

Students as Partners supports over 40 Peer Mentoring schemes and 23 Peer Assisted Study Session schemes (PASS) across The University of Manchester, encompassing more than 1500 student volunteers.

Peer Support can only function with the dedication and support of students and staff involved in the individual schemes.

It is recognised that many Mentors, PASS Leaders, Student and Staff Coordinators make exceptional voluntary contributions, far greater than expected in their roles.

It is the commitment and dedication of these people that the Outstanding Contribution to Peer Support Awards seeks to recognise.

The 10 students and 2 members of staff selected to receive an award this year have each made significant contributions in developing and strengthening their disciplines scheme as well as sharing practice across the Institution and collaborating with others.

Hassan Khalili

Student Coordinator – PASS

School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering



Hassan was involved as a first year student in the piloting of PASS in EEE in Semester 2 (2009) and immediately seized the opportunity to become a PASS Leader in his second year when the scheme was rolled out across the whole year. Hassan was incredibly active as a PASS leader, enthusiastically promoting and running his PASS sessions, he also worked closely with his Student Coordinators to help organise quiz and lego team building events for the first year students.

As a Student Coordinator in his third year of study Hassan quickly began to develop the scheme and was the driving force in making it progress. He organised a very successful Welcome Week event, a treasure hunt to help the new first year students become orientated within their new surroundings. He then constructed a lab script for the first year students to run in their session to familiarise themselves with the equipment in the lab, spending over 10 hours of his own time working on the script.

Hassan has also organised and run a revision quiz for the first year students with a follow up revision session so that students could review the quiz and fill the gaps in their knowledge.

Prof. Ali Rezazadeh, Professor of Microwave and mm-wave Engineering says:

“Hassan is able to communicate his message very clearly and with a manner which enthuse students to do their best. He has the capacity to adopt and conform to any situation and tries his best to solve the problems with enthusiasm and dedication. He is highly intelligent, creative and an efficient individual with an enormous will and tendency to help and care for other fellow students. He is an honest, hard working and diligent student who takes his responsibility seriously. He has a good and positive attitude towards his peer students and is always eager to learn and help others.”

Hassan’s dedication extends beyond his own PASS scheme in regularly contributing to wider institutional activity including writing for the Peer Support newsletter and contributing to ‘Additional Leader’ training.

Alexandra Shaw Student Coordinator – PASS Faculty of Life Sciences



Within the team of four co-ordinators in FLS, Lexy naturally took on the role of leader, and in this role as coordinator of the group Lexy always remained positive, enthusiastic and motivated in her contribution to PASS throughout the year. Lexy was essential in maintaining the other Coordinators' motivation towards PASS during exam periods and course work.

Lexy has been an exemplary coordinator, and has always provided someone on which the other coordinators can rely. She has continually gone the extra mile, and has always strived to further the scheme. The introduction of the book sale in FLS this year was a huge success, and the entire event was orchestrated by her.

Lexy takes a lot of pride in her work, and upon hearing about her PASS session observations, it was clear that she is very passionate about the FLS scheme. She always spoke with fervour and always offered both the sabbatical intern and other coordinators help if they needed any extra support. Another example of this is her enthusiasm in debriefs where she is always hands on, and loves mingling with the leaders to try and generally help out wherever she can.

Liz Sheffield, FLS Staff coordinator, says:

"Lexy has been a superb co-ordinator - going above and beyond the call of duty on a regular basis, and always being there to ensure that planned activities go smoothly. Examples of the former include her enthusiastic participation when we hosted a visitor from the International Center for Supplemental Instruction - a senior member of staff who oversees Academic Affairs at UMKC. Lexy engaged her in lively, informative and enthusiastic conversation over a lengthy dinner - way outside normal working hours, and much appreciated by the staff who asked if she might participate."

Andrew Mclean, FLS Student Coordinator, says:

"Lexy also maintains a deep interest in the actual process of PASS and has been extremely proactive in PASS observations, debriefs and co-ordinator meetings. Lexy has also been vital to our group as she has links to several other PASS organisations at the university and the Faculty of Life Sciences who we have worked with this year."

Heather Jones (Senior), Jamie Ingle, and Amy Norris Student Coordinators – Peer Mentoring Speech and Language Therapy (School of Psychological Sciences)



The Mentor Coordinators have been extremely organised and motivated to meet regularly as a proactive team and to improve upon an already successful peer mentoring scheme. Their most mentionable achievements over the last year have been initiating a peer mentoring area on Blackboard to increase the ease and effectiveness of communication between mentors and mentees and transferral of information. This includes details of each mentee and mentors' contact details and a calendar of peer mentoring events.

