

Section 1: What is Peer Support?



Overview

Peer Support gives students the opportunity to gain support and guidance in a relaxed, supportive and fun environment from experienced students in higher years who have been in the same position – whether in relation to academia (e.g. same module or discipline) or the transition to University life.

Peer Support aims to establish a supportive environment in which students can develop deeper conceptual understanding of fundamental academic principles and increase their confidence. The aim is not to offer ‘strategic learning’ to pass exams but to embed genuine understanding and supplement formal teaching. It does not seek to replace interaction between teaching staff and students but provides another opportunity for all students to enter into scholarly discourse with their peers.

Peer Support is a highly valued across Higher Education and has been proven to be beneficial for everyone involved; the students being mentored, the students leading and organising, as well as the College or Discipline itself.

The University of Exeter has a well-established system of Peer Support programmes which come in all shapes and sizes but follow 1 of 3 formats (PASS, PAL, or PM) which will be explained shortly.

Peer Programme Structure

Programme Organiser

A Programme Organiser sets the Peer Programme up; deciding on the purpose, format and length of the programme and which year groups will be involved.



Peer Leader / Mentor (that's you!)

Peer Leaders plan, organise and deliver activity-based sessions to mentees in lower years and facilitate the understanding of discipline/module concepts or give general guidance on the transition to University life.



Mentees

Mentees attend sessions delivered by Peer Leaders and actively participate in activities and discussions with their fellow mentees in the Peer Support group.