Enhancing Student Support

Peer Support Report

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Acknowledgements:

This initial Report into Peer Support at the University of Edinburgh and other higher education institutions would not have been possible without the support of EUSA and the universities of Manchester, Liverpool, Stirling, St Andrews, Queens Belfast, Reading, Glasgow, Oxford Brookes, Dundee and Leeds, as well as independent research and contributions from Maggie Marr. I would also like to thank all the staff and students at the University of Edinburgh that contributed to this Report.
# Table of Contents

Executive Summary ........................................................................... 1

Project Remit .................................................................................... 2

Introduction ...................................................................................... 3

Project Phase ................................................................................... 4

Consultation Findings ..................................................................... 5

Research of other Institutes ............................................................. 6

Peer Support: Models of Practice ....................................................... 7

  Academic Families ........................................................................ 7.1

  Mentoring .................................................................................... 7.2

  House System ............................................................................. 7.3

  Peer-Assisted Learning ............................................................... 7.4

  Befriending ............................................................................... 7.5

  Helpdesk ................................................................................... 7.6

  Additional Projects ..................................................................... 7.7

Matrix of Activities ........................................................................ 8

Resource & investment .................................................................. 9

Managing a Peer Support Project .................................................. 10

Establishing a Peer Support Project ............................................. 11

Recommendations .......................................................................... 12
1. Executive Summary:

This is a Report of findings examining peer support within the University of Edinburgh and other higher education institutions. It will contribute to meeting the outcomes for Phase 1 of the Enhancing Student Support (Peer Support Strand). The Report contains a Matrix of Activities which catalogues all the peer support projects currently taking place across the University.

The first area of work for the peer support programme was to identify a need and it did this with ease, as in some Schools as much as 71.9% of students said they would like a formal Peer Support Scheme. Further to this we consulted with staff, Schools, students and societies throughout the University. Through this the research from other institutions, some common success factors have been identified:

**Key Elements to a successful Peer Support Project:**

- The projects are discipline owned and student-led, with an acknowledged element of academic and administrative responsibility
- Programmes are supportive, non-remedial and have a holistic attitude to the student experience
- The Student Leaders reflect the diversity of the student body
- All Student Leaders go through a rigorous recruitment, induction and training process
- All students involved sign-up to the Universities ‘Peer Support Code of Practice’
- An additional central service provision with a strong focus on pastoral care
- A robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism

The Report also catalogues the common challenges when setting up a Peer Support Programme such as issues around timetabling, ensuring appropriate staff support, initiating and sustaining student attendance and maintaining the motivation of Volunteers.

Following this to ensure a common understanding, quality and consistency there are definitions for each model along with the aims/objectives, activities, outcomes and benefits. This is to allow each School to choose a flexible model or models which best fits their needs. Each example also has case-studies from within or out with the University to give a clear vision on how these projects work in practice. In line with taking the findings of this Report forward it also catalogues the resources needed to put these programmes in place. In addition to this and to complement other University strategies and frameworks the Graduate Attributes which can be attained by each programme have been identified and are valued by the excellent Edinburgh Award.
We have also been running a number of Pilot Projects here at Edinburgh this Semester:

**Pilot Projects:**

- Fast Track (Supported study sessions in partnership with the Institute for Academic Development and Accommodation Services)
- Maths for Physics Buddies
- Academic Families: Geo-Science & Economics
- Vet Medicine House System
- Vet Medicine Peer Supporters
- Physics International Buddies
- Training also delivered to: Nursing Academic Family

To suggest ways in which the University could take these projects forward, there is information and guidance on various ways to establish and manage a successful Peer Support Programme whether that be academic or pastoral based. Finally this Report makes recommendations to the University of how they may move forward to create a best practice model of Peer Support, a summary of these recommendations can be seen below:

**Key Recommendations:**

- It is essential that a robust management system is in place either centrally or within each School before new Peer Support Projects are underway
- There must be clear allocated responsibilities, including both academic and administrative support
- There must be an identified need for the project found through consultation to ensure it is relevant and reactive to the students’ requirements
- There will be a best practice Toolkit available which will provide 6 practice models and will include information on planning, initiating, managing and developing peer support programmes.
- It is recommended that implementation of support for 1st years should be viewed as a priority, with provision to higher years following on.
- Schools can choose the model or models that suit them best and will be encouraged to blend and vary them to meet their own needs but must maintain the quality of the provision
- Overall the key to successful Peer Support is initial investment of resources and continuous support, motivation and development.
2. Introduction

The Peer Support Project is a strand of the wider Enhancing Student Support Project. Following recruitment of a Development Officer based within EUSA, work on this strand began in August 2012, with the aim that every undergraduate student would have access to peer support by the start of 2013/14. As expected, much of the initial work has been to research existing models of support, both within the institution and beyond, consult with students and staff in every School and document current Peer Support Projects. All of which will be outlined in this Report.

We are particularly pleased that a number of pilot schemes have evolved during the semester, as this is something we had not necessarily planned to be involved with until semester two. These include schemes based in Physics, Maths, Veterinary Medicine, Geology, Nursing, Economics and Accommodation Services (Fast Track). EUSA are pleased to have collaborated with the students and staff running these pilot projects and have developed and delivered resources and training for them. We recognise the key to a successful Peer Support Project is to engage students and use their wealth of knowledge and experience to inform this work.

We look forward to collating a 'Toolkit' over the coming months. A menu of peer support options/models will be included in this kit, along with training, delivery and support materials relating to each option/model. We hope that this will enable Schools to identify a model(s), which best suits the needs of their students, and that the kit will provide practical guidance as to how to take these forward. Although many schemes will be largely student-led, we feel it is essential that every School or subject-area identify an academic and administrative staff contact who can take responsibility for ensuring peer support is maintained and developed.

We are working with the IAD to examine issues around monitoring and evaluation of peer support systems, so that quality can be assured from the outset. Future stages of the project will include exploring peer support for PGT students, and a possible institution-wide mentoring scheme. This is an initial Report of findings and although all efforts have been made to ensure it is comprehensive apologies must be made for any omissions

3.0 Peer Support Project Remit:

- Explore the purpose of the project, and ways in which its aims and objectives can be met
- Explore and identify the needs of students, volunteers, staff and Schools
- Consult with the relevant parties on how we deliver on these goals
- Research Peer Support Models in place within the University and other institutions.
- Identify key features of success and areas of development
- Roll out, monitor and evaluate Pilot Projects
- Make recommendations for future developments and where it fits with ESS.
4. Project Phases

**Phase 1:** EUSA together with the University have been researching the current models of Peer Support within the University and other institutions. There has also been wide-scale consultation with staff and students, which has resulted in Pilot projects being run in a number of Schools and a partner project with the Institute for Academic Development and Accommodation Services.

**Phase 2:** EUSA and the University plan to create a ‘Toolkit’ which will be a resource on best-practice models of Peer Support and by the academic year 2013/14 Peer Support will be available to every campus-based undergraduate. During this time we will also be examining and evaluating the Pilot Projects, continuing to deliver and develop training resources, making further recommendations and implementing planned projects.

**Phase 3:** Will focus on ODL, PGT and PGR Students as well as investigating the possibility and resource implications of creating a central support service.
5. Consultation findings

Who we asked:

- PALS & Fast Track Leaders (Training and provision)
- EUSA’s Academic Council (representing all Schools)
- Surveys: LLC, Economics, Engineering, Social Work, Divinity
- PPLS Freshers Helpers Scheme
- Staff and student representatives from ALL Schools
- Focus Groups
- Over 300 Societies
- Medicine (Self-Assessment Exercise)
- Consultation has been collated and analysed from Vet Medicine
- Widening Participation (consulted with Dr Neil Speirs)
- Nightline Service
- Careers and Counselling Service

What we asked:

- Are you aware of any Peer Support available within the School?  
- How do you view Peer Support, if there is any available?  
- Would you like a formal Peer Support system? (for example Academic Families, Buddying or ALG’s).
- Where do you think Peer Support should be focused?
- Would you be interested in being involved in a Peer Support System as a Participant or Leader?
- Please add any further comments, recommendations or any other ideas you have on improving Peer Support?

What they said:

English Literature:

- Those who have received Peer Support rate it 9 out of 10
- Although 58.8% had no experience of Peer Support in English Lit, of those who had knowledge 23% marked it 9 out of 10
- Quote ‘ALG’s have been excellent. They really help to tease out ideas’
- A lot of positive feedback on the ALG’s
- Quote ‘ALG’s have been excellent. They really help to tease out ideas’
- Quote ‘My only experience is ALG’s, but I absolutely love them! We get a lot done in a fun, pressure-free atmosphere’
- A number asked that ALG’s be available junior years
- Recommendations: Academic Families, LitPALS needs to be more supported, better advertised and promoted.
Economics:

Prior to the recent implementation of the Economics Academic Family

- 75% Not aware of any Peer Support available within Economics
- 84.6% have no experience of Peer Support
- Those who had received Peer Support marked it a 1 out of 10
- Quote ‘Non-existent, mostly informal basis with friends’
- Quote ‘Economics Family by Econ Society,
- Requests: Helpdesk open longer, greater encouragement to use Peer Support services, academic families and buddy system.

