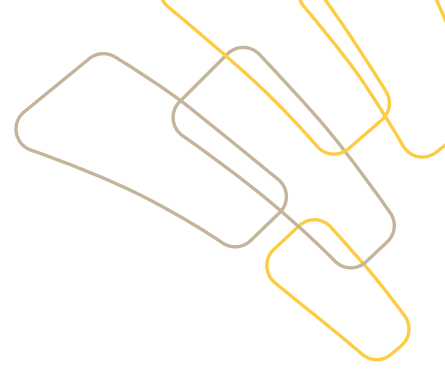
University staff also systematically perceived doping in their own country to be lower than doping in other countries, for both athletes and coaches. For elite athletes, staff estimated that 26.7% of athletes in their own country used doping substances to enhance performance, compared to 33.9% for athletes in other countries.

A paired samples t-test confirmed that this difference was statistically significant, $t(91) = 6.76$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.71$). A similar pattern was observed for coaches, with staff estimating that 23.2% of elite coaches in their own country would encourage athletes to dope, versus 29.1% for coaches in other countries; a mean difference of 5.9 percentage points, which was again statistically significant, $t(91) = 5.59$, $p < .001$, with a medium-to-large effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.58$).

This pattern closely mirrors the findings observed in the student sample, where the own-country bias was similarly significant for both athletes (Cohen's $d = 0.75$) and coaches (Cohen's $d = 0.57$). Although a direct statistical comparison between staff and student estimates was not the primary aim of this analysis, the consistency of the own-country bias across both groups strengthens the interpretation that this reflects a systematic perceptual tendency – likely driven by in-group favouritism and social desirability – rather than an artefact of any particular respondent group.

Figure 10. University Staff Perceptions about the Prevalence of Doping





3.2.4. Anti-Doping Education Needs

Responses were given on a 7-point scale where 1 = "not at all" and 7 = the highest positive endorsement for each item. Three items share the stem proposition "anti-doping education is...", completed by three different descriptors. The fourth item asked directly whether respondents believed their university should include anti-doping topics in their subject area or discipline (1 = Definitely not, 7 = Definitely yes). Results are presented by disciplinary group, focusing on the proportion of respondents selecting scores 6 or 7, the highest positive endorsement band, as the primary metric. Score 7 alone is noted as a secondary indicator of the intensity of endorsement within the top band.

Four disciplinary groups were compared:

- Sport Science & Physical Education (SES & PE; n = 88)
- Biomedical & Health Sciences (Biomed & Health; n = 55)
- Social Sciences & Humanities (SSH; n = 28)
- Unclassified disciplines, including Engineering, Information Technology, and others (n = 20)

Table 2. Anti-doping education needs by disciplinary group — university staff (% scoring 6–7)

Anti-doping education is...	SES & PE (n=88)	Biomed & Health (n=55)	SSH (n=28)	Unclassified (n=20)
...important for preventing doping	83.9%	88.9%	84.6%	75.0%
...relevant to subjects I teach	60.9%	63.0%	50.0%	35.0%
...important for students' future careers	76.8%	69.3%	57.6%	35.0%
University should include anti-doping*	79.3%	74.1%	61.5%	40.0%

* Full item wording: 'Should your university include anti-doping topics in your subject area/discipline?' (1 = Definitely not, 7 = Definitely yes)

Note: The Social Sciences & Humanities (n = 28) and Unclassified (n = 20) subgroups are small, and findings for these groups should be interpreted with appropriate caution.

Figure 11 presents the results as a grouped bar chart comparing the four disciplinary groups across all four items.

Figure 11. Anti-doping education needs by discipline group in university staff (scores 6–7 combined, %)

