



# UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN



Peer Assisted Learning  
SCHOOL OF Ψ PSYCHOLOGY

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## ABOUT PAL

PAL is a student-led initiative. PAL is a space where undergraduates help more junior students.

**WHAT IS PAL FOR?** To provide academic support. To consolidate knowledge gained from formal teaching such as lecture materials and statistics. To pass on things students wish they had known when they started. To answer questions students may not want to ask staff. To explain things in a language students understand. To emphasize little things that can make difference, such as attendance.

**WHAT IS PAL NOT?** Compulsory! Additional teaching.

**PAL IS SOCIAL:** PAL talks to students where students are, using Facebook and student portal to share information, opinions, ideas and student needs.



## PAL LEADERS

PAL sessions are led by students – PAL leaders. PAL leaders are usually two per session. PAL leaders share experience, facilitate interactions, and make sessions fun. But PAL leaders do not teach!

**THE JOB:** PAL leaders are selected from ranks of students. PALs volunteer about 2-3 hours weekly. This time is spent preparation of sessions, the session, and communication.

**PREPARATION** consists of creating a Facebook event and preparing a topic of a session. The **SESSION** takes place informally, in a friendly atmosphere, linked with ice-breakers and games. **COMMUNICATION** part means to plan with the students the topics of following sessions and communicating the plan to a team leader, who then e-mails the plan to all the students weekly.

All PAL leaders gather regularly at feedback sessions to monitor the success of PAL sessions, and student satisfaction.



## BENEFITS OF PAL

**STUDENTS** benefit from PAL as PAL is helping them to immerse in Psychology. It is a student space for discussions, sharing ideas and debating various topics related to the class, like no other place.

**PAL LEADERS:** The PAL initiative has been shown to produce leaders who are good at working with people, have organisational skills, are reliable, interested, and knowledgeable in Psychology. Being a PAL leader is a responsible position that gives students a space to prepare the sessions how they like it, work with groups, and communicate in a semi-professional manner.

*"I benefit as it allows me to enhance my pre-existing knowledge and question my own studies so I can better my work. Also, I love the interaction I get from seeing others benefiting from my own experiences to support them in their student life."*

Ailsa O'Brien  
Level 1 & 2 PAL Leader

*"We get to see a lot of different people with different interests and views and manners in which they do their work. So I need to learn to be open minded to various approaches to explain concepts to students because they all think and work differently. It's asking us to be very, very creative."*

Aletta Boerkoel  
Level 1 PAL Leader

*"To me it is a great learning experience as we have to weekly work with groups of students, which improves our communication skills. Doing one 15 min presentation a semester for a class then seems like an easy job."*

Marek Nikolic  
Level 1, 2 & 4 PAL Leader

*"It is interesting how little we PAL leaders, think we know how beneficial our experience is to students who come to our sessions. What I have learned is that the information that might seem like "common sense" to me might be a complete enlightenment to others and this helps you re-evaluate your own strengths. I think in particular you understand this in the later years when you do PAL and when you have more experience. It's very rewarding knowing that your help can actually have such an impact on someone's education"*

Karina Kangur  
PAL Team Leader



## PAL TOOLS

PAL is attended by ~10% of the students across all levels. Students who attend PAL regularly are students actively engaging with their studies. For those reasons, PAL students have their place at the school of Psychology.

PAL students have a dedicated room. The room is equipped with a computer, a projector, and a stash of Psychology related books. The room is only available to all students outside the PAL sessions.

PAL leaders are often sought after by members of the school, as they are exemplar, pro-active, and well equipped students.