Engineering:

71.9% said they would like Formal Peer Support System

Requests: More informal group to go over particular academic difficulties

Vet Medicine:

Prior to the new House System/Peer Supporters

Main issues identified by students:

- Need for more formal/structured ‘Peer Support’ system: students want connections with more experienced students for social/academic expectation advice
- Adaptation to Vet School/Induction: Expectation of more information before arrival, essay skills for 1st years
- Integration of GEP group into 2nd year
- Accessibility of information for students (esp. on EeVEC): Not knowing where to go/who to ask for help (for academic or pastoral matters)
- Not enough formal opportunities for mixing; activities often alcohol-biased

EUSA Academic Council: Requests

- Better combination between social and academic support
- House System
- School-based support
- More online presence
- Greater advertisement of what is available
- Further support in honours years
- Overall ratings low for current Peer Support

(Information is available for other Schools on request)
6. **Research on Peer Support in other Institutions:**

| University of Liverpool (Vet School) | • Student Learning and Achievement Mentors is identified as a preventative programme,  
| | • Aims to reduce pressure on support services  
| | • Volunteers attend 30 hour training course,  
| | • Peer Support Code of Practice  
| | • Post training support to enhance and make safer provision of informal links  
| | • Volunteers must attend Peer Support Groups  
| | • Set within the counselling service  
| | • Gender-specific service  
| | • Drop-in service seems integral.  |

| University of Manchester | • National Institute for Peer-Assisted Learning  
| | • Centrally co-ordinated, discipline owned & student-led PAL Schemes  
| | • Aim for 40% uptake on the PAL Schemes  
| | • Provide a Discipline-based Mentoring service  
| | • Induction, training and ongoing support  
| | • Have a written Duty of Care  
| | • Clear ‘Code of Practice’ in place  
| | • Central Support staff/team accessible to support/supervise the Mentors/ Leaders  
| | • Evaluated locally by the annual monitoring and periodic review processes.  |

| University of St Andrews | • Well-established Academic Family system  
| | • See Peer Support as integral to their NSS Results  
| | • ‘Sup-net’ Peer Support Scheme since the 1990’s  
| | • Centrally administered  
| | • Head of Student Services is ultimately responsible  
| | • Managed and monitored by Student Support Staff  
| | • Covered by Public Liability Insurance  
| | • Supported by qualified Counsellors  
| | • Students must record all interactions  |

| Queens University Belfast | • Mentoring service  
| | • Mentors attend Compulsory training  
| | • School-based, weekly meetings  
| | • Debrief with Mentor Group  
| | • On campus students only.  
| | • Evaluation: Paper-based, mid-year & end of year  |
| University of Reading | • Concentrates on having a diverse group of Peer Supporters  
| | • Those involved take part in a comprehensive training package  
| | • Online list of Peer Supporters  
| | • Open-house drop in  
| | • Social gatherings to build informal links  
| University of Glasgow | • Run Peer Assisted Learning Schemes  
| | • Attend a comprehensive, standardised training course  
| | • Organise and facilitate weekly study support sessions for junior year students  
| | • Sessions are voluntary, non-remedial and offer a safe study space  
| | • Discipline-based and co-ordinated by School Academics.  
| University of Stirling | • Mentoring and Buddying Service  
| | • Training run by Senior Mentors/Buddies  
| | • Co-ordinated by Student Interns  
| | • An excellent student-led model  
| | • Managed centrally  
| Oxford Brookes University | • Alumni mentoring & Peer Supporters  
| | • Peer Support Panel: Handling all recruitment, training (including specialist Peer Support Trainer) and management  
| | • Peer Support ‘Code of Practice’  
| | • Each College has 6-12 Peer Supporters, with new training starting every year to compensate for Leavers.  
| | • Set within the Advice Service and all content is online  
| University of Dundee | • Buddying and Mentoring Scheme  
| | • Work predominantly in 1st term  
| | • Hold group and one to one meetings  
| | • Attend compulsory training  
| | • Pastoral & social focus  
| | • Run an established Mediation Service  
| | • Virtual and face to face contact |
### University of Leeds

- Peer Mentoring scheme managed by the partnership agreement, which the University has with the Student Union
- High engagement rate
- Compulsory, comprehensive training
- Administered and evaluated by School Manager
- Evaluated through interviews and focus groups of staff and students
- Offered work placements with Alumni Mentors.
- All Peer Mentors are PVG Checked.
- Advice on Data Protection Act for Mentors.
- Use Group Mentoring Model
- Clear defined guidelines for Mentors

### Key Elements:

- Student-led and discipline-owned
- Academic responsibility and administrative support
- Supportive, non-threatening and non-remedial
- Diverse and reflective group of Peer Supporters
- Formal Application & Interview process with compulsory training
- Appropriate insurance and background checks must be in place
- Code of Practice
- Central service provision with strong focus on pastoral care
- Holistic approach to the student experience integrating academic and social care
- Robust monitoring and evaluating mechanisms

### Common Challenges:

- Timetabling & room bookings
- Ensuring each Scheme has appropriate academic and administrative support
- Creating and maintaining a robust and organised management system
- Ensuring a small, local budget is allocated to each Scheme
- Generating initial and sustained student attendance
- Providing training as the Schemes grow
- Maintaining the motivation of Volunteers
Activity at Edinburgh University

Pilot Projects:

The Following Schemes are currently being piloted at Edinburgh:

- Fast Track (Supported study sessions in partnership with the Institute for Academic Development and Accommodation Services)
- Maths for Physics Buddies
- Academic Families: Geo-Science & Economics
- Vet Medicine House System
- Vet Medicine Peer Supporters
- Physics International Buddies
- Training also delivered to: Nursing Academic Family
7. Models of Practice:

Please find below a number of models of Peer Support the University may choose to implement. To ensure consistency and common understanding they have been broken down into definition, aims/objectives, activities, expected outcomes, benefits, resources and Graduate Attributes.

7.1 Academic Families

Definition:

Academic Families encourage the forming of relationships, foster a sense of belonging and ensures that new students quickly feel part of a community of learners within the School. This is particularly important during orientation and the first few weeks of the semester, however Academic Families can also benefit students from junior and senior honours throughout the academic year. Academic Families allow a space for incoming students to ask about course choices, common pitfalls or even the best places to go out. They also give the higher year students the opportunity to nurture newer students and facilitate their learning. Although this is an informal model it still has great value and with training provided by EUSA we are able to support the Academic Families to ensure they are providing a quality experience for other students. As a keen Divinity student said ‘the idea of Families is great-integrating social and academic studies’.

Aims/Objectives:

- Build a sense of belonging and investment within the School and Discipline
- Encourage the forming of an intellectual community where students can exchange and discuss academic theories and ideas
- Create a social space where students can make friends with other students who have common interests
- Encourage integration between diverse student communities
- Support the students to develop strong inter-personal skills
- Allow senior students to grow in confidence and maturity as they facilitate the learning and positive experience of junior year students

Activities:

As mentioned above the Academic Families have a number of roles and activities. They often hold social events where members from all years can interact or run PAL Schemes. They sometimes organise seminars and invite along external or internal experts in the field to give lectures, some groups have also taken expeditions to places of interest. Over recent months these roles have become more formalised and a comprehensive training package has been delivered to those involved. Many of the current Academic Families are run purely by the associate Societies with little involvement from the School.
**Expected Outcomes:**

- Students will report feeling a stronger sense of belonging and feel part of a community of learners
- Students become more active in co-curricular academic activities
- Students feel more enriched as learners by being part of a diverse student community
- Students report an increased sense of satisfaction and community, which will be reflected in local and university-wide surveys

**Benefits:**

Academic Families inspire a sense of community and encourage students to think of their whole University career rather than purely focusing on their current year. It helps them consolidate their learning when they see how all their modules have benefitted the students in higher years. Academic Families also reduce isolation and build familial ties for students who may be struggling when first leaving home.

**Resources:**

- Staff time allocating students into families and making them aware of their duties
- Staff time to deliver the training package from the Peer Support Toolkit (around 3 hours)
- Allow students to use facilities for printing and publicity
- A physical space to hold meeting, events and activities is necessary
- A small fund for these activities

**Edinburgh University Case-study: Economics**

“The Economics Family is a new Peer Support Project for the Economics Society. The Society found that many first-year students may struggle to fit into university life. New students are often looking for someone who can give them help and advice on academic and career issues. The aim of the Economics Family is to help first year Economics students fit in, with the Society assigning first-year students to more senior peers. Elder brothers/sisters are required to meet with their first-year counterparts at least once per semester, although almost all of the family pairings meet on a regular basis. It is hoped that the first-year students can benefit from this Peer Support Project and it will lead to success in their university life. Also, it’s helps to form a community for all the Economics students, not only regarding academic issues but also social issues.

The Economics Society held the first Economics Family Induction event on 31st October 2012. The Head of the School Economics Dr Simon Clark was invited to join the Society in matching the first year Economics students to senior students. This was
a success and a further gathering in will be held in semester 2’.

Quote ‘I really like the idea of Economics Family. My first year sister is really cool. We’re great friends now!’ (from one of our Elder Sisters)

Quote ‘The experience helps me academically and provides support’. (from one of the first year students)

With thanks to Nicholas Chiu, Social Secretary, University of Edinburgh Economics Society

**Edinburgh University Case Study: Nursing**

‘The University of Edinburgh Nursing Society is a new society set up in 2011 for students studying the Bachelor of Nursing Honours Degree. The society decided to set up Academic Families for nursing students to replace the buddy system which was already in place. The society members felt that although the buddy system worked for some students, on the whole it did not provide appropriate academic and social support for all. As part of the buddy system, one second year was assigned to a first year to support them but it was thought that this did not take into consideration the variety of personalities and the different needs of individuals. Therefore, the Families aimed to provide academic as well as social support in a wider group to ensure that students could get the most out of their time at the University of Edinburgh.

The Nursing Society Academic Families are made up of students from all four years providing each family with a Grandparent (Fourth Year), Parent (Third Year), Older Sibling (Second Year) and Younger Siblings (First Year). Eight Families were created containing at least one student from each year group. Students were asked if they wanted to be involved and only those interested were added to a family. It was thought that involvement of all years in each family would allow inter-year relationships to develop which would provide advice and support on courses and placements as well as social support.