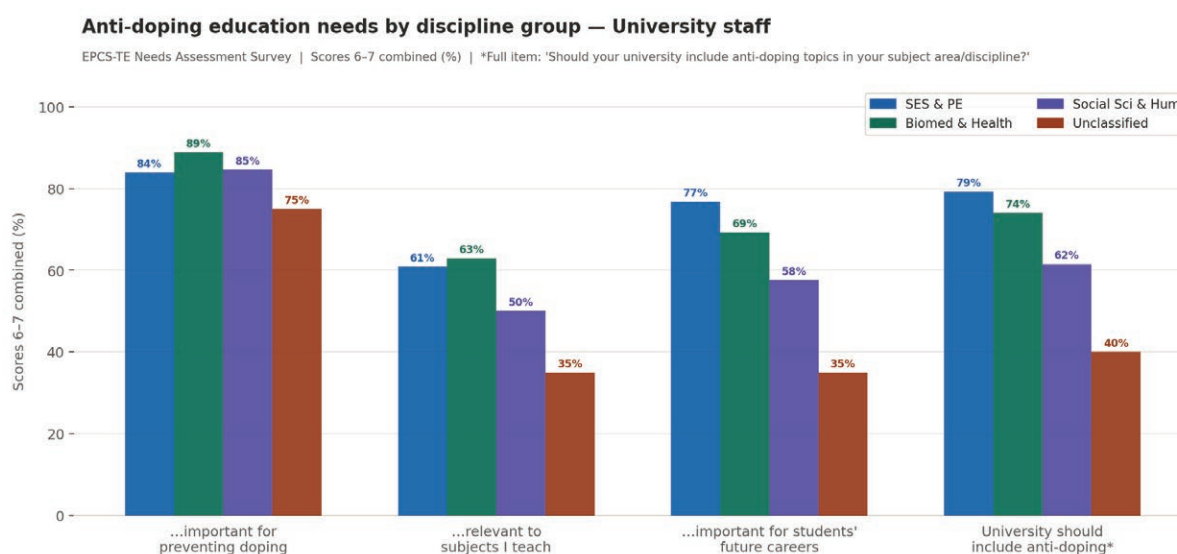
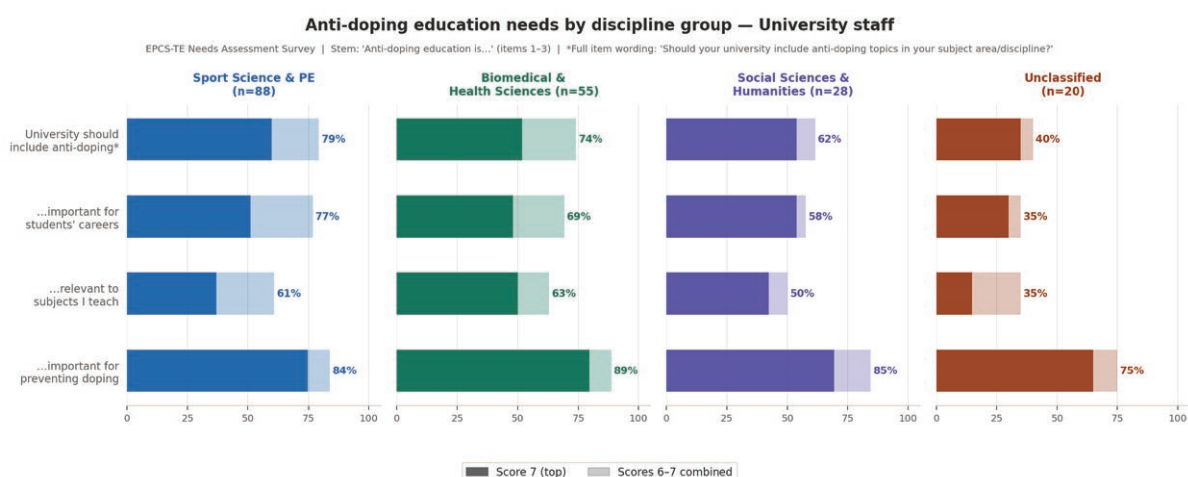


Figure 12 presents discipline-specific panels showing both the score 6–7 combined band and score 7 alone.

