

peer-assisted learning

A SOURCE OF SUPPORT FOR LEVEL 1 STUDENTS

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What is PAL?

PAL uses students from higher levels to provide academic support to other students. In the School of Psychology there are weekly PAL sessions for students in levels 1-3.

Who are the PAL leaders?

The PAL leaders are good students (average grades 2:1 and above). At level 1, the PAL leaders are from levels 2, 3 and 4.

The content of the PAL sessions is student-led. Normally the sessions focus upon upcoming assignments. Topics this year have included how to write reports, APA referencing and statistics.

At the start of the academic year the first couple of sessions deal with more general support. The PAL leaders show the level 1s how to set up the proxy server, how to download software they might need and give general advice on e.g., how to manage multiple deadlines.

What happens in the PAL sessions?

...they give us first years a closer look into the Psychology department and help us to get into conversations with students from higher levels. I think that is great because as 1st years you don't want to bother older students with your stuff but at the PAL meetings they take time and help you to feel totally relieved.

I was personally totally freaked out at the beginning of term looking at all the assessments we had and how to manage that and so on but they calmed me down and just gave me support.

Testimonial of a 1st year student

How does PAL aid transition?

1. Gives students a safe environment to ask questions and get extra academic support
2. Allows level 1 students to meet other psychology students, promotes vertical integration within the School, and gives students the opportunity to draw on the experience of other students who have gone through the same transition.
3. Towards the end of the semester, allows students to ask questions about the transition to level 2, what the structure of the courses is, how expectations change etc.
4. Extremely high attendance in the first semester (30-40 students voluntarily attending), attendance in second semester still strong (approx. 10-15) but does suggest PAL is particularly helpful in the first few months of university.

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