The Families have only been running for one semester thus far. The Society have had an initial Family event where the individual Families got together to meet each other before meeting the other Families at a bigger event. Overall this event seemed to be very successful and allowed students to get to know people in other years. It was then left to the individual families to arrange further events, from feedback we know several families have met up since the initial event and they appear to be working well to allow inter-year support.

Feedback from the students involved in the Families has shown that the Families provide opportunities to get to know people in other years. Feedback from a first year stated that the academic families allowed them to get to know those in other years and
provided them with support when starting their first placements. The third years have found it useful for gaining advice on how to arrange their clinical electives and information about the expectations for entering Junior Honours. The society hopes that the families will continue to develop and arrange further social events to maximise their potential benefit.

With thanks to Fiona Leith, Edinburgh University Nursing Society

Graduate Attribute Development: Academic Families

Research and Enquiry

- After taking part in a comprehensive training package all Academic Family Leaders will be expected to respect values and boundaries of other Family members
- All Academic Family Leaders will conduct themselves in an appropriate way guided by the Universities expectations and standards
- All Academic Family Leaders are trained to understand and have an awareness of the social, cultural and legal issues they may encounter in relation to the use and distribution of information
- All Academic Family Leaders will be encouraged to reflect on their own learning experience by undertaking evaluation and participating in the Edinburgh Award

Personal and Intellectual Autonomy

- Academic Family Leaders will be led by and open to new ideas and ways of thinking introduced by other Family members.
- Academic Family Leaders will be encouraged to think creatively and imaginatively in considering the activities and interactions for the Family unit
- Academic Family Leaders are independent learners who take responsibility for their own learning by initiating co/extra-curricular learning activities such as visiting lectures/discussion groups, outings and PAL Schemes.
- Academic Family Leaders will use collaboration and debate to ensure they have a holistic understanding of their subject areas with input from as diverse a range of sources as possible.

Communication

- Academic Family Leaders and Members value communication as a tool for creating and negotiating new understandings and creating new communities
- Academic Family Leaders and Members use communication as a tool for collaborating with others both academically and socially
- Academic Family Leaders seek and value open feedback which is recognised and accredited by the Edinburgh Award
- Academic Family Leaders through their engagement in the Scheme recognise and value the benefits of communicating with those beyond their immediate environment
7.2 Mentoring

Definition:

Mentoring has many different meanings in a wide range of contexts, however for the purpose of this Report we regard mentoring as "to support and encourage people to manage their own learning in order that they may maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be." Eric Parsloe, The Oxford School of Coaching & Mentoring.  

Mentoring students through the transition to University will support them to manage the change in educational attainment, expectations and become used to being autonomous and self-reliant learners. The main aims of mentoring in this context are to support the Mentee to set, work towards and achieve manageable goals to ensure they reach their academic potential. This is a 'personal/professional' relationship and is often characterised by the Mentor helping the Mentee to discover their own capabilities and competences. A key aspect of mentoring is that it's a tool of empowerment which allows the Mentee to realise their academic potential. Mentoring is a successful, sustainable model because it uses a resource which is in limitless supply, our own accomplished students.

Aims/Objectives:

- To assist a smooth transition to University life by giving new undergraduate students the opportunity to meet with current students in the same academic School, during their first year.
- To help new students feel an early sense of belonging to their peer group, school and the University.
- To assist the Mentee to set, work towards and meet their desired goals.
- To offer support, guidance and experience to the Mentee in working towards these targets.
- To work in an open, non-judgmental way and encourage the Mentee in their chosen pursuit.
- Facilitate the exploration of needs, motivations, skills and thought processes to assist the Mentee in making sustainable change.

1 http://www.mentorset.org.uk/pages/mentoring.htm
2 http://steer.stir.ac.uk/MentoringResourcesandSupport.php
3 http://www.mentorset.org.uk/pages/mentoring.htm
4 http://scottishmentoringnetwork.co.uk/mentoring-faq.php
5 http://scottishmentoringnetwork.co.uk/mentoring-faq.php
Activities:

- Support the mentee to make an ‘Action Plan’ outlining their motivation and goals
- Meet on a one to one or group basis to review the Mentee’s progress towards their desired goals
- Utilise active listening and communication skills to ensure the needs of the Mentee are being met within the mentoring relationship.⁷
- The Mentor may share relevant academic experiences/problems they have overcome (if appropriate)
- Use questioning techniques to facilitate the Mentee's own thought processes in order to identify solutions and actions⁸
- Facilitate and encourage autonomous and enquiry-based learning, providing the Mentee with the tools to find their own answers
- Sign-post the Mentee onto other support services should this be necessary
- Attend continuous training to ensure the Mentor has the appropriate skills to support the Mentee in their journey

Expected Outcomes:

- Students identify their own ‘Learning Plan’
- Students develop their own autonomous learning skills & style
- Academics student-facing time is focused on relevant educational issues
- Enhances peer recognition⁹
- Builds confidence in Mentor and Mentee.
- Supports the development of a ‘professional’ relationship¹⁰

Benefits:

The Scottish Mentoring Network outlines the benefits of mentoring as ‘the ability in the Mentee to set manageable, achievable goals and work towards these’.¹¹ Mentoring is of benefit to the University as by mentoring students develop the skills of facilitation, support and issue management and Mentees acquire the skills needed to break down tasks, work towards goals and achieve their targets. All of these work well at improving Graduate Attributes. It also directly benefits the Academics, as student’s smaller questions and queries can be answered by others.¹²

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⁶ http://www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/coaching-mentoring.aspx
⁷ http://scottishmentoringnetwork.co.uk/mentoring-faq.php
⁸ http://www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/coaching-mentoring.aspx
⁹ http://www.dur.ac.uk/hr/mentoring/mentoringguidelines/mentoringbenefits/
¹⁰ http://www.dur.ac.uk/hr/mentoring/mentoringguidelines/mentoringbenefits/
¹¹ http://scottishmentoringnetwork.co.uk/mentoring-faq.php
¹² http://scottishmentoringnetwork.co.uk/mentoring-faq.php
Resources:

- A central member of staff or student must take responsibility within each School
- Mentors must be recruited, interviewed, trained and PVG checked to ensure all vulnerable students are protected
- Staff must supervise the matches and debrief the students
- The meetings must be documented and monitored

Graduate Attributes Development: Mentoring Scheme

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<th>Research and Enquiry</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mentors will recognise the limitations of their own knowledge and will therefore signpost or refer onto other services if the Mentee’s needs are out with their skill-set</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentors will ask key questions and exercise rational enquiry as they support the Mentee to identify SMART goals and ways to achieve these</td>
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<td>Mentors will be encouraged to search for, evaluate and use information to support the Mentees in reaching their identified goals</td>
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<td>Mentors will be trained on respecting the values and boundaries of others and will put this into practice within the mentoring relationship</td>
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<td>Mentors will value and recognise the importance of reflecting on their learning and will do this through evaluations and in pursuit of the Edinburgh Award.</td>
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<th>Personal and Intellectual Autonomy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mentors will be encouraged to be open to new ideas, methods and ways of thinking when working with their Mentee and more widely within their own learning environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Following their training and with support the Mentors will work independently to support Mentees through their journey.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Following their training Mentors will identify processes and strategies for learning and apply these within the mentoring relationship</td>
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<th>Communication</th>
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<td>Mentors will recognise and value communication as an essential tool for negotiation within the Mentoring relationship.</td>
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<td>Mentors will support their Mentees to effect change and be responsive to their new or changed environment within the University.</td>
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<tr>
<td>As a key element of mentoring the Mentors will collaborate with others to further their learning and ability to achieve their desired outcomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentors will also further and strengthen their own learning through collaboration with the Mentee, other Mentors and the wider programme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentors will be encouraged to seek and value open feedback, especially when taking part in the Edinburgh Award</td>
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**Personal Effectiveness**

- It is part of a Mentor’s role to identify, appreciate and encourage the use of the Mentee’s talents constructively.
- The Mentor’s will have to manage risk while supporting the Mentee to effect change often at a time of transition.
- Mentors are encouraged to make available their knowledge, learning, skills and abilities to be utilised by their Mentee.
- Mentor’s will be encouraged to work effectively with their Mentees and other Mentor’s, capitalising on their different thinking, experience and skills.

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**Case-study Edinburgh University: Peer Proofreading**

EUSA ran a trial of the Peer Proofreading scheme in the 2010/11 academic session, in recognition of the strong demand among the international student body for assistance with proofreading academic work before assessment. EUSA learned from enquiries received through the Advice Place that the need is greatest among students who are non-native speakers of English, and may not have easy access to help with proofreading through social networks.

**Aims and Objectives**

- To increase access to trustworthy proofreading services on campus;
- To reduce dependency upon proofreading services among users of the scheme by helping them to spot basic grammar and spelling errors;
- To enhance the sense of community among students at the university through peer support;
- To provide student Volunteers with a rewarding volunteering opportunity, developing their transferable skills and experience.

**Following the Training**

- 100% of Volunteers felt confident taking on the role of Peer Proof-reader;
- 96.8% of Volunteers found the training ‘very helpful’

**Highlights:**

- 395 proofreading jobs were completed during the 2011-12 academic session, by 63 volunteer proofreaders;
- 51.65% of jobs were received from Postgraduate Taught students, although only 20.05% of UoE students are PGT, and 30.65% of EU/Overseas students are PGT;
- 43.04% of jobs were received from Undergraduate students, with the remaining 5.32% from Postgraduate Research students;
Student Survey - Highlights and Commentary


Overall Satisfaction

- 98.9% would recommend the Peer Proofreading Service to their friends and classmates.

- 98.9% felt that the Volunteer proofreader provided quality and comprehensive feedback.
- 97.8% understood the comments and suggestions that were made by their proofreader about the assignment.