Figure 12. Anti-doping education needs by discipline group in university staff (darker = score 7; lighter = scores 6–7 combined)



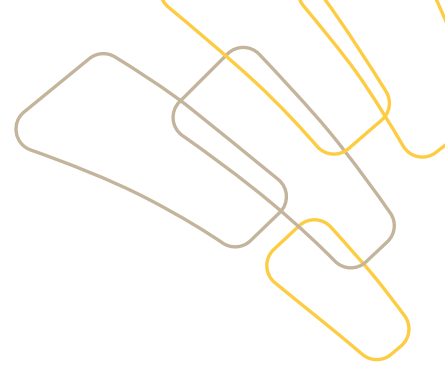
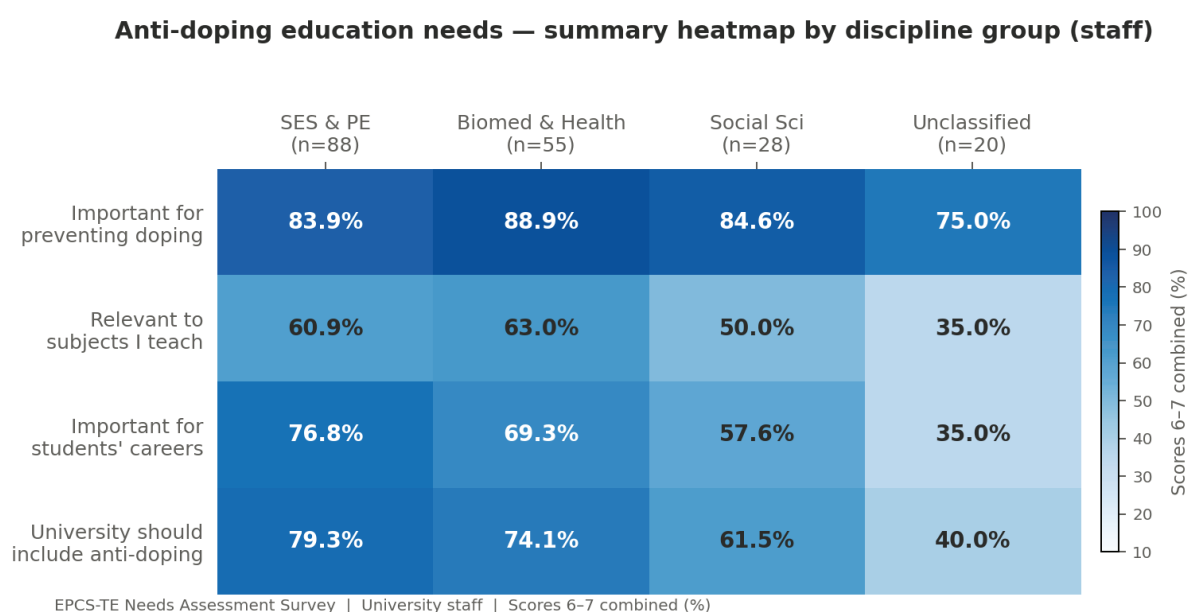


Figure 13 provides a summary heatmap for rapid cross-disciplinary comparison.

Figure 13. Summary heatmap with scores 6–7 combined (%) by discipline group and item in university staff



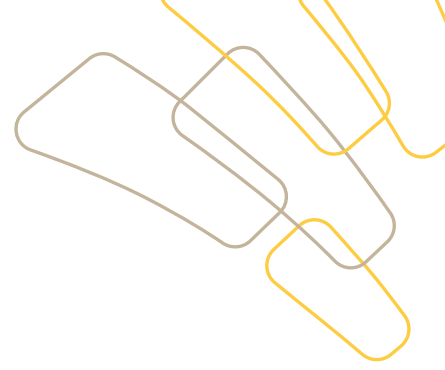
Across all four disciplinary groups, anti-doping education was most strongly and consistently endorsed as important for preventing doping, the highest-rated item in every group. Sport Science & PE staff and Social Sciences & Humanities staff showed near-identical endorsement rates on this item (83.9% and 84.6% respectively in the 6–7 band), while Biomedical & Health Sciences staff reported the highest rate of all four groups (88.9%). The Unclassified group showed the lowest endorsement on prevention (75.0%), though this still represents a clear majority. Notably, top-score rates (score 7 alone) were very high across all groups, ranging from 65.0% (Unclassified) to 79.6% (Biomedical & Health Sciences), confirming that the preventive value of anti-doping education is broadly and strongly recognised among academic staff irrespective of discipline.

Perceived relevance of anti-doping topics to subjects taught showed greater variation across groups, and a clearer disciplinary gradient than the prevention item. Biomedical & Health Sciences staff reported the highest scores in the 6–7 band (63.0%), followed closely by SES & PE staff (60.9%).

