

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



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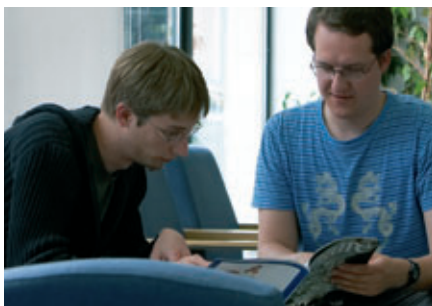


PASS Case Study – Biosciences

The Biosciences PASS scheme started in 2010 and supports the Cell Biology and Physiology module. The PASS scheme ran fortnightly and was embedded in the 1st year tutorial programme through alternating the tutorial and PASS sessions.

The scheme was an opt-out scheme which meant that participants were assigned to PASS groups and then had the option to deselect themselves from the group.

During the first semester, around 30 PASS Leaders from across the 2nd and 3rd years worked in pairs to run PASS sessions which were attended by nearly all 230 1st years. The maximum number attending each fortnightly timetabled PASS session was 15 participants.



Value to Participants

- Improved the transition to university life and the very different teaching and learning styles
- Very helpful to work with students in higher years who had successfully completed the first year
- Helped them to get to know others on the course in a large School
- Non-UK students, those who had entered via BTEC and Access routes and those studying Biochemistry rated PASS highly as helping them to adapt to university life

Value to Leaders

- Development of communication skills, presenting themselves, taking responsibility for their groups
- Developing maturity both academically and personally

PASS is presented as an asset at Open and Applicant Visit Days and parents are particularly keen on the idea of 'buddying'; many are used to it from schools and colleges.

In addition to the general PASS Survey of the 2010–11 programme, Biosciences conducted its own survey which informed some of the following feedback.

'PASS is great because you can ask the Leaders anything about anything.'

PASS Participant

'We got to go to a conference and meet PASS Leaders from other universities. It was inspiring.'

PASS Leader

'PASS was far more useful than I expected.'

PASS Participant