Case Study Edinburgh University: Maths for Physics
Buddies /Mentors

The scheme was created with the primary aim of helping and supporting the teaching and learning of first year Maths for Physics students.

The scheme relies on excellent Volunteers from the year above cohort, who after the initial instruction will run the scheme as a student led activity. To maximise the benefits the framework of the scheme is flexible within the constraints (e.g. timetable constraints, coursework deadlines, etc.)

All Maths Buddies are included as Teaching Assistants on the first year maths course online Learn page to access course materials with ease. They can also access the Maths Buddies Facebook group; which is set up and run by the Buddies, can be used as an:

- Online forum, where students can post their questions, discuss problems and solutions, general support and advice on study skills and problem solving methods.
- Notice board to confirm regular meetings and advertise ad-hoc meetings

Face to face contact with students:

- Saturday Maths Club: every Saturday at 11am at Teviot (2 hours per week)
- Pop in at first year maths workshops (an hour per week)
- Weekly homework evening in cooperation with Reslife
- Lunch hour homework help (one hour per week) the scheme is created with the primary aim to help and support the
Methods of evaluation:

- Monthly Reports
- Edinburgh Award
- Student self-reflections

With thanks to Kristel Torokoff, Lecturer School of Physics & Astronomy

Case Study Other Institute: Manchester University

Geography Dissertation Peer Mentor Scheme

“The Geography Dissertation Peer Mentor scheme is designed to support 2nd years during the first stages of the dissertation process. The mentors, current 3rd years, have usually just handed in their dissertation for marking. The mentors provide 2nd years with advice such as topic areas, which research methods to use and which academics are best to answer specific questions. They also provide an insight into their own dissertation journey; what went well and what mistakes they made.

The scheme starts in Semester 2 and runs until the end of the year. Some mentors also make themselves available throughout the summer when the 2nd years are conducting their primary research. The staff coordinators also play a vital role in the scheme, allocating mentors to dissertation groups and ensuring the smooth running of the scheme on a week by week basis. The mentors are expected to formally attend the dissertation group meetings in weeks 6, 9 and 12 and are encouraged to provide support outside this structured timetable.

This scheme benefits the 2nd years immensely and adds substantial value to their learning experience. It also benefits the Mentors by further developing essential transferable skills’.

With thanks to Manchester University, School of Environment & Development

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7.3 **House System**

**Definition:**

The House System involves all students being allocated to a House within their School or Discipline. That House may or may not have Senior or Personal Tutors allocated to it. This would work in a similar way to the Academic Families however generally speaking it would have more administrative responsibility taken by the staff.

**Aims/Objectives:**

- To foster a welcoming 'family' environment in smaller group sizes, encouraging social interaction between years and between staff/students (largely through social events)
- To provide mentoring and personal academic advising
- To facilitate student communication among peers and faculty
- To guide students through their University experience
- To advise and discuss (with Mentors and Peers) about career options
- Increase sense of community

**Activities:**

House activities can vary widely but each House usually has a Student Committee who organise social activities for example inter-house quizzes, outings and sports. They also may have some ‘Peer Supporters’ attached to them as in the Vet School model.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Students feel more comfortable and able to communicate with academics
- There will be increased positive communication between the year groups
- Students report their social, emotional and pastoral needs are being met
- Students report an increased feeling of belonging to a community of learners
- Peer support is acknowledged as an essential element to student life

**Resources:**

- Relevant structures, frameworks and training will be available within the Peer Support Toolkit
- Staff time to divide all relevant staff and students to within the Houses (administrative)
- Staff time allocating, inducting and training Senior & Personal Tutors on their role
- Small fund for each House to use for activities
- Continuous support and encouragement for the Houses
Case-study: Edinburgh University Dick Vet School R(D)SVS House System

Following a decision to increase student support Stacy Spielman (Teaching Fellow) examined the Student Support Systems of the University Of California Medical School (San Francisco, Berkeley); Vanderbilt Medical School; Johns Hopkins Medical School and many other American universities whom traditionally have a strong theme of Student Support.

Stacy’s research found that many Medical Schools(and other Universities) in the U.S. are turning to the “Advisory College” system (or similar sub-divisions of the student body) to provide more focused support and guidance in a family atmosphere; UCSF appears to be among the first to trial the system-this has been running successfully for over 8 years. Medical Schools that have not changed to the Advisory College system usually have other Gold Standard support systems in place, particularly for pastoral support.

It was decided that 10 Houses would be created (each named after the Pentland Hills). Each House would be comprised of 80-90 students, 5-6 Personal Tutors and a Senior House Tutor. Dr. Geoff Pearson is the Senior Tutor and is responsible for overseeing the running of the House System along with Roshni Jethwa, the Student Experience Officer who will monitor and evaluate the progress of the system.

The primary objective of the project is to implement an improved and more consistent quality of academic and pastoral support for students.

As part of the House System, academic guidance is provided to assist the students in improving their academic skills and performance. Pastoral advice and guidance is also provided to help them with any difficulties that are affecting their studies.

In addition to this, it is hoped that the House System will help the School deal with issues with isolation, which have arisen due to the remote location of the School as well as the demanding nature of the curriculum. Each House has its own Student Committee. The Committees are responsible for deciding upon and organising social events for each House.

Activities: Social Interaction

Each House Committee is responsible for deciding upon and organising social events and activities for their House. So far, the Houses have been for hill walks, trips to the theatre, participated in fundraising activities and held House lunches.

In addition to this, the School has organised social activities for all of the students for example a very successful Halloween Event was held for the entire School and each House hosted a stall or activity.

As part of the School’s Student Support initiative, two peer support structures will be implemented. A pastoral Peer Support Mentor scheme has been created and so far, the
School has 32 peer supporters currently undergoing training and will be in a position, in Semester 2, to offer an extra layer of support for students who are less willing to speak to staff. In addition to this, a Peer Assisted Learning Scheme will provide academic mentoring to 1st year students during the 2013/14 academic session. This is currently in the early planning stages and it is hoped that Student Mentors/Leaders will be recruited in Semester 2 of the 2012/13 session.

So far, the School feels that the House System has been a great success. The students have engaged with the structure of the new system and have been proactive in making their houses their own. They have created House crests and have organised a number of social activities and fundraising events. They have also participated fully in School events.

There has been a positive response to the House System from both staff and students:

‘Looking ahead, the School will continue to develop its Peer Support Systems and embed them into the existing House System. It is also hoped that we will continue to work closely with the Support Service and EUSA to respond to the needs of our students. The House and Peer Support systems will be monitored by the Student Experience Officer who will continue to liaise with staff and students’.

Geoff Pearson, Dick Vet School Senior Tutor

With thanks to Roshni Jethwa, Student Experience Officer

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**Case Study Edinburgh University: The R(D)SVS Peer Support Programme (pastoral focus)**

The Peer Support Programme in place at the Vet School was created by Anne Ford at the University of Oxford, where over 350 formally trained and supervised Peer Supporters are now available to assist the general student body in a range of matters. The Programme has also been in place at the Liverpool Vet School for several years now, with growing success. Not only does the Programme benefit the students seeking advice, but the Peer Supporters themselves report increased self-awareness, compassion and satisfaction within their own lives, which they carry on with them into life beyond University.

The fundamental concept behind the Programme is the awareness that many students, particularly those on competitive professional courses, may feel intimidated by the notion of revealing any personal issues, big or small, to faculty members or other support staff within the University. There is also some concern on the part of the student not to ‘bother’ faculty or staff with even small queries.

All students from years 2-5, plus our Graduate entry students, are eligible to join the Peer Support Programme. This year was the pilot year, with 31 Volunteer students attending the November training weekend, with a further two sessions to come, one in
crisis management/referrals/limit-setting, and one on suicide education, which will be delivered by a suicide education specialist. The weekend training course focused on communication, listening, reflection, and team skills, with the students participating in a range of group and pair exercises. Attendance at the team Weekend and further two sessions is mandatory for entry to the Programme.

Upon completion of the course, the student will hold the title ‘Peer Supporter’, and will be advertised as such to the student body. They will be responsible for how they choose to make themselves available to other students; other schools have instituted surgery hours for drop-ins, and social events open to everyone. As Peer Supporters, they are trained to listen openly and without judgement, and to help others without falling into an advice-giving role. The Peer Supporters will be given a complete directory of staff and services within both the Vet School and larger University that are available to refer students on to, should the Peer Supporters decide the problem is too big for them to handle on their own. The Peer Supporters will therefore draw upon the self-awareness skills they have learned to recognise their own limitations when dealing with others, both in and out of School. Once monthly during term times, the team (including the Team Supervisor, an experienced member of staff) will debrief together in a mandatory 1-1.5 hour meeting, within a safe and confidential environment, to discuss any issues the Peer Supporters might be having with their role. These regular meetings also ensure that the Peer Supporters themselves are not becoming overburdened by either the issues they are dealing with or time constraints within their own lives.

Although the training will not be completed until the end of January 2013, the feedback so far is impressive; students clearly felt a connection to the material, and bonded well with each other over the course of the training weekend. The training was challenging, but it is clear from the feedback that the exercises had a deep impact on many of the delegates, mostly in the area of self-awareness, and how it ties in to our perception of others. Several students have expressed some comfort in feeling confident about their communication skills now, as they realise these skills are critical for their future success as veterinarians. Students completing the academic year as members of the Peer Support Team are eligible for the Edinburgh Award. The following are direct quotes from delegates of the training weekend:

"I have learned to identify that I don't need to become too involved with someone else's problems in order to be able to support them."

"Can understand social anxieties and possibly relate (although obviously not everyone experiences things the same way)."