Social Sciences & Humanities staff reported moderate levels of perceived relevance (50.0%), while Unclassified staff reported the lowest relevance rating (35.0%), consistent with the greater disciplinary distance of this group from sport and health-related subjects. Interestingly, the top score alone tells a different story: 50.0% of Biomedical & Health Sciences staff and 42.3% of Social Sciences & Humanities staff selected score 7, compared to 36.8% of SES & PE staff and only 15.0% of Unclassified staff. This suggests that among those who do perceive anti-doping as relevant to their teaching, the conviction is strong even in disciplines not traditionally associated with sport.

Perceived importance of anti-doping knowledge for students' future careers was rated highly across the three main disciplinary groups. SES & PE staff reported the highest combined scores (76.8%), followed by Biomedical & Health Sciences (69.3%) and Social Sciences & Humanities (57.6%). The Unclassified group again showed the weakest scores (35.0%), with a notably high proportion of low-range responses (30.0% selected the lowest score of 1 = not at all important) reflecting the limited perceived professional relevance of anti-doping knowledge in engineering, IT, and related fields. Interestingly, Social Sciences & Humanities staff reported the highest top-score rate on this item (53.8%), surpassing even SES & PE staff (51.2%), suggesting that those in social science disciplines who do engage with anti-doping see it as professionally valuable for their students, even if fewer of them reach the top endorsement band overall.

The item asking whether the university should include anti-doping topics in the respondent's subject area or discipline showed strong endorsement in the three main disciplinary groups and clear differentiation in the Unclassified group. Among SES & PE staff, 79.3% scored in the 6–7 band and 59.8% selected the top score of 7 ("definitely yes"). Biomedical & Health Sciences staff showed similarly high endorsement (74.1% in the 6–7 band; 51.9% at top score). Social Sciences & Humanities staff, despite the small sample size ($n = 28$), showed substantial support (61.5% in the 6–7 band; 53.8% at top score), with 50.0% selecting "definitely yes", comparable to the larger groups. By contrast, Unclassified staff showed the weakest endorsement overall (40.0% in the 6–7 band; 35.0% at top score), and 25.0% selected "definitely not", the highest negative response rate across all groups and items. This finding suggests meaningful differentiation in anti-doping curricular integration among staff in disciplines furthest from sport and health.



Overall, the disciplinary breakdown of staff data reveals a broadly positive picture for anti-doping education across the main academic disciplines, with the notable exception of Unclassified staff. Unlike the student data, where scores were substantially lower across all items outside Sport Science & PE, staff in Biomedical & Health Sciences and even Social Sciences & Humanities show strong and consistent endorsement of anti-doping education needs, including support for curricular integration. This suggests that academic staff across a wider range of disciplines than students may be ready to champion anti-doping education in their institutions. The Unclassified group, largely consisting of engineering and technology disciplines, remains an outlier, with weaker endorsement across all items.

Key finding:

Among university staff, the preventive value of anti-doping education is strongly and consistently endorsed across all disciplinary groups. Biomedical & Health Sciences and Social Sciences & Humanities staff show higher or comparable endorsement to SES & PE staff on several items, suggesting a broader disciplinary readiness for anti-doping education among academics than among students. Unclassified staff (Engineering, IT, etc.) represent a consistent outlier, with weaker endorsement across all items and the lowest rate of endorsement of curricular integration. These findings support a discipline-informed approach to engaging academic staff as drivers of anti-doping education, while acknowledging the limits of a one-size-fits-all strategy.

4. Summary of Key Findings

A summary of the key cross-cutting findings from the needs assessment survey is presented below, organised thematically across the student and staff samples.

4.1. Attitudes towards Doping

Key Finding

Both university students and academic staff reported predominantly negative attitudes towards doping. Taken together, both groups share a clear and consistent rejection of doping, providing a strong value-based foundation on which anti-doping education initiatives in higher education settings can be built.

4.2. Perceived Prevalence of Doping

Key Finding

Perceived social norms can be reflected in the perceived prevalence of a given behaviour in a given population. In this study, both students and staff systematically perceived doping prevalence to be lower in their own country than in other countries, for both elite athletes using doping, and coaches encouraging it. In both samples, paired samples t-tests confirmed that these differences were statistically significant (all $p < .001$), with medium to large effect sizes.

