

Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)

'PASS was the best thing that could have happened to me academically and for the first time I am actually enjoying education.'

PASS Participant



Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) gives students an opportunity to work together and discuss their learning. PASS sessions are weekly or fortnightly one hour study groups for students who are new to an academic module. Sessions are facilitated by student Leaders in higher years.

The PASS Leaders are trained facilitators who support groups of student Participants in lower years by helping them find solutions to academic problems through discussions and guided questioning. PASS does not replace teaching by staff, but offers instead another opportunity for students to build confidence, consolidate and enhance their learning.

PASS Leaders encourage active learning in an informal, friendly and fun environment. The focus is on key modules identified by the Schools' academic leads and students.

PASS offers a safe, friendly space to help students:

- Adjust quickly to University Life
- Improve their study habits
- Enhance their understanding of the subject matter of their course through collaborative learning
- Enhance their awareness of course direction and expectations

Benefits to Leaders

- Consolidating their own learning
- Developing personal and employability skills such as: confidence, time-management, presenting, leadership, collaboration, initiative

Benefits to Participants

- Deepening their understanding of key concepts
- Testing learning in safe environment
- Getting used to university life

Benefits to Schools:

- Flexible and can be delivered as an 'opt-in' or an 'opt-out' scheme that's embedded in the timetable.
- Contributes to building a culture of learning
- Resolves many student questions
- Enables immediate feedback on learning
- Underpins enquiry-based and personalised learning

PASS is successful because it is discipline-owned and student-led



For further information, contact:

Gale Dawson

Learning and Progression Project Manager
0121 414 4736

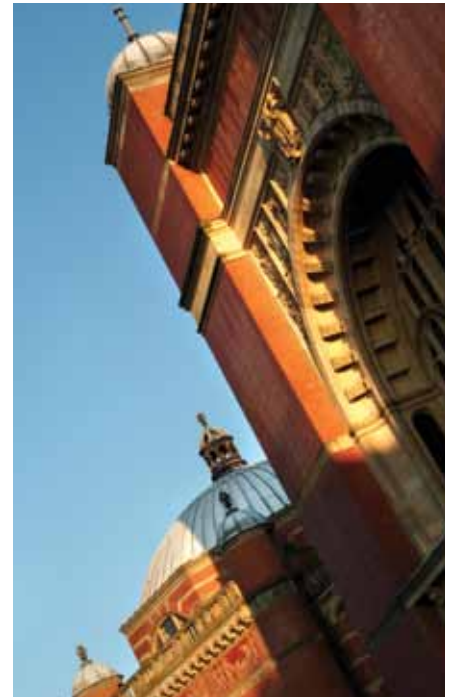
Rachel Wood

Skills Development Manager
0121 414 2252

Mike Stanford

Skills Projects Officer
0121 414 3582

pass@contacts.bham.ac.uk



PASS Case Study – Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity

The Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity is one of our original PASS schemes. PASS in IAA started in October 2009 as an opt-in scheme, where students decided whether or not they wished to attend PASS and at what time. Since then PASS has supported a variety of modules and in 2011-12 IAA timetabled PASS for the first time as an opt-out scheme. Opt-out schemes benefit from being voluntary but students are assigned to groups to support the schemes administrative management. In 2011-12 IAA also trialed splitting the cohort of approximately 60 students, with 30 attending PASS in the first half of the semester and the remaining 30 students in the latter half of the semester. Unlike typical PASS schemes, IAA PASS

leaders chose to attend the first year lectures to reinforce their own understanding and to help them provide a context for preparing their PASS sessions. Through the years, IAA students have built up a bank of previous materials to use with first year participants from solving interactive timelines, labelling the rooms in a roman bath house, to structured debate topics and essay writing techniques. PASS leaders in IAA also dedicate sessions to topics such as effectively using the library, how to reference, and going over the departments' essay style guide.

Value to Participants

- Reinforce lectures with interactive learning and peer discussion.
- Opportunity to ask students about the course as a whole, from module choice to study tour.
- Aids transition by preparing new University students for study.

Value to Leaders

- Value to Leaders
- Gaining practical and transferable skills in organisation, leadership and communication.
- Consolidating first year knowledge

'The element of discussion was a great way to learn.'

PASS Participant, IAA

'Not only has PASS helped me get a job after Uni, it was really good fun as well'

PASS Leader, IAA



**For further information, contact the academic lead:
Dr Ken Wardle**

k.a.wardle@bham.ac.uk