"I feel I have learnt the skills as well as the protocol to handle situations properly. Now I feel I need to practice these skills so they come more naturally to me."

“The exercises gave you the option of sharing as much or as little as desired. The people in the groups were easy to get along with and it was apparent to me that all participants were eager to learn.”

“I am aware of my personal limits as a Supporter, so I can quickly refer peers if I am..."
not able to help or feel others could help more.”

“The experience of this weekend has been enriching and I have learnt a lot about effective communication. More importantly, I have learnt a lot more about myself and how I react to certain situations. The context of the training was highly relevant and (it was) definitely beneficial to have heard feedback on my communication skills.”

“I believe the skills we practised over the weekend are very valuable as both a Peer Supporter and a veterinarian. “

“(I have learned) how to use more welcoming body language to encourage people to approach me. I have a bad habit of resting my arms crossed.”

“I was in a position last year where a Peer Supporter would have been helpful, so my experience last year has fuelled my desire to be there for others: no one should be alone.”

With thanks to Stacey Spielman, Teaching Fellow, Dick Vet School

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**Case-study other Institute: UCSF Medical School (Berkeley and other campuses):**

- Has five Advisory Colleges with two Mentors heading each ‘College’ (Mentors are clinicians working and teaching full-time within the School), about 100 students per College (distributed equally across the years)

- New students are assigned to an Advisory College on admission

- Each college becomes a ‘hub’ of information/support for new students

- The Advisory Colleges support a Peer Assisted Learning Scheme, whereby students within the College can request and organise student-led study groups or request formal tutorials on difficult subjects

- Runs alongside a “Student Well-being Program”, which offers counselling (staffed by 2 psychiatrists and 1 psychologist), support groups and organises Well-being Rotations in 3rd year: students see clinical practice with a view to learning to cope with non-clinical issues that arise

- Has greatly increased the student satisfaction rate at the School
### Graduate Attribute Development: House System

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Personal and Intellectual Autonomy</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House Members will be introduced to new ideas and ways of thinking by meeting students from other backgrounds, cultures and year groups within the School</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Communication</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build a community of learners and a feeling of belonging within the School</td>
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<tr>
<td>A holistic care and support system, where academic, pastoral and social issues can all be dealt with in unison</td>
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<tr>
<td>House Members through their engagement in the System recognise and value the benefits of communicating with those beyond their immediate environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>House Members will develop their communication skills, utilising these to negotiate new understandings and creating new communities within their House</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Personal Effectiveness</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>House Members learn to value those around them and see themselves as having an essential role in the life of the House and the University as a whole.</td>
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7.4 Peer-Assisted Learning (PAL)

**Definition:**

Peer Assisted Study Sessions or Peer-Assisted Learning have their roots in Supplemental Instruction, a model developed at the University of Missouri, Kansas City in 1973. In this model PASS/PAL Leaders (usually senior students) are trained to support and facilitate study sessions for junior years (though there are some higher year Peer Support structures in place). All Leaders go through the same training to equip them with the skills to fulfill their roles. Particularly active students may continue on to become Student Coordinators (a role which will be discussed later in this document).

Supplemental Instruction (SI) has been run successfully in Universities from Canada to Australia and South Africa to Norway. SI has now been augmented to fit in with the UK Higher Education System and the common components of all PALS Models are:

- PAL Sessions are Peer-facilitated
- The PAL Leader serves as a model student and encourages learning autonomy
- The PAL Session integrates content and learning skills
- The PAL Leader receives comprehensive training
- Attendance at the PAL Sessions is voluntary and non-remedial
- The PAL Scheme is Discipline-owned and student led

PASS Leader Training Manual, University of Manchester

**Aims & Objectives**

- To encourage autonomous and enquiry-based learning
- Support Student Leaders to develop their facilitation, communication and leadership skills
- To allow a safe academic space for students to reflect on their learning
- To encouraged Students to maximise their academic potential.

**Activities:**

The key to an effective PAL Programme is planning, for the programme to be successful it is essential the required time, resources and space are allowed for it in the curriculum. Once these areas are catered for the model has great scalability and can be set up in almost any School or discipline. It is essential that all PAL Leaders are comprehensively trained and equipped with the necessary tools to allow them to facilitate successful PAL Sessions. The Sessions will usually take place weekly and are led by the course content being followed and by the needs of the students.

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14 [http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/tandl/resources/peersupport/passfaq/index.html](http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/tandl/resources/peersupport/passfaq/index.html)
15 PASS Training Manual, University of Manchester
Benefits:

Participant Level

- Provides support & guidance
- Non-threatening & non-remedial
- Social benefits
- Increased academic confidence
- Improved communication, teamwork, collaborative problem solving & interpersonal skills

Mentors/PASS Leaders

- Personal development opportunity
- Skills development - leadership, communication, teamwork etc
- Opportunity to reflect, review and re-evaluate
- Increased academic performance
- Recognition and Reward

School & Discipline Level

- Providing staff with regular & ongoing feedback
- Highlighted as good practice by QAA
- Improves student study skills
- Fostering a spirit of community

Institutional & Faculty Level

- Widening access to an increasingly diverse student body
- Reducing student dropout rates

Excerpt from the University of Manchester, PASS National Centre UK & Ireland PASS Leader Training Manual.

Expected Outcomes

- Students develop the skills needed to be autonomous learners
- Students also understand the place and benefits of collaborative learning
- Students report feeling part of a community of learners

Resources:

- Staff can utilise framework, training and resources from the Peer Support Toolkit
- Staff must publicise project, recruit, interview and train Leaders (Academic or Independent Trainer)
- Staff allocate each 1st or higher year student to a PASS Group
• Staff must ensure timetabling is correct and adequate room bookings have been made (Administrative)
• Students must be continually supported by staff including regular debriefs and training updates
• Students may be supported to achieve the Edinburgh Award

**Case Study University of Edinburgh: BioPALS**

Launch and establishment of BioPALS during Innovative Learning Week:

‘BioPALS is a Peer-Assisted Learning (PAL) scheme set up BY students FOR students of the Schools of Biological and Biomedical Sciences at the University of Edinburgh. They aim to help students make the most of their degree by creating a friendly and informal environment for cross-year interaction and support. Structured group meetings, based around a theme relevant to the course and university experience are led by trained student facilitators every two weeks. This has been a hugely successful project.

**Aims of BioPALS:**

- To complement the academic programme, improving understanding of the course materials, assessments and expectations.
- To help support students in the transition to university, and be a first point of contact for any questions or problems.
- To promote active studying strategies to help students develop as independent learners.
- To provide a forum for the exchange of ideas between students and co-operative group discussion
- To facilitate the transmission of feedback to academic and support staff, and the BTO.
- To encourage the development of a more open, engaged, effective and responsible student community’.

‘The BioPALS project worked together with Physics PALs, the Widening Participation office and the IAD in ILW to introduce peer-assisted learning to biology students, through a series of information, training and peer-assisted learning sessions. A team of podcasters worked in parallel, with the help of the BioPOD team, to produce a podcast resource supporting the project. Students attending one, some, or all of the four afternoon sessions particularly valued the opportunity to discuss their attitudes and approaches to learning with students from different year groups and the word “reassuring” featured prominently in feedback comments. Volunteer student facilitators reported associated benefits to themselves in terms of presentation and organisation skills, confidence and generally from “involvement in something useful”. The 44 students attending rated their interest in future Biology PALs activity at 91%. The full evaluation results as well as an introduction to PALS, the programme for the week, and the resources produced are all freely available at: [http://biologypals.weebly.com/](http://biologypals.weebly.com/)
The BioPALs Projects were widely advertised via posters, websites (including Facebook), emails and talks given at the start of large class lectures, and a sign-up sheet was used to assess numbers.

The Feedback from the Sessions was:

Post-it note group feedback:
OPEN: because you can speak freely between peers
RELAXED: there was no pressure, no one’s answer is right or wrong
REFLECTIVE: allowed you to reflect on your own priorities and how to manage them
INTERESTING: because you can see others point of view and pick up new ideas
USEFUL: for sharing ideas and discussing issues and problems
INTERACTIVE: hearing others opinions and views and talking to older students
RELIEF: because others have the same problems as you

Case Study University of Edinburgh LawPALS

LawPALS is Edinburgh Law School's Peer Assisted Learning Scheme designed to help students adapt to studying law and, for four-year students, studying at university. It aims to ease academic and social transition into Edinburgh Law School – whether students are coming from school, college, employment or university. Every first year LLB student – no matter their route of entry -is automatically assigned to a LawPALS Group which meets weekly for an hour a week during the first semester. These groups are led by trained (and paid) third and fourth year Student Leaders who are there to help them navigate life at law school through using facilitation skills and their LLB experience. The Student Leaders report to a postgraduate LawPALS Coordinator and the whole programme is overseen by The Director of the Student Experience.

Sessions follow the flow of the timetable so that students cover e.g. legal essay-writing skills before their first essay is due. The sessions are embedded within the law student timetable and nothing else runs during these times. This ensures the students have maximum opportunity to participate. There are separate sessions for our Graduate LLB students (those with a degree in another discipline who come into do the first two years of the LLB) as their study needs differ. These sessions are led by a Diploma in Legal Practice student who came through the Graduate LLB route.

Attendance for the sessions has been steadily growing each year with sessions on practical skills – mooting, essay-writing and note-taking – remaining the most popular in terms of attendance. Students rated the exam skills, legal essay skills, open space for Q&A, mooting and electronic resources sessions as the ‘most helpful’ in 2012.

Recent feedback shows students decided to attend because it ‘sounded helpful’ and
they had ‘nothing to lose.’ Others told us they wanted to ‘meet other people from law;’ ‘everyone else was going’ and ‘student reps (…were…) talking it up at welcome lectures.’ We were also told it was ‘a casual way to find out info,’ ‘it seemed prudent’ and ‘sounded like advice would be important for getting through first year.’ A lot of time and effort goes into promoting these sessions to students so it is good to see the messages are getting through and translating into attendance and engagement.