They were also crucial for the success of the first introductory session in Welcome week involved a team building activity for 1st years to help them feel at ease and then played 'pictionary' in groups to focus on and illustrate effective communication skills.

Rachel Harwood, Staff Coordinator for Speech and Language Therapy, says:

"The 3 Coordinators, led by Heather have been a pleasure to work with and have ensured that this scheme has run smoothly throughout the year. It has been well received by the 1st years and has provided invaluable information."

Lindsay Scott, Sabbatical Intern for MHS, says:

"Heather, Jamie and Amy have worked very well as a team this year. They have helped to continue developing the Mentoring Scheme and provide first year students with a solid support structure.

They have been very proactive in addressing the areas for improvement from 09/10 and have increased the number of social events and sessions. They have also put in a lot of hard work to ensure there is a good handover of the scheme next year; which will benefit from having Coordinators from different year groups."

Alwin Puthenpurakal Student Coordinator – Peer Mentoring BNurs (School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work)



Alwin first joined the scheme in 2009 as a Peer Mentor and his clear enthusiasm later saw him become a Student Coordinator. In this time he has worked hard in both capacities and the scheme has greatly benefited from his hard work and dedication.

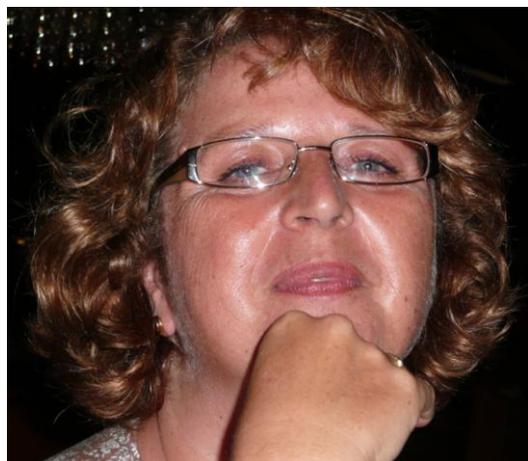
As a Peer Mentor, Alwin worked closely with Student Coordinators from the two other schemes in the School to work on the historically lengthy and little recognised pre-arrival guide that is sent to all 1st year students before they begin their programme. Alwin's commitment and enthusiasm in developing the Peer Mentoring scheme, along with his collaboration with other students, resulted in a shorter, snappier read which evaluated very well with Mentees.

Alwin also attended the Peer Support Residential in Wales and came up with the innovative idea to create a Peer Mentor Wall Planner for all first year students. He later worked collaboratively with the Staff Coordinators and previous Sabbaticals to promote the ideas to the School and as such, when having received their Wall Planner in Welcome Week, 95% of students said they would use it again, making it a huge success.

Joanne Timpson, Senior Academic Advisor and Lecturer says:

"The profile of the Peer Mentoring Scheme within the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work has been greatly enhanced by Alwin's obvious dedication, motivation and enduring enthusiasm for the role. Alwin's commitment to the role of a Peer Mentor has been a constant feature of his student life and he has been a source of inspiration and an accessible port of contact and support to students throughout the cohorts."

Janet Ellis
Staff Coordinator – Peer Mentoring and PASS
School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work



Without Janet, Peer Support in the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work would not be as successful as it is. Through her work with Peer Support she has nurtured and developed 3 separate Peer Mentoring Schemes and is now at the forefront of piloting PASS in the BNurs programme. Due to the specific challenges of the course requirements, this will be one of only a handful of scheme internationally.

Coordinating over 700 students (Peer Mentors and PASS Leaders) is undoubtedly a challenging Peer Support role but is something in which she has consistently excelled. This year she oversaw the biggest Peer Mentoring induction event within the School to date.

Janet encourages new and innovative ideas, always listening closely to the ideas of students and colleagues. When one of her Student Coordinators suggested making a Wall Chart for new students, Janet was eager to develop this idea. She was the key driving force behind the design and development of the Wall Chart which a hugely creative and useful resource through which the Peer Mentors in the School 'kick start' their scheme.

The Wall Chart is not the only new project Janet has facilitated this year. New Facebook groups were set up for Mentors and she organised accommodation talks to advise first year students about renting in Manchester. Thanks to this dedication Peer Support has grown considerably in size and presence within the School and her involvement with the new PASS scheme will ensure this brings further success.

Joanne Timpson, Senior Academic Advisor and Lecturer says:

“Janet has been invaluable in terms of her knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment. Nursing programmes present many challenges in terms of freeing time for students to engage in wider University activities and Janet’s experience and vision have helped to facilitate and guide the process both in terms of recruitment and the facilitation of training.”

