The SMARTAL Project

St MARTin’s College health students
Access to Learning resources whilst on placement

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St Martin’s College

• a higher education college, whose degrees are awarded by Lancaster University.

• SMC has 5291 FTE students (2005/06), the majority taking teacher training or nursing and allied health-related courses.
Background

• The project ran from December 2004 to March 2005.

• HENSAL (Health and Education Northumbria Students Access to Learning resources whilst on placement) Project

• 2005/06 – 1282 FTE pre-registration health students who spend up to half their course on placement
Aims

• To determine patterns of use of learning resources

• To find out barriers to access and use

• Provide local evidence to improve access to facilities, services and resources

• To compare with other HE institutions and contribute to the evidence base
Objectives

To find out:

• how important it was for the students to be able to access learning resources while they were on placement

• if they had access to a placement library, IT and study space and, if so, were they using them

• what difficulties they experienced

• how much use they made of the College library, local NHS library and other libraries

• who they asked for help in accessing and using the resources
Methodology

• Questionnaire to students – 444 students, 60% response rate

• Interviews with 5 nursing Practice Placement Facilitators
Significant findings

• 72% - in a hospital (68% of these in hospitals in the 2 local trusts)

• 96% - thought access to learning resources was either important or very important

• Most students used libraries for accessing printed books and journals

• 84% - used learning resources for completing a College assignment
Availability of learning resources by venue

- **Hospital**
  - Study space
  - Library
  - Internet access

- **Primary care**
  - Study space
  - Library
  - Internet access

- **Other venue**
  - Study space
  - Library
  - Internet access

Legend:
- Light blue: Study space
- Blue: Library
- Teal: Internet access
Difficulties accessing learning resources

![Bar chart showing difficulties accessing learning resources in different venues.](chart.png)

- Library
- Study space
- Internet access

- Hospital
- Primary care
- Other venue
Use of specific resources

- Books
- Printed journals
- E-journals
- Databases
- E-books
- Web sites
- Study space

% Placement
SMC
Home

Learning and Information Services

ST MARTIN'S COLLEGE
Other findings

• 82% - internet access at home
• Little awareness of NHS e-resources
• 65% - never accessed their College e-mail account
• Most students asked clinical staff for help in using learning resources
Recommended Actions - 1

- Consultation between the Faculty and the library on placement audits
- Briefing sessions with the students
- Leaflet, web page, VLE module
- Information fluency training
- Feedback from the Faculty
- Exchange of information with mentors and NHS library staff
Recommended Actions - 2

- Publicise extended loans
- Pilot postal loans
- Pilot borrowing access for NHS mentors
- Investigate longer College library opening hours
- Extend methodology to other groups of placement students
• Full text of the SMARTAL report is available at

www.ucsm.ac.uk/library

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• Look out for the next issue of the *Health Information and Libraries Journal*