The programme has been running for seven years now at the Law School. Developments in that time include the introduction of the separate Graduate LLB groups and LawPALS Honours – large-group sessions designed to ease transition from Ordinary-level to Honours-level study.

*LawPALS programme is part of the wide range of support measures available in the School and demonstrates the ‘whole system approach’ Edinburgh Law School takes in terms of pastoral care and support for its students.*

With thanks to Lindsay Jack, Director of the Student Experience, School of Law

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### Graduate Attributes Development: PAL Scheme

#### Research and Enquiry

- An essential part of a PAL Leaders role is to identify, define and analyse problems, supporting the group to find their own answers
- PAL Leaders must exercise critical judgment in selecting topics/areas to cover and the appropriate learning styles for the group allowing the members to reach a new level of understanding
- An elemental task for PAL Leaders is to postulate key questions and encourage the group Members to exercise rational enquiry when attempting to find their own answers
- A critical initial task of a PAL Leader is to assess existing understanding and knowledge limitations within the group and support them to set their own targets and routes to further acquisition

#### Personal and Intellectual Autonomy

- PAL Leaders are encouraged to be creative and imaginative thinkers, using innovative methods, new ideas, and ways of thinking to encourage the group to reach their own academic potential
- PAL Leaders are encouraged throughout their training to hone their ability to identify core processes and strategies for learning, which the group can utilize to their benefit
- The essence of PAL is to foster in students the ability to be independent and
autonomous learners, who take responsibility for their own academic journey

- Throughout the PAL training Leaders are encouraged to respond effectively to unfamiliar problems and contexts through role-play, case-studies and reflective practice

**Communication**

- PAL Leaders are trained to make effective use of oral, written and visual means to negotiate, facilitate and communicate understanding within the PAL group
- PAL Leaders use communication tools to collaborate with and relate to others through the groups, virtual learning environments and the social spaces which often follow academic meetings
- Through their voluntary participation in the PALs programme it is clear the Leaders recognise the benefits of communicating with others beyond their immediate environments

**Personal Effectiveness**

- It is the role of the PAL Leader to identify and appreciate the knowledge and talents possessed within the group and to support them to create a safe, reciprocal learning environment.
- It is the role of the PAL Leader to be responsive, flexible and proactive in facilitating the learning of the PAL Group.
- PAL Leaders are tasked with being able to flexibly transfer their learning, skills and abilities to be utilised by the group while still supporting them to find their own answers.

**Case Study other Institute: Manchester University**

**PASS National Centre UK & Ireland**

‘PASS helps ease the transition into higher education by giving students an environment in which they can get to grips with a different way of learning with their peers. PASS helps students to gain self-confidence and reassurance with course material. It also gives them the opportunity to meet people on their course who they might not meet in lectures, which is especially important in large schools with little or no small group learning. Students who regularly attend PASS do better in their exams than those who do not.

PASS sessions are timetabled for an hour each week; groups normally consist of two Leaders and up to fifteen lower year students, discussing aspects of the course that students traditionally struggle to get their heads around in an informal setting. Sessions are student-led, in that the lower year students decide what they wish to cover, so that sessions are maximally beneficial to them.

PASS Leaders develop leadership, communication, organisation, creativity and presentation skills, among many others. Sessions allow Leaders to revise (often
without realising it) material from previous years, and research in various schemes has shown that PASS Leaders may improve their marks, sometimes increasing their grade by as much as a degree class. Leaders are also awarded a certificate by the University in recognition of their work. The cumulative amount of time spent in training, sessions and debriefs throughout the year can count to 25% of the voluntary hours of the Manchester Leadership Programme. There are also many additional opportunities available to Leaders, both within and outside the University.  

With thanks to Manchester University

### 7.5 Befriending/Buddies

#### Definition:

For the purpose of this Report we define a Befriender as, a student who will take the role of a ‘friendly professional’ (rather than a friend) and provide students with an opportunity to meet up with another student and have a safe social experience. Many Voluntary Organisations have developed successful Befriending Projects which provide people with the opportunity for social interaction and a sense of being part of a community. A Befriender can help the recipient student with social anxiety, support them to talk through all their options, make decisions and connect with others when needed. They do not provide study skills support and may not be at a higher or even equal level of academic study. For example, a 4th year undergraduate student could effectively befriend an international postgraduate student. A Befriender must be reliable, committed and able to offer consistent support to the recipient student. A Buddy or Befriender is a less formal relationship and may have a social element to it. However, it is important to be clear on the nature of the relationship as there is still a power dynamic in operation that could put the Befriendee potentially ‘at risk’. Although a Buddy/Befriender may have some of the characteristics of an advocate, advisor or friend they do not work within the limits of these roles and are there to offer support and guidance rather than counselling or opinion.

#### Aims/Objectives:

- That the recipient student feels more in touch with and valued by the community around them
- Students feel more comfortable in social situations and able to communicate with other students
- That the student feels listened to and supported
- Support the recipient student to grow in confidence in their new environment

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16. [http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/tandl/resources/peersupport/passfaq/index.html](http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/tandl/resources/peersupport/passfaq/index.html)
18. [http://steer.stir.ac.uk/MentoringResourcesandSupport.php](http://steer.stir.ac.uk/MentoringResourcesandSupport.php)
19. [http://steer.stir.ac.uk/MentoringResourcesandSupport.php](http://steer.stir.ac.uk/MentoringResourcesandSupport.php)
20. [http://steer.stir.ac.uk/MentoringResourcesandSupport.php](http://steer.stir.ac.uk/MentoringResourcesandSupport.php)
Activities:

- Support the recipient student to deal with the worries, anxieties and problems they may face when making the transition to University life and new situations
- Offer a ‘friendly ear’ and listen without making judgments about the students being supported\(^2\)
- Sign-post the recipient student to other services if necessary
- Facilitate the opportunity for the recipient student to make new friends and become part of a community of learners.

Benefits:

- This model has a strong focus on pastoral care and offers essential support to often vulnerable students
- This model builds a strong sense of community and responsibility
- This model does not need any specific academic input

Expected Outcomes:

- Recipient students feel more comfortable in their new environment
- Recipient students feel an increased sense of belonging to the student body
- Recipient student feel supported and able to ask for help
- Increased student retention rates
- Releases pressure from other support services
- Encourages students to build multiple, new and inclusive communities

Resources:

- Staff time creating project publicity (administrative or academic)
- Use Peer Support Toolkit for guidance on Project aims, objectives and outcomes
- Use Training Package available in the Peer Support Toolkit
- Staff time to recruit and train Befrienders
- Staff time to allocate and monitor matches
- Staff time to input evaluative data (administrative)

Case Study Edinburgh University: AS Befriending

The University of Edinburgh Student Peer Befriender Programme (SPBP) is a new programme from the Student Disability Service designed to act as another strand of support for students on the Autistic Spectrum (AS).

Students with AS or High Functioning Autism (HFA) tend to experience isolation, at times by choice and at times due to finding social interaction too problematic despite wanting social contact. These students may experience confusion in understanding the subtleties of social interaction and social ‘rules’ and not necessarily able to interpret response by context and social cues.

The SPBP seeks to provide a senior or PG student who will take on the role of Student Peer Befriender to encourage students with AS/HFA to develop their skills for social interaction or to simply provide them with an opportunity for some social interaction with another student.

The Befriender role is a voluntary role and the volunteer has to commit to meeting consistently with a student with Asperger’s Syndrome - usually for about an hour once a week over one academic year. The Befrienders need to be sensitive and understanding of any difficulties students with AS may have with talking to people.

Key objectives of the meetings with the Befriender are likely to be to support the student with AS to develop strategies for interpreting social cues and social ‘rules’ and to help students ‘practice’ responses for social situations which may be challenging or which make the students with AS feel anxious. The Befriender may give socialising tips, answer questions about talking to or meeting with people, help develop ways of dealing with anxieties about socialising, and help practice useful responses students with AS can then use in social situations. Befrienders can also help provide information about University life, shopping, budgeting, where to find things in Edinburgh and how to find out about other sources of support if relevant.

This has been a successful programme and it is hoped to be rolled out further in 2013.

With thanks to Melanie Scott, Assistant Director (Specific Learning Difficulties), Student Disability Service
Case-study University of Edinburgh: International Buddies

International Buddies aim to create a community of new and current students to help new international students transition to their life at University. This has been an extremely successful project with support from the Scottish Government Welcoming International Students Fund. The Edinburgh Buddies are students who have previously studied abroad and they are matched with International Buddies. Edinburgh Buddies will connect with their International Buddy over email in August and then meet them in-person in September when the new students arrive. Students will be asked to meet once a week at the start of the semester to make sure students feel at home. This opportunity will help the Edinburgh Buddies grow in confidence, strengthen their inter-personal skills and develop problem solving abilities.

Statistics:

Number of Edinburgh Buddies volunteers: 149
Number of International Buddies: 312
Total number of students: 461

Events to date:

'Welcome Event' attended by around 200 students.
A further 19 buddies were introduced to the system as a result of the evening.
'Buddies Karaoke' was attended by around 25 people.
4 buddy pairs merged into a larger group as a result of this event and meet once a fortnight (2 Edinburgh buddies, 6 International buddies).