Elena Polisca
Staff Coordinator – Peer Mentoring
Italian Studies (School of Languages, Linguistics
and Cultures)



Elena has been a driving force for the Peer Mentoring scheme in Italian Studies since 2003. Initially the scheme, which is one of the first to have been established in the School of Languages, Linguistics and Communication, was set up to provide conventional face to face support to first year students.

However, Elena went above and beyond this role to develop a Blackboard site accessible to incoming students with the support and input of her Mentors. Italian was also one of the first schemes to introduce hard-copy pre-arrival material written by students, for students.

In more recent years, Elena's input has been pivotal in developing the Italian Studies newsletter, which has now reached its fourth edition. This includes contributions from students across all years of study, including Year Abroad students and staff. She has also been heavily involved this year with introducing Italian Studies hoodies. Her input to this activity has been instrumental in creating a strong sense of community for the discipline.

Elena has shown dedicated to the promotion of Peer Mentoring within and outside The University of Manchester. Internally, her regular contributions to the Peer Mentor Staff Coordinator Network have enthused colleagues to further develop their schemes whilst her delivery of a 'Building Networking Skills' workshop for Peer Mentors was the first workshop piloted for all Peer Mentors across the Institution as part of an 'Additional Training' programme.

She has disseminated her work at a range of conferences including WebCT European Conference (2008), Enquiry Based Learning Conference (2009) and at the Teaching and Learning Conference (2010).

Francesca Robinson
Peer Mentor
Religions & Theology (School of Arts, Histories and Cultures)



Francesca has dedicated herself to the mentoring role and has never stopped supporting the first year students. In Welcome Week she took the time during a scavenger hunt to stop for tea and lunch to give new students the opportunity to have a question and answer session, which was so successful it will be included in next year's welcome activities.

Furthermore, Francesca has turned up to drop in sessions every week to see her Mentees. Her dedication to her role meant she was the first Mentor to sign up to the weekly 'drop-in' sessions for mentees and the only mentor to have consistent weekly attendance at these events.

In addition to this regular commitment, Francesca has organised some very innovative events for R&T mentoring. Craig Wright, Religions and Theology Student Coordinator commented that:

"She really took inclusion to heart this year and organised two events that could cater for everyone. Firstly, during 'refreshers week', she organised a movie-showing which catered for students who did not drink. This was a great success, one of the best attended events of the entire week. Furthermore, Francesca has organised R&T nights out on a weekend, a first for R&T! This meant students who had caring responsibilities would find it easier to attend."

The organisation of these events shows that Francesca has given a lot of independent thought to how she can best support first year students and has not merely followed in previous year's footsteps.

Overall, her hard work, dedication and innovative ideas have made a tremendous impact on the success of R&T's Peer Mentoring scheme this year.

Justin Kennedy and Isabella Fairclough

PASS Leaders

Religions & Theology (School of Arts, Histories and Cultures)



The introduction of PASS in Religions & Theology this year has seen Justin and Isabella excel in their innovative ideas and shine in their dedication to student support. Every week they have produced and comprehensively planned new, exciting and engaging ideas that keep drawing their level 1 students back to their sessions. They have strived to make the level 1 students engage and enjoy their subject through the most imaginative use of resources; from plasticine models to paper and even a few McDonald's straws.

Isabella and Justin have been 100% dedicated to the scheme and every event organised has been attended by the pair; always smiling and with a brilliant attitude. They meet regularly outside of their session to plan innovative and creative sessions, condensing complex knowledge into posters and mind maps which has drawn much praise and appreciation from their PASS group.

Their commitment to first years and dedication to peer support has seen them pulling together all of their PASS plans and resources to contribute them to the Students as Partners resource page on the website, allowing PASS Leaders from all schemes across the University to access their ideas

April, a 1st year from Justin and Isabella's PASS group says:

"I think Justin and Isabella were the best PASS leaders I could have asked for. Their enthusiasm for helping other people stood out so much and it made them really easy to talk to if you ever found you did have a problem. They tried to make all the sessions fun, which they really were, including games and all sorts of other things. You could tell they were committed to what they were doing and genuinely wanted to help in all ways possible."

Most of all, they have both demonstrated innovative approaches which have pushed the boundaries of PASS at The University of Manchester, and it is together that they are truly outstanding.

Craig Wright Student Coordinator – PASS and Peer Mentoring Religions and Theology (School of Arts, Histories and Cultures)



Craig's contribution to the Peer Support schemes within R&T has, and continues to be, a fundamental and pioneering effort. He very much led the way in gaining the support which resulted in the implementation of PASS into the discipline in September 2010 and is very interested in setting up the foundations of a Peer Support scheme that will outlive his time in the discipline.