This finding indicates a systematic normative bias, likely driven by in-group favouritism and social desirability – doping is perceived as less of a problem in one's own country than in other countries. It also highlights the importance of providing accurate, evidence-based information about doping prevalence as part of anti-doping education programmes in higher education settings.

4.3. Anti-Doping Education Needs

Both students and staff endorsed anti-doping education across multiple dimensions, though with notable differences in the strength of endorsement and in the patterns across disciplinary groups. Table 3 summarises the proportion of students and staff scoring in the top band (scores 6–7 combined) across the shared education needs items.

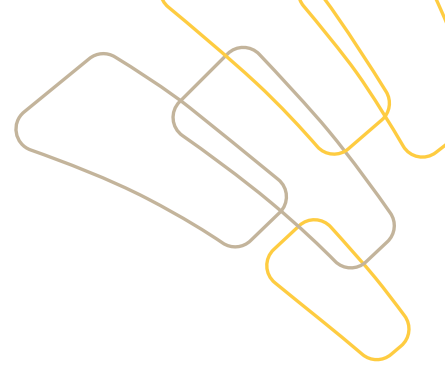


Table 3. Anti-doping education needs — students vs. staff comparison (scores 6–7 combined, %)

Dimension	Students (scores 6–7, %)	Staff (scores 6–7, %)
Important for preventing doping	65.0% (overall)	83.9–88.9% across groups
Relevant to studies / subjects taught	14.3–43.2% by group	35.0–63.0% by group
Important for future career	19.9–50.9% by group	35.0–76.8% by group
University should include anti-doping	15.3–48.1% by group	40.0–79.3% by group

Note: Student ranges reflect variation across four disciplinary groups (SES & PE; Biomedical & Health Sciences; Social Sciences & Humanities; Unclassified). Staff ranges similarly reflect disciplinary group variation. Overall student figure for prevention item based on full sample.

Key Finding

Prevention: The importance of anti-doping education for preventing doping was the most strongly and consistently endorsed item across both groups and all disciplinary subgroups. Among students, 65.0% of the full sample scored in the 6–7 band, with SES & PE students showing the highest endorsement (65.5%) and Biomedical & Health Sciences students the lowest (55.7%). Among staff, endorsement was higher across all groups, ranging from 75.0% (Unclassified) to 88.9% (Biomedical & Health Sciences).

Disciplinary relevance and career importance: These items showed the greatest variation across disciplinary groups in both students and staff. Among students, SES & PE students showed the strongest endorsement on both items (43.2% and 50.9% in the 6–7 band respectively), while Social Sciences & Humanities and Unclassified students showed the weakest. Among staff, the disciplinary variation was less pronounced: Biomedical & Health Sciences and SES & PE staff showed high endorsement, Social Sciences & Humanities staff showed moderate endorsement. Unclassified disciplines (i.e., engineering and technology-related) staff showed the weakest endorsement, consistent with their greater disciplinary distance from sport and health subjects.

University curriculum integration: The sharpest student-staff gap emerged on the item asking whether the university should include anti-doping topics in the respondent's subject area. Among students, only SES & PE students showed strong endorsement (48.1% in the 6–7 band); all other groups were below 30%. Among staff, three of the four groups showed strong endorsement (SES & PE: 79.3%; Biomedical & Health Sciences: 74.1%; Social Sciences & Humanities: 61.5%), with only Unclassified staff falling below 50% (40.0%). This contrast between staff readiness and student ambivalence is observed across disciplines and is the most practically significant finding for the design of anti-doping education initiatives in higher education settings.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of this needs assessment survey provide a robust empirical foundation for the subsequent phases of project EPCS-TE, particularly the co-design of the Framework for the Partnership for Clean Sport Tertiary Education (WP4). Three key conclusions and associated recommendations can be drawn.

Conclusion 1: Anti-Doping Attitudes – Strong Foundations for Anti-Doping

The overwhelmingly negative attitudes towards doping observed among both students and staff across all four partner countries confirm that participants in our study shared the core values underpinning anti-doping. This is a meaningful and encouraging finding. Anti-doping attitude assessment can help National Anti-Doping Organisations (NADOs) and universities explore the values base of anti-doping initiatives; where attitudes to doping are predominantly negative, anti-doping initiatives have more favourable conditions to be embedded and endorsed.