Buddy Feedback

EUSA conducted a survey of all the September cycle Buddies in Week five of the first semester. We received positive feedback including the testimonies below –

‘To be honest, it's not the first time I'm involved in a buddy scheme (last year I was an exchange student and tried the Buddy scheme in Sweden), but Edinburgh was by far more organised! Congratulations! :)’
‘I love my Edinburgh buddy. She has been an excellent person to go to for advice. She has also been really great about inviting me to different events so I got to meet people when I first started here. I'm really glad I did the Buddy Project if for no other reason than I got to make a good friend because of it.’
‘My buddy is so nice, giving me a lot of experience and chance to talk with somebody who knows about this city a lot.’
‘I'm grateful for getting some chats with a native student. I learned the attitude towards studying at Edinburgh.’

With thanks to Johanna Holtan, International Engagement Coordinator, EUSA
Graduate Attribute Development: Befrienders

**Research and Enquiry**
- Befrienders must facilitate problem solving; awareness, perception, reasoning, and judgment regarding social and inter-personal situations.
- Befrienders demonstrate creativity in learning how to explain one thing from several different angles, finding suitable analogies, finding new ways to relate to other students.

**Personal and Intellectual Autonomy**
- Befrienders must exhibit professionalism and approach each student with respect and openness, learning the skill to be authoritative while remaining friendly and approachable.
- Befrienders must have an awareness and understanding of the wider impact of their role on fellow students, for example by enhancing the student experience and how improved social care benefits academic performance.

**Communication**
- Befrienders must hone their communication skills and learn how to be approachable, patient, tolerant and flexible when communicating information to adapt to the level, interest and ability of the student.
- Befrienders must use communication as a tool for collaborating and relating to others.
- Befrienders must seek and value open feedback to inform genuine self-awareness.

**Personal Effectiveness**
- Befrienders also develop beneficial personal qualities and attributes as they become: responsible, reliable and active citizens.
- Befrienders also become skilled at self-management. Learning how to set boundaries, be organised, prepared, analytical and reflective on their own performance.
7.6 Helpdesk

**Definition:**

In this context we at the University view a ‘Helpdesk’ to be a physical space that students can go to for assistance with curriculum related problems, questions and issues. These ‘Helpdesks’ are staffed by trained Student Leaders and are open and available at set times each week.

**Aims & Objectives:**

The main aims of the ‘Helpdesk’ are to ensure that students have the time and space to explore right and wrong answers in a safe, confidential place. It also provides the opportunity for students to get to know their peers better, this is especially important in larger Schools like Economics. Another important objective of the Helpdesk is to ensure staff time is utilised effectively and that Peer Supporters are able to reinforce their own learning through supporting others.

**Activities:**

The main task of the ‘Helpdesk’ is to provide a physical space for students to meet with their immediately senior peers and work through any academic problems they are having. Students may attend with a specific question or be unsure of an area of the course; the key component however has to be the students’ commitment to finding their own answers. The Student Leaders that work on the desk are not Teachers and will only act as facilitators for other students to discover their own answers.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Students are supported to find their own answers to academic queries
- Students feel they have a space they can use to ‘ask the stupid question’
- Students are better able to relate to other students including in higher years

**Benefits**

There are a number of benefits to the ‘Helpdesk’, firstly it benefits those working on the desk hugely, allowing them to develop facilitation skills, gain experience of supporting others and enrich their own learning experience. In terms of ‘Helpdesk’ Users, it encourages the practice of looking in different areas for the answers rather than only to the Lecturer or School Office. It also provides a safe space to practice getting things wrong without being judged or graded. Finally the ‘Helpdesk’ is a clearly signposted first port of call students can go to with concerns to be sent in the right direction.
## Graduate Attribute Development: Helpdesk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research and Enquiry</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Leaders are able to identify, define and analyse problems and identify or create processes to solve them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Leaders are able to exercise critical judgment in creating new understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Leaders are able to critically assess understanding and knowledge in the student they are supporting.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal and Intellectual Autonomy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Leaders are able to identify processes and strategies for learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Leaders are able to use collaboration and debate effectively to encourage the student they support to reach their own conclusions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Leaders are able to respond effectively to unfamiliar problems.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Leaders make effective use of oral, written and visual means to negotiate, create and communicate understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Leaders further their own learning through effective use of the full range of communication approaches.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Leaders are able to encourage the students they support to use their talents and apply their knowledge constructively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Leaders are able to flexibly transfer their knowledge, learning, skills and abilities from one context to another.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case-study University of Edinburgh: Infdesk (Informatics)

The InfBase is a student helpdesk staffed by Informatics course MSc and PhD students (tutors hereafter). InfBase tutors are selected on the basis of expertise and coverage, offering support and advice on all Informatics taught courses, particularly non-honours courses and the Maths for Informatics courses taught in 1st and 2nd year. InfBase is a service run by tutors to help Informatics students throughout their courses and exam revision.

Term 2012/2013 InfBase is staffed with 2 tutors that look after the Informatics students, Monday to Thursday afternoons. InfBase is open for 2 hours on these afternoons and works on a drop in basis. Since the students don’t need to book an appointment the numbers of students coming in can change daily, but usually between 1 and 6 students are using InfBase in these 2 hours. The tutors help the students with mathematical problems or when they get stuck with their programming and other subject related problems, be it by guiding them to find the answers during their visit in InfBase or by pointing them to the right place where they can find helpful answers. The idea is not to present the students with a ready solution but with guidance towards the solution.

InfBase is peer-based and the tutors work closely together. They consult each other when they think it is necessary and they also refer students to each other when they know the expertise of the other tutor is covering the topic of the student’s problem. Students using InfBase usually have urgent questions that can’t wait until their next weekly tutorial or they simply feel better asking a tutor a question when they are not in a classroom environment, because they might be shy or not confident for other reasons to ask in front of class. Students also come if they have missed tutorials and lectures due to illness and ask for help from our tutors to be brought up to speed. Also there is usually see a rise of numbers before assignment deadlines or exams we can see a steady stream of students coming to use InfBase during the whole teaching term”.

With thanks to Susen Rabold (Tutor Support, School of Informatics)
7.7 Additional Peer Support Projects:

In addition to the detailed project outlines and case-studies covered in this Report, please find below some additional examples of Peer Support that are currently in place across the University.

- Autonomous Learning Groups
- PPLS Freshers Helpers Scheme
- Hoppers: A networking group for women in Informatics

**Case-study University of Edinburgh: English Literature
Autonomous Learning Groups**

ALGs were piloted in 1995 and by 1999 were part of the core curriculum at Honors level. The main aims of ALG’s are to encourage both autonomous and co-operative learning. It places the responsibility firmly on students’ shoulders and relays a clear message that they will only get out what they put in. The ALG’s have many benefits; they work to hone students graduate attributes through encouraging investigation, presentation and reviewing skills. They also encourage communication, teamwork and summarising abilities. They help the students to get to know each other in smaller groups to try out ideas ahead of the seminar and identify issues that need to be addressed in the seminar. The feedback from the students has been extremely positive with many rating their experiences of ALG’s as 9/10 and these are now being trialed with Pre-Honors level as well.

All Honors level seminar groups are required to meet in groups of approximately five for an hour’s discussion of topics set by the tutor before attending the next week’s seminar. The specifics of what is set varies according to the particular course and the results of the discussion are also fed back into the seminar in a variety of ways: including email report, online discussion, WebCT submission and oral presentations in seminar. This is currently an Honours level provision but may soon be provided to all years. It involves the Seminar group being broken down into smaller groups of around five people. These smaller groups are then given a piece of the course relating to the tutorial to work on, then when the group comes back together each group must take a turn presenting their findings and facilitating this part of the Seminar.

With thanks to Penny Fielding, Head of Department, English Literature
Case study University of Edinburgh: PPLS Freshers Helpers Scheme

The aim of the PPLS Helpers Scheme is to offer the opportunity to 2nd, 3rd, 4th year students to Volunteer in a very direct way within the School, to help other students (particularly Freshers) and help them to feel part of their own student community.

PPLS students were recruited to act as Helpers during Freshers week. Volunteers were asked to complete a ‘note of interest’ form where they were asked to give a brief explanation of why they wanted to be a Freshers Helper and to list any relevant experience that might help them in this role.

Those successful applicants were given an induction training session with PPLS L&T Projects Administrator, Judy McCulloch on the practicalities and Neil Speirs, Peer Mentoring Scheme, SRA, discussing the role as a Helper and how to engage with it. To fully prepare the Helpers they were sent copies of our Freshers’ guides and all the documentation regarding meetings and how to find your PT in advance of Freshers’ week.

For Freshers’ week Helpers were given PPLS Helpers’ T-shirts to wear so they were easily identifiable. A Rota system was in place and the students were expected to commit to the times they selected and were allocated to and had to negotiate with their fellow Helpers to arrange cover if there was a problem attending the time slots. Helpers were located in the fourth floor meeting room (DSB) where some students were waiting to see either the SSO or senior member of admin staff or the UG Director for any complicated issues. There were Helpers located also in the concourse (reception) and basement concourse of the Psychology building at 7 George Square, where administrators were confirming attendance and enrolling students onto courses. Helpers were also at the reception area of the DSB. The Helpers were able to assist students in finding their PTs, where the lecture theatres are located, helping students to find out about courses on the University DRPS, navigational help with timetab and generally being a point of contact and a friendly face. Additionally the Helpers attended the academic fair to answer general queries on outside course choices.

The evaluations showed very positive and good constructive comments, with suggested improvements from the Helpers. Freshers were supported throughout the week and there were noticeably smaller queues of Freshers requiring guidance. Freshers also reported they found it easier to approach students for smaller enquires.

Helpers said that they enjoyed this experience and would definitely like to help again next year. Following its continued success, the PPLS Helpers Scheme will run again next year’.