Craig continues to celebrate and promote the benefits that Peer Support can provide in any way he can. He frequently sends out supportive and friendly emails to staff and students reminding them of important dates and events. He also organises regular PASS Leader and Peer Mentor meetings in order to keep the flow of communication high and is a recurrent contributor to the R&T monthly newsletter. Craig has taken on a huge amount this year and has succeeded with everything he has set out to achieve.

Judith Clark, an R&T first year student says:

"Craig made me feel welcome from the moment I arrived in September. He is always there with a big smile on his face, eager to assist wherever and however he can. He truly is a stand alone individual one for whom recognition, with an award such as this, is so obviously meant"

Dr. Jacqueline Suthren Hirst, Senior Lecturer says:

"Craig has made an exceptional voluntary contribution without ever making it seem as though he was putting himself out in any way or drawing attention to himself, yet he has been a gentle but firm voice when changes have been needed. With a light touch and good humour, Craig has inspired the Mentors and provided an excellent role model. When he graduates he will leave in place a robust scheme for others to benefit from."

Scheme Awards

This year, the team of Sabbaticals nominated a range of schemes for a 'Scheme Award'. The Outstanding Contribution Panel recommended two schemes for an award; one for PASS and one for Peer Mentoring. The recipients are:

- Psychology (Peer Mentoring)
- Life Sciences (PASS)

Psychology Peer Mentoring Scheme

The Peer Mentoring Scheme was first introduced to Psychology in 2005 as a way to develop a sense of community within the discipline. Since then, the scheme has grown considerably and now includes 5 Student Coordinators and 46 Peer Mentors.

The scheme has benefited greatly this year from the outstanding leadership of the Staff Coordinator, Alison Fisher, and the Student Coordinators (Elisabeth Berggrav, Laura Birch, Georgina Jones, Rebecca Taylor and Alice Toseland). This year, they restructured the scheme, assigning Mentors to tutorial groups and thus providing better opportunity for contact with the Mentees at the School level.

Together with the Mentors they have been involved with a number of different projects this year including; providing excellent pre-arrival material, organising multiple social events and charity fundraising. The Coordinators have also introduced a prize based incentive scheme to further encourage and maintain contact between Mentors and their Mentees.

At the start of the academic year, the scheme went above and beyond the role to help establish the Psychology society. This is something that students had wanted for a number of years, and the Coordinators were keen to get involved and further develop a sense of community for Psychology students. The scheme now works collaboratively with the Society to organise social events.

The scheme has also reached out to the wider community. Since the start of this academic year they have been fundraising for the mental health charity MIND. The Mentors and Coordinators led the creation and production of Psychology Mentoring Hoodies and have donated over £450 of the proceeds to the charity.

The Psychology Peer Mentoring Scheme has been at the forefront for developing a sense of unity and community within the School and is an outstanding example of what can be achieved in Peer Support.

Life Sciences Peer Assisted Study Sessions Scheme

PASS in FLS has become a deeply embedded scheme since it was established in 2005-06 and supports in excess of 600 first years. Each year since the 'Outstanding Contribution to Peer Support Awards' has run FLS has had at least one award recipient. This is a testament to the dedication of Leaders, Student and Staff Coordinators alike.

PASS is not linked to one unit, but covers all of first year and therefore requires Leaders to be flexible and creative. Each year, Leaders quickly become confident in their roles and challenge themselves creatively to ensure quality and interactive sessions for the 1st years.

This included one leader baking cupcakes with Molecular Genetics related words in icing; each of the 1st years had to explain the word to the others before eating one and six separate PASS groups joining forces to revamp the activity 'Campus Treasure Hunt', which led to 6 PASS groups competing in a treasure hunt around University to further support orientation.

Welcome Week activity is intensive and events include: pub quizzes, trips to the zoo, a team building event (fashion show) and even a brewery tour. There was an interactive session with 1st years (led by the Staff Coordinators), utilising 'clickers' to explain PASS and prompt students to think about how to benefit from their time at University. 'Clickers' have also been used to deliver revision sessions, supporting the transition into Semester 1 exams.

Leader support is critical and structured debriefs, led by the Staff and Student Coordinators, take place regularly. In addition to feedback of their sessions, debriefs are structured to help develop Leaders' key attributes, with Staff Coordinators producing sessions allowing Leaders to realise the transferable skills they were gaining from PASS, and how these could be applied to job applications or interviews.

Evaluation from FLS has been presented by Staff Coordinators at a range of internal, national and international conferences.