Phase One: Peer Support Project Report
Key Elements to a Successful Peer Support Project:

• Discipline owned and student-led
• Clear element of academic and administrative responsibility
• Supportive, non-remedial and have a holistic attitude to the student experience
• The Student Leaders reflect the diversity of the student body
• A rigorous recruitment, induction and training process
• ‘Peer Support Code of Practice’
• An additional central peer support service provision, to compliment local School-level projects, with a strong focus on pastoral care
• A robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism
Common Challenges:

• Timetabling and room bookings
• Creating and maintaining a robust and organised management system
• Generating initial and sustained student attendance
• Providing training as the Schemes grow
• Maintaining the motivation of Volunteers
• Ensuring each Scheme has appropriate Academic and administrative support
• Lack of Funds
Models of Practice

• Academic Families

• Mentoring

• House System

• Peer-Assisted Learning (PALS)

• Befriending

• Helpdesk

• Additional Projects
Establishing a Peer Support Project

- Designate a key member of Academic and Administrative Staff to support the Scheme
- Student Interns or equivalent within the School, design and deliver consultation exercises to explore the experiences of our students
- PSDO can provide advice to the School on which type of Scheme meets the students’ needs
- Schools select which Peer Support Scheme they would like to implement from the Toolkit
- Recruit Student Leaders and train them with the resources available in the Toolkit
- Decide how the project will be monitored and evaluated
- Administrative and Student Staff/Volunteers plan the logistics of timetabling and location for Peer Support activities
Recommendations
Essential: Short Term

• Robust management system in place either centrally or within each School before new Peer Support Projects are underway
• Allocated responsibilities, including both academic and administrative support
• Consult & identify clear need for Peer Support
• Utilise best-practice Toolkit
• All volunteers must be supported, supervised & adequately trained & PVG checked where appropriate
• A central peer support virtual database
• Make small, local budgets available
• Start with supporting junior years first
• Schools can choose and blend the best practice models
Desirable: Longer Term

• To ensure a sustainable model a longer term investment must be made in managing the Peer Support Strand of Projects with the university.

• A central pastoral support should be phased in to complement a School-based provision.

• Further provision aimed at the particular needs of honours students would be beneficial.

• Recognition of Peer Support through EA and other Award Schemes has proven to be hugely beneficial and should be rolled out further
Next Steps:

• Determine what the local needs are: including finding out what students within your School want
• Define the aims and objectives for the provision
• Use this to inform your choice of model/models
• Consult with the PSDO on taking this forward
• Communicate with other Schools running this project model
• ESS benchmarking Event
• Wider discussion on management models

Overall key to success:

• Initial investment of resources, with continuous support, motivation and development