

GUIDELINES FOR PEER GUIDES AND POTENTIAL PEER GUIDES

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Code of Practice for the Peer Guide Scheme. It is also possible to download more information, ideas and examples of good practice from the Peer Guide area of 'MyBangor'.

1. Background Information

These guidelines are specific to both potential Peer Guides and those who have completed all processes and been accepted onto the Scheme.

Peer Guides are student volunteers who help new undergraduate students settle into their life at Bangor. As volunteers there is no payment for the standard duties but, in recognition of the opportunities it affords to develop employability skills, Peer Guides are awarded experience points towards the Bangor Employability Award (BEA).

The Peer Guide Scheme is managed centrally by the Peer Support Co-ordinator who undertakes all the standardised processes such as, applications, training, referencing and evaluation and also leads on recruitment. In addition there is a Peer Guide Co-ordinator in each Academic School who helps with recruitment as well as undertaking the practical implementation within the School, allocating Peer Guides to particular duties and new students.

The Peer Guide cohort contains both new Peer Guides (First Time Peer Guides) and those returning to the scheme for a second or even third time (Senior Peer Guides). The term Senior is used administratively to indicate Peer Guides who are already trained and for whom there is already a reference on file. They have the same standard duties that all Peer Guides undertake but being more experienced, many academic schools ask for their input to the planning of welcome week.

While some academic schools prefer to keep their cohort of Peer Guides to the two levels described above, others like to add a third level. They are usually termed Lead Peer Guides and they work more closely with the staff and take on extra responsibility. They might be asked to return to Bangor a little earlier than other Peer Guides and typically undertake tasks such as: organisation of events; being a team leader and point of reference for other Peer Guides; allocation of freshers and duties to Peer Guides; collation and distribution of resources such as information packs, handbooks, T shirts. The Lead Peer Guides are normally, although not exclusively, Senior Peer Guides.

As these extra responsibilities fall outside the main remit of the Peer Guide role, the terms on which they are offered are between the Academic Schools and the Peer Guides. However, in addition to the BEA points that all Peer Guides are awarded those who take on the Lead Peer Guide role can be awarded extra points towards the BEA. Similarly, staff in the academic schools have the discretion to nominate any Peer Guide who shows commitment over and above the expected role, whether that is taking on

extra responsibilities to cover gaps in provision or helping with more challenging or prolonged situations. These 'over and above' points can be awarded in addition to the Lead Peer Guides points if appropriate.

Other opportunities, both paid and voluntary, are circulated to the Peer Guides from the Central Peer Support Co-ordinator.

2. Becoming a Peer Guide

It is recommended that potential Peer Guides attend an information session so they understand the ethos and demands of the role before applying. These aspects are then further developed at Peer Guide training where the emphasis is on the commitment and behaviour expected of them in their position of trust. This emphasis lies on two related aspects:

- **behave in a responsible manner** for example:
 - be a positive role model; this might include encouraging:
 - adherence to University rules and regulations.
 - positive attitude to student life and studies.
 - maintain confidentiality of personal information entrusted to them, by staff or students, unless concerned for wellbeing; this might include, amongst other things:
 - contact details.
 - disability or health issues.
 - personal problems.
 - promote sensible attitudes to issues such as personal safety and drinking.
- **refrain from any behaviour that undermines their position of trust** for example:
 - do not exploit others' vulnerability; this might include amongst other things:
 - not pressurising others into drinking games, over drinking or other activities they do not appear comfortable with.
 - not acting in a sexually predatory manner.
 - do not use misuse the University's trust in them; this might include amongst other things:
 - do not sell or pass on their Peer Guide T shirts to others who are not Peer Guides.
 - do not distribute commercial flyers.
 - do not pressurise new students into activities merely to gain a reward.

To be accepted onto the scheme all Peer Guides MUST*:

- complete the on-line application form which will then be passed to the Academic School for confirmation.
- attend the mandatory training.

- pass the screening process ie nothing untoward appears on the external references, within the Academic School's records or on the University's disciplinary records.