With thanks to Moira Avraam (PPLS Undergraduate Administrator)
# 8. Matrix of Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Staff Contact</th>
<th>Student Contact</th>
<th>Academic Family</th>
<th>Befriender</th>
<th>Mentor</th>
<th>Help desk</th>
<th>ALG</th>
<th>PAL</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lit, Lang and Culture</td>
<td>David Farrier&lt;br&gt;Penny Fielding</td>
<td>Claire Macintyre</td>
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<td>Physics &amp; Astronomy</td>
<td>Kristel Torokoff</td>
<td>Ilona Kovicukite&lt;br&gt;Tom Crewther</td>
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<td>Simon Harley&lt;br&gt;Neil Stewart</td>
<td>David Banks&lt;br&gt;Claire&lt;br&gt;Allmark&lt;br&gt;Vlad&lt;br&gt;Macovei</td>
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<td>Engineering</td>
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<td>Christoph Roller&lt;br&gt;Aditya&lt;br&gt;Srivastava</td>
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<td>PPLS</td>
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<td>Ruth McElroy&lt;br&gt;Fiona Das</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>Julian Holt&lt;br&gt;Melissa&lt;br&gt;O’Neill</td>
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<td>ECA</td>
<td>Arno Verhoeven&lt;br&gt;Brad Herbert&lt;br&gt;Elaine Kelly</td>
<td>Beatrice&lt;br&gt;Langford&lt;br&gt;Powell&lt;br&gt;Lauren Mairs&lt;br&gt;Melanie&lt;br&gt;Davies/&lt;br&gt;Gregory&lt;br&gt;Steckelmacher</td>
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<td>Law</td>
<td>Lindsay Jack</td>
<td>Giedre Jokubauskaiite</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social and Political Sciences</td>
<td>Ross Bond&lt;br&gt;Pontus Odmalm</td>
<td>Lili Schwoerer&lt;br&gt;Selma&lt;br&gt;Augestad</td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
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<td>Tom Kerr/Kitty Vaughan</td>
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<td>Tommer Spence/Connar Mawer</td>
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<td>Darren McCulloch/Sian Robertson</td>
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<td>Mateusz Adamski/GosiaWaszak</td>
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<td>Health in SS</td>
<td>Tonks Fawcett</td>
<td>Fiona Leith/Ruth Barker/Anna Haldane</td>
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<td>Roberta Bradshaw</td>
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<td>Zsolt Ero/James Hulme</td>
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<td>Fraser Dick/Catriona Innes</td>
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<td>Helen Cameron/Micheal Ross</td>
<td>Laura Henderson/Mathew Wood</td>
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<td>Stacy Spielman, Geoff Pearson, Roshni Jethwa</td>
<td>Mathew Erskine/Nicholas Goody</td>
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- = Project soon to be established
9. **Resources & Investment**

There are various ways in which Peer Support can be taken forward by the University; and this is dependent on the commitment of resources the University is able to invest. In addition to documenting the resource commitment needed for each individual project below is an example of processes that need to be in place to establish and manage a successful Peer Support Programme. There are two options offered, however these are only examples, further research and advice can be produced on this area at the University’s request. EUSA is keen to take an advisory role in setting up new Peer Support provisions though they must be discipline owned and student-led.

10. **Managing a Peer Support Project**

![Diagram of Peer Support Structure]

**Peer Support Manager:**

The Peer Support Manager manages the strategic development, direction, planning and external work on Peer Support across the institution and also works closely with the Peer Support Team to find new and creative ways of developing the Peer Support Programmes and resources.

**Student Interns:**

The primary role of the Student Interns is to develop and maintain the various Peer Support Schemes across the University, including sharing best practice, working with the Staff and Student Co-ordinators to implement new ideas and conduct research to remain relevant, ensure the quality and standards of the Projects are maintained. They also encourage and motivate those involved throughout the academic year and attend
Peer Support Network meetings to ensure there is strong and continuous communication between Schools on what is going on.

**Academic Coordinator:**

The main role of the Academic Coordinator is to supply academic information and support and to receive feedback from students on the course or other related issues arising in the Peer Support groups.

**Administrative Assistant:**

The role of Administrative Assistant is mostly around supporting publicity, communication and logistics such as timetabling and room bookings.

**Student Coordinator:**

The Student Coordinator has a key school-based, practical role in organisation, management and achievements of the Scheme. They promote the Scheme locally, are a point of contact for the academics, administrators and the Student Leaders or Peer Mentors involved in the Peer Support programmes. They also support staff to assign Mentors, organise events and activities for their Scheme and keep all involved parties updated on the Schemes activities.

**Student Leaders**

Student Leaders or Mentors are the student Volunteers who support, interact and facilitate work mainly with lower year students within the Scheme. The responsibilities of this role vary depending on the Scheme but mainly involve providing academic, pastoral and social support. All Mentors and Leaders go through comprehensive training to equip them with the skills to fulfill their roles, particularly active students may continue on to become Student Coordinators. *(This model draws strongly on the Manchester and Stirling University Schemes)*

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**Alternative Management Model: Liverpool University (Peer Supporters set within counselling Service)**

- Peer Support: Run by the Counselling Service and provided to the Vet School
- Based on the Oxford Model by Anne Ford
- Project Coordinator: Freelance Counsellor formerly of the University Service
- Supported by another Counsellor
- Both Senior Staff at Grade 8
- Line Managed by Head of the Counselling Service
- Fairly independent programme meeting with Head of Service once per term
- Receive expert advice from Oxford three times per year (more in the preliminary stages)
- Time spent running 30 hour training package, debriefs, reflective work and general support
11. Establishing a Peer Support Project  
(Guidance Notes)

- Designate key member of Academic and Administrative Staff to support the Scheme
- The Student Interns will then work with the School to design and deliver a focus group or other consultation method to explore the experiences of students who are currently/have been studying the particular area/year for which a scheme is being considered and ways in which they could be further supported.
- Speak with the Peer Support Development Officer who can provide advice on an individual basis to discuss which type of scheme meets the students’ needs (including the aims, objectives and desired activities and outcomes including specific issues related to the School)
- Select which Peer Support Scheme you would like to implement from the Toolkit (each scheme is "Discipline-owned and student-led" which means it can be tailored to the needs of that particular cohort)
- Recruit Student Leaders and train them with the resources available in the Toolkit (this can be delivered internally or externally)
- Decide how the project will be monitored and evaluated
- Administrative and Student Staff/Volunteer plan the logistics of timetabling and location for Peer Support activities

(This model is based on the Manchester University Students as Partners Scheme)
12. Recommendations

Following the documentation of the research, consultation and findings of this Report it is important to identify some key recommendations which are essential for planning, initiating, and managing a successful Peer Support Project. These are outlined below:

Essential: Short Term

- It is essential that a robust management system is in place either centrally or within each School before new Peer Support Projects are underway
- There must be clear allocated responsibilities, including both academic and administrative support
- There must be a clear identified need for the project found through consultation to ensure it is relevant and reactive to the students’ needs
- There will be a best practice Toolkit available which will provide 6 practice models and will include information on planning, initiating, managing and developing peer support programmes
- All Volunteers involved in Peer Support must be recruited and trained in line with relevant equal opportunities legislation
- Each Volunteer must undertake the relevant training for their role (this can be delivered either internally or externally)
- If Volunteers are going to work one to one with vulnerable adults they must be PVG checked.
- An option may be for a Peer Support Panel to manage these provisions
- A central, virtual database should be initiated which would ensure that all the details of those involved with peer support were held securely to ensure data protection.
- This online tool could also link to the Edinburgh Award
- There needs to be dedicated publicity support through marketing or administrative services
- Making a small budget available to each Peer Support project would be beneficial to their reach and sustainability
- It is recommended that implementation of support for 1st years should be viewed as a priority, with provision to higher years following on.
- Schools can choose the model or models that suit them best and will be encouraged to blend and vary them to meet their own needs but must maintain the quality of the provision
- Overall the key to successful Peer Support is initial investment of resources and continuous support, motivation and development.
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.
- Further, central pastoral support should be phased in to complement a School-based provision.
- It is important to recognise that the needs of junior and honors students may be different and although senior students will benefit from being involved in Peer Support (as seen through the EA Framework) further provision aimed at the particular needs of this group would be beneficial.
- An additional virtual space could be made available in which all those involved in Peer Support across the University can chat, exchange ideas and resources.
- Further 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 Peer Support Development Officer on taking this forward
- Communicate with other Schools running this project model
**Useful Links:**

*University of Leeds: Peer Mentoring*

http://help.leeds.ac.uk/peer_mentoring/index.html

http://help.leeds.ac.uk/peer_mentoring/docs/mentors_guide.pdf

*Peer Assisted Learning in Mathematics & Physical*

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/stem-conference/PhysicalSciences/Samantha_Pugh_poster.doc

*University of Manchester: PASS Project*

http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=13099

http://www.pass.manchester.ac.uk/aboutus/

*Mentoring Project: Dealing with problems*

http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=7604

*Peer Support Handbook: “Philosophy Family”*


*Student peer support – link below*

http://www.tlso.manchester.ac.uk/students-as-partners/peersupport/roles/

*Peer supporter role profile – link below*

http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=7619

*University of Essex: Peer Mentoring*
http://www2.essex.ac.uk/stdsup/peermentoring/

*University of Glasgow: PAL Scheme Handbook*

http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_9269_en.pdf

*Quality Assurance and Improvement systems and protocols*


*Cambridge University Peer Support – Code of Practice*

http://www.peersupport.cam.ac.uk/codeofpractice.html

*Oxford University – Peer Support*

http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/shw/peer/

*St Andrews University – Peer support*

http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/involve/supnet/

*Peer Support Paper – St Andrews 2009*


*University of Stirling: Peer Support Handbook*

http://steer.stir.ac.uk/MentoringResourcesandSupport.php

*Joseph Rowntree Foundation: The Role and Impact of Befriending*