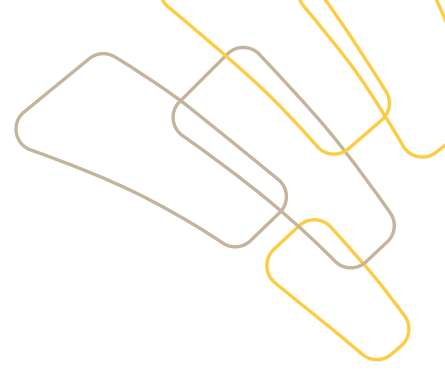
Recommendation:

The development of the Partnership for Clean Sport Tertiary Education should capitalise on existing pro-clean sport values by framing anti-doping education as a natural extension of the shared values of tertiary education institutions and sport communities, rather than as a compliance-driven exercise. Communication and engagement strategies should emphasise the alignment between anti-doping values and broader academic values of integrity, fairness, and evidence-based practice — framing that is likely to resonate across disciplines.

Conclusion 2: Different Starting Points – Staff Ready, Students Still to be Convinced

The present study revealed a consistent and substantively important gap between staff and students across all anti-doping education needs dimensions. Academic staff rate the importance, relevance, and disciplinary pertinence of anti-doping education considerably higher than students. Compared to students, academic staff are also far more likely to actively support its integration into university curricula. Students, by contrast, show a more mixed picture, recognising the preventive value of anti-doping education in principle, but rating its personal relevance and disciplinary utility more modestly.

The disciplinary group analyses add important nuance to this conclusion. Among students, the gap between SES & PE students and all other disciplinary groups is substantial, particularly on the items



concerning relevance to studies, career importance, and university inclusion. Social Sciences & Humanities and Unclassified students show the weakest endorsement, and in some cases low support for curricular integration. Among staff, the disciplinary differentiation is considerably less emphasised: Biomedical & Health Sciences and Social Sciences & Humanities staff show strong endorsement across most items, and only Unclassified staff emerge as a consistent outlier with weaker ratings and lower curricula integration support scores. This contrast between students and staff, particularly in non-sport disciplines, is one of the most practically significant findings of this survey. This gap is not a barrier, but an opportunity: Academic staff are well-positioned to act as institutional drivers and discipline-specific advocates for anti-doping education, while students' engagement can be deepened through more contextualised, discipline-relevant educational approaches.

Recommendation:

The Framework for the Partnership for Clean Sport Tertiary Education should leverage academic staff as primary agents of curricular change, particularly in Biomedical & Health Sciences and Social Sciences & Humanities, where staff show strong readiness even when students in the same disciplines are less engaged. Staff in these disciplines can serve as discipline-specific advocates, translating the relevance of anti-doping education into the language and context of their own fields. Student-facing anti-doping education should be designed to make explicit the disciplinary and professional relevance of anti-doping knowledge, moving beyond generic awareness-raising towards contextualised learning that resonates with students' own academic and career trajectories. Special attention is needed for students and staff in Unclassified disciplines (e.g., engineering and technology-oriented), where engagement strategies may need to emphasise societal and institutional values, rather than direct professional utility, to increase support for anti-doping education.

Conclusion 3: "It Takes Two to Tango" – The Case for Formalised NADO-University Partnerships

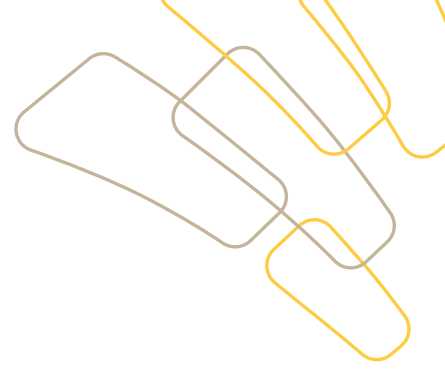
The needs assessment findings, taken together, make a compelling case for structured and evaluated partnerships between NADOs and tertiary education institutions. Both students and staff express openness to anti-doping education, and staff in particular actively support its curricular integration. However, translating this openness into sustained educational provision requires institutional infrastructure, such as shared goals, formal agreements, dedicated roles, and evaluation mechanisms.