Peer Guides accepted onto the scheme who then display inappropriate behaviour will be removed from the list of active Peer Guides and will not receive a certificate or any further BEA points.

To help with this the Peer Support Co-ordinator, supported by the School Peer guide Co-ordinator will:

- advertise the recruitment information sessions.
- maintain contact with potential Peer Guides through their university email addresses.
- guide potential Peer Guides through the processes above.

It is important that potential Peer Guides respond quickly to emails to ensure the application is completed efficiently and quickly.

3. Peer Guiding in Practice

Once all the above processes have been successfully completed, applicants are included on the list of Peer Guides for their Academic Schools. They then work through their Academic Schools; the Peer Guide Co-ordinator within the school organises the activities and allocates duties and incoming students to each Peer Guide. It is there that the Welcome activities are organised and the duties are allocated. There are two main aspects of Peer Guiding:

- to offer general support at school induction activities and social events.
- to welcome and support more closely a small group of new students allocated to them by the academic school.

In order to help new students effectively, Peer Guides should:

- attend Peer Guide meetings within the academic school.
- maintain contact with staff, fellow Peer Guides and the new students allocated to them. Peer Guides do not have to give out personal details if they do not wish to do so - contact can be via university emails rather than personal phone or email accounts if preferred.
- return to Bangor in time to meet and greet new students - this will be on the Friday immediately prior to the Arrival Weekend.
- undertake the duties allocated to them; this will vary but is likely to include:
 - meeting and greeting new students either at Halls of Residence or within the school as appropriate.
 - help with induction sessions within the school.
 - orientation tours of the university and the town.
 - help at school social events and trips.
 - help with less formal activities arranged by the cohort of Peer Guides.

- be inclusive:
 - welcome all our new students.
 - be friendly and approachable.
 - respect the views and beliefs of the incoming students.
 - provide and / or promote activities to meet the needs and interests of a varied student intake for example:
 - alternative activities for those who do not drink.
 - introducing students to others likely to share interests or commonalities such as mature, home based, International students or fellow residents in Halls.
 - liaise with Peer Guides from other schools where appropriate for students studying across schools.
- listen, show empathy and reassure those finding it more difficult to adjust to Bangor.
- signpost new students to appropriate support services if needed.
- seek support from relevant staff if issues beyond the Peer Guide role are raised.

This support for incoming students is intended to ease the transition to Bangor and the expectation is that after the first week it tails off quite quickly. However, this requires balancing against the needs of those who take a little longer to settle. Peer Guides are encouraged to keep a 'looser' less demanding level of support while the incoming students wish it but they should bear in mind the need to pass on cases to appropriate staff as is highlighted at training.

In undertaking the above Peer Guides will be advised by the relevant staff who will also be available to provide guidance and support on Peer Guide issues as requested.

4. Extra Opportunities

Peer Guides sometimes find extra opportunities available to them. This is especially true of the Senior Peer Guides who often take on roles over and above the normal role described above. Those who take on the extra duties are often termed Lead Peer Guides. The extra duties depend on how the Academic School wishes to run the cohort of volunteers and is a matter for discussion between the school and the Peer Guides. The extra opportunities might include:

- being part of an organising committee.
- taking on a leading role by organising events and /or supporting less experienced Peer Guides.
- returning to Bangor early to help organise duty rotas, distribute T shirts, prepare information.
- recruitment events.
- other opportunities arising within the Academic School.

There are, on occasions, other opportunities circulated by the Peer Support Co-ordinator which are thought to be of possible interest to Peer Guides.

The **Peer Support Co-ordinator** is available for advice and guidance on all aspects of Peer Guiding and can be contacted on peerguidng@bangor.ac.uk or 01248 382072. There is also information to support the Peer Guides in their role on Bangor 360 which all Peer Guides have access to.

Notes

*Senior Peer Guides do not have to attend the mandatory training a second time and neither are extra references requested. However, their disciplinary records will be rechecked and they will be offered the chance to attend an optional training session that aims to help them step up to a leading role.