The disciplinary analyses further strengthen this conclusion. The fact that staff readiness for anti-doping education extends well beyond sport science means that NADO-university partnerships have the potential to reach a much wider student audience than programmes focused solely on sport-related disciplines. At the same time, the relative weakness of engagement in Unclassified disciplines points to the limits of a universal approach and underlines the value of tailored partnership models that allow for disciplinary customisation.

NADOs bring expertise, resources, and credibility; universities bring disciplinary breadth, student reach, and curriculum authority. Neither can fully deliver anti-doping education in higher education settings alone. The strong staff endorsement of curricular integration identified in this survey, particularly in disciplines beyond sport sciences, provides an important evidence base to advocate for institutional commitment at leadership level within partner universities.

Recommendation:

The EPCS-TE Framework should provide clear and actionable guidance on how to formalise NADO-university partnerships, including the development of written agreements, shared goals, designated institutional leads, and evaluation metrics aligned with the WADA International Standard for Education. Partnership models should be designed to be flexible and discipline-sensitive, enabling institutions to engage academic staff across a broad range of disciplines, not only those most closely linked to sport, as champions of anti-doping education. Universities should be supported and empowered to draw on NADO expertise in co-designing and co-delivering anti-doping education, while maintaining flexibility for context-specific adaptation across different countries, disciplines, and institutional cultures.



Appendix 1. EPCS-TE Survey for University Students

1. Age _____

2. Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ I don't want to answer

3. Type of studies

☐ Undergraduate ☐ Postgraduate (e.g., PG Cert, PG Dip, MSc, MA, PhD)

4. What is the general degree program of your study?

- ☐ Law
- ☐ Medicine
- ☐ Pharmacology
- ☐ Sport & Exercise Science
- ☐ Biology/Life Sciences
- ☐ Physical Education
- ☐ Management/Business Studies
- ☐ Physiotherapy
- ☐ Nutrition
- ☐ Journalism
- ☐ Psychology
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

5. Which of the following best describes your relationship with sport?

- ☐ Athlete (i.e., you compete in sport at national or international level).
- ☐ Recreational athlete or exerciser (i.e., you play for a sports club and/or have regular exercise).
- ☐ Coach, trainer, or instructor (e.g., in fitness centres).
- ☐ Sport fan
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

6. Have you ever taken part in anti-doping education or awareness-raising activities?

☐ No ☐ Yes

7. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree, nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Doping undermines the spirit of sport					
Doping is against the spirit of fair play					
Doping harms the athlete's health					
Doping is against the values of society					
Doping is seen as a short-cut to the goal					

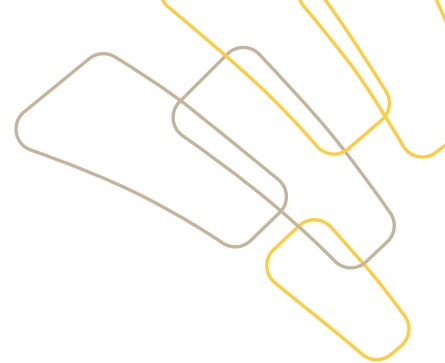
8. From 0 to 100%, how many elite athletes in your country do you believe use doping substances to enhance their performance? _____ %

9. From 0 to 100%, how many elite athletes in other countries do you believe use doping substances to enhance their performance? _____ %

10. From 0 to 100%, how many coaches in elite sport in your country do you believe would encourage their athletes to use doping substances to enhance their performance?
_____ %

11. From 0 to 100%, how many coaches in elite sport in other countries do you believe would encourage their athletes to use doping substances to enhance their performance?
_____ %

12. According to the World Anti-Doping Code published by the World Anti-Doping Agency, anti-doping education is the process of learning to instil values and develop behaviours that foster and protect the spirit of sport, and to prevent intentional and unintentional doping.



How important do you think is anti-doping education for preventing doping?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all important						Very important

13. How interesting is anti-doping education for you personally?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all interesting						Very interesting

14. How relevant do you think is the inclusion of anti-doping topics to your studies?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all relevant						Very relevant

15. How important do you think is knowledge of anti-doping for your future career?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all important						Very important

16. Should your university include anti-doping topics in your subject area/discipline?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Definitely not						Definitely yes

17. Which of the following topics would you consider relevant to your subject area/discipline?

- ☐ Principles and values associated with clean sport
- ☐ Definition of doping (Anti-Doping Rule Violations)
- ☐ Doping substances and methods (WADA Prohibited List)
- ☐ Health risks of using doping substances
- ☐ Consequences of doping, for example, social and economic effects, and sanctions
- ☐ Risk of nutritional supplement use
- ☐ The role and responsibility of coaches and athlete support personnel in doping
- ☐ Testing procedures, including urine, blood, and the Athlete Biological Passport
- ☐ Ways to report doping misconduct to relevant authorities

Appendix 2. EPCS-TE Survey for University Staff

1. Age _____

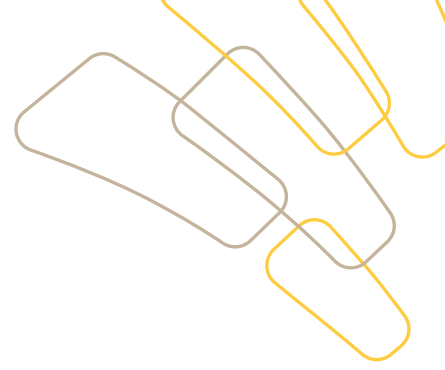
2. Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ I don't want to answer

3. What is your main subject area?

- ☐ Law
- ☐ Medicine
- ☐ Pharmacology
- ☐ Sport & Exercise Science
- ☐ Biology/Life Sciences
- ☐ Physical Education
- ☐ Management/Business Studies
- ☐ Physiotherapy
- ☐ Nutrition
- ☐ Journalism
- ☐ Psychology
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

4. Which of the following best describes your relationship with sport?

- ☐ Athlete (i.e., you compete in sport at national or international level).
- ☐ Recreational athlete or exerciser (i.e., you play for a sports club and/or have regular exercise).
- ☐ Coach, trainer, or instructor (e.g., in fitness centres).
- ☐ Sport fan
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____



5. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree, nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Doping undermines the spirit of sport					
Doping is against the spirit of fair play					
Doping harms the athlete's health					
Doping is against the values of society					
Doping is seen as a short-cut to the goal					

6. From 0 to 100%, how many elite athletes in your country do you believe use doping substances to enhance their performance? _____ %

7. From 0 to 100%, how many elite athletes in other countries do you believe use doping substances to enhance their performance? _____ %

8. From 0 to 100%, how many coaches in elite sport in your country do you believe would encourage their athletes to use doping substances to enhance their performance? _____ %

9. From 0 to 100%, how many coaches in elite sport in other countries do you believe would encourage their athletes to use doping substances to enhance their performance? _____ %

10. According to the World Anti-Doping Code published by the World Anti-Doping Agency, anti-doping education is the process of learning to instil values and develop behaviours that foster and protect the spirit of sport, and to prevent intentional and unintentional doping.

How important do you think is anti-doping education for preventing doping?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all important						Very important

11. How interesting is anti-doping education for you personally?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all interesting						Very interesting

12. How relevant do you think is the inclusion of anti-doping topics to subjects that you teach?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all relevant						Very relevant

13. How important do you think is knowledge of anti-doping for the future career of your students?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all important						Very important

14. Should your university include anti-doping topics in your subject area/discipline?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Definitely not						Definitely yes

15. Which of the following topics would you consider relevant to your subject area/discipline?

- ☐ Principles and values associated with clean sport
- ☐ Definition of doping (Anti-Doping Rule Violations)
- ☐ Doping substances and methods (WADA Prohibited List)
- ☐ Health risks of using doping substances
- ☐ Consequences of doping, for example, social and economic effects, and sanctions
- ☐ Risk of nutritional supplement use
- ☐ The role and responsibility of coaches and athlete support personnel in doping
- ☐ Testing procedures, including urine, blood, and the Athlete Biological Passport
- ☐ Ways to report doping misconduct to relevant authorities
- ☐ Other (please describe)



European Partnership for Clean Sport in Tertiary